



Right to social inclusion and equality

The National Action Plan on the UN
Convention on the Rights of Persons
with Disabilities 2018–2019

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of Persons with Disabilities 2018–2019

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The National Action Plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities determines the measures that will be taken to promote the implementation of the Convention in different administrative sectors during the first action plan period 2018–2019.</p> <p>The Action Plan has been drawn up by VANE (Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), which has representatives from disabled people's organisations, labour market organisations and the key ministries regarding the rights of persons with disabilities. Disabled people's organisations and persons with disabilities have been consulted during the process of drawing up the Action Plan to obtain information about the matters that according to the convention should primarily be promoted in the Action Plan. Based on this information, discussions about the concrete measures for taking these matters forward have been conducted with different ministries.</p> <p>The Action Plan comprises 82 measures, to the implementation of which the different ministries have committed themselves. These measures have been divided into measures that are to be implemented during this action plan period and measures that will be implemented over a longer period of time. A responsible body or bodies have been indicated for each measure. The realisation of the measures will be assessed at the end of the action plan period.</p> <p>The Action Plan emphasises the importance of social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the changing operational environment and the importance of accessibility as a precondition for the realisation of the other rights. One of the main objectives of the Action Plan is increasing awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and mainstreaming these rights in different administrative sectors and more widely in society.</p>			
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<p>Referat</p> <p>I det nationella handlingsprogrammet för FN:s konvention om rättigheter för personer med funktionsnedsättning fastställs de åtgärder genom vilka genomförandet av konventionen främjas inom olika förvaltningsområden under den första handlingsprogramperioden 2018–2019.</p> <p>Delegationen för rättigheter för personer med funktionsnedsättning VANE har ansvarat för utarbetandet av handlingsprogrammet. IVANE finns företrädare för funktionshinderorganisationer, arbetsmarknadsorganisationer och de ministerier som är viktiga med tanke på rättigheter för personer med funktionsnedsättning. I samband med utarbetandet av handlingsprogrammet har man hört funktionshinderorganisationer och personer med funktionsnedsättning och på det sättet fått information om vilka frågor enligt FN:s konvention om rättigheter för personer med funktionsnedsättning som i första hand bör främjas genom handlingsprogrammet. Utifrån detta har man fört diskussioner med olika ministerier om de konkreta åtgärder med vilka dessa frågor förs vidare.</p> <p>Handlingsprogrammet består av 82 åtgärder, och de olika ministerierna har förbundit sig att genomföra dem. Åtgärderna har också indelats i åtgärder som genomförs under handlingsprogramperioden och åtgärder på lång sikt. För varje åtgärd finns det en ansvarig instans eller ansvariga instanser. Genomförandet av åtgärderna ska utvärderas vid handlingsprogramperiodens slut.</p> <p>I handlingsprogrammet framhävs betydelsen av delaktigheten för personer med funktionsnedsättning i den föränderliga omvärlden samt betydelsen av tillgängligheten som en förutsättning för att tillgodose övriga rättigheter. Viktiga mål för handlingsprogrammet är att öka medvetenheten om rättigheterna för personer med funktionsnedsättning samt integreringen av dessa rättigheter inom olika förvaltningsområden och i samhället i stort.</p>			
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FOR THE READER

Everyone is entitled to fundamental and human rights. However, the rights of certain groups of people are not always fulfilled unless particular attention is paid to them and special measures are taken to ensure the rights. Disabled people are one of these groups. For this reason, there has been need for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, Convention) and also a demand for special national measures for safeguarding the rights guaranteed by the Convention.

In ratifying the Convention, Finland was committed to reaffirming the full enjoyment of human rights and civil liberties for persons with disabilities as well as promoting their implementation. This National Action Plan includes 82 measures which aim to promote the implementation of fundamental and human rights of persons with disabilities in Finland. The measures form twelve entities, some of them principled and cross cutting, while others directly focused on different administrative branches. Brief descriptions of the current status have also been included in these areas as evidence of the fact that we are not starting from scratch even though we have plenty of work ahead of us.

The inclusion of persons with disabilities is a driving and cross-cutting theme of the UNCRPD. Before the preparation of the Action Plan, the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities VANE organised a hearing on the Convention for disability organisations. In the autumn of 2017, VANE also conducted a survey among persons with disabilities on the implementation of disabled rights in Finland. Among other topics, the survey explored the views of persons with disabilities on which rights guaranteed by the UNCRPD were implemented well, which of them were implemented poorly, and with which it should be primarily intervened. The persons with disabilities considered the right of persons with disabilities to work

to be the weakest area. By contrast, the right to health care was considered to be fulfilled the best. The persons with disabilities considered the right to an adequate standard of living and social protection to be the primary concern requiring measures. The objectives set for the long and short term in the present Action Plan have aimed to take these messages into account. Securing the employment for people with partial work ability is also one of the key projects of Sipilä's Government. In addition, the Government aims to comprehensively reform social protection.

While we have taken some steps forward, I feel we have not yet arrived at our destination. We cannot settle for providing persons with disabilities with poorer employment, education and standard of living compared to the rest of the population. Instead of institutional accommodation, I wish to work towards a Finland where persons with disabilities have a place to live that they can call their home - a private safe haven for the rest of their lives. There is probably most work yet to be done in the area of inclusion; over the course of history, persons with disabilities have been regarded at times as patients and at others as clients. It is high time we transition to a society of equality and inclusion – an era of perceiving persons with disabilities as fully-fledged human beings. Around the world, the disability rights movement has expressed this sentiment in the phrase "nothing about us without us". The slogan "leave no one behind" was also selected for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Action Plan provides a strong instrument for taking these principles forward also here in Finland.

Minister of Family Affairs and Social Services Annika Saarikko
Helsinki, 13 March 2018

1 Framework: key international documents

1.1 The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Finnish Treaty Series 26 and 27/2016; UNCRPD, Convention) and its Optional Protocol were adopted by Finland in 2016. The purpose of the UNCRPD is to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully and equally enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms, to promote and protect these rights and freedoms as well as to promote the respect for human dignity of persons with disabilities.

In accordance with section 22 of the Constitution of Finland (731/1999), the public authorities shall guarantee the observance of basic rights and liberties and human rights. By ratifying the Convention, Finland is committed to safeguarding the rights determined under the Convention. The UNCRPD is part of the national legislation of Finland. Therefore, the authorities must take into account the implementation and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities in all of their activities.

The UNCRPD comprises 50 articles. It includes cross-cutting Articles, including provisions concerning the purpose, general principles and obligations of the Convention, equality and non-discrimination, women and children with disabilities, raising awareness, accessibility, and definitions with significance to the Convention. This should be taken into account when interpreting the contents of all the Articles.

The other Articles in the Convention contain important provisions regarding national measures to promote the Convention as well as provisions about international cooperation, national monitoring systems, the Convention's international monitoring system and meetings of the parties.

According to the UNCRPD, persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The Convention will raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities which will improve their opportunities to participate in society. Raising awareness will influence the position of the individual through changing attitudes. The Convention will also raise the awareness of persons with disabilities of their rights.

The UNCRPD emphasises the participation of persons with disabilities and organisations representing them on all decision-making that affects them. The Convention guarantees the right of a person with disabilities to live independently as part of the community. Universal services must be accessible to persons with disabilities. Individual specialist services must also be accessible if necessary.

The UNCRPD emphasises the importance of reasonable accommodation to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are respected. Denial of reasonable accommodation is discrimination.

1.2 The UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

The goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations were adopted in 2015. They are valid from the beginning of 2016 until 2030. The Sustainable Development Goals are a continuation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The objective of the goals is to make the world a better place by taking into account the environment, people, human rights as well as economic aspects. These goals are universal, which means they belong to everyone: the state, municipalities, companies and others involved. The goals concern all UN Member States.

The Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasises that all of the goals are important and interlinked. It is impossible to achieve one goal without another, and their achievement requires the input of states, decision-makers and citizens alike.

One of the important goals of the agenda is reducing inequality and promoting peaceful, fair and inclusive societies as well as protecting human rights. The slogan of Agenda 2030 is "Leave no one behind". The aim is to first reach those who have been left furthest behind. Giving a voice to those in the poorest and weakest positions was already given attention in preparing the declaration.

The Sustainable Development Goals take disability and persons with disabilities into account. The goals make reference to disability in total 11 times, especially in the contexts of education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility, data collection and the monitoring of set goals. Although disability is not mentioned in connection with all of the goals, the set goals are significant for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The 2030 Agenda also pays attention to the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities, and it has indeed gained prominence in international disability politics alongside the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The long-term slogan of the disability rights movement, "Nothing about us without us", has been paired with a new one, "Leave no one behind".

2 The national implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

2.1 National implementation and monitoring of the Convention

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health are the national focal points for the implementation of the UNCRPD. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has established a national coordination system, the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The role of the Advisory Board is to ease national implementation of the Convention within central government.

The duties of the autonomous and independent structure as referred to in the Convention are carried out by the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Human Rights Centre and its Human Rights Delegation which form a national human rights institution. The role of this institution is to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of the Convention.

The implementation of the CRPD is monitored internationally by reports delivered periodically by the parties to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The first report is to be submitted two years after the Convention comes into force. From then on reporting will take place every fourth year as well as upon request by the Committee. Civil society has the opportunity to deliver its parallel report to the Committee. The Committee will consider the report and deliver its conclusions and recommendations relating to it.

This monitoring is complemented with the Optional Protocol which enables an individual or group to submit an appeal to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities regarding a breach of his or her rights recognised under the Convention. The Optional Protocol also provides an investigation procedure into serious and systematic breaches on the initiative of the Committee.

2.2 The Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities VANE

Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VANE) is a national coordinating mechanism in accordance with the UNCRPD. Its function is to facilitate the national implementation of the Convention.

The Advisory Board operates under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Provisions on the Board's tasks are laid down in Decree (908/2016), according to which the Board has the duty to promote the national implementation of the UNCRPD as well as to take the rights of persons with disabilities into account in the activities of all administrative branches, and to elect from among its members a representative of persons with disabilities for the tasks of a contact person in accordance with Article 33 of the Convention.

The Advisory Board consists of representatives of ministries, persons with disabilities and their close relatives, labour market organisations as well as representatives from municipalities, counties, and research. The Board comprises a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a maximum of 16 members. The Board also has a Secretary-General and a Planning Officer. The Government appoints the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for four years at a time.

2.3 Preparation of the Action Plan

Provisions on the preparation of the Action Plan are issued in the Government Decree on the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Advisory Board must prepare an Action Plan for its term. The first term is shorter than a nor-

mal four-year period, lasting from 1 January 2017 to 30 April 2019. The Action Plan must determine the key national objectives for promoting the implementation of the Convention, the measures that promote these and necessary monitoring. Different Ministries are committed to its implementation and objectives.

The Action Plan is used for the national implementation of the UNCRPD. Therefore, the obligation laid down in the UNCRPD to fully include persons with disabilities in the entire process through the organisations that represent them must be taken into account in this process. The Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which includes six representatives appointed by disability organisations, coordinates the process for preparing the Action Plan. The Advisory Board has also appointed an action plan working group from among its members, which also includes representatives from different disability organisations.

There was also an interest in consulting disability organisations as well as persons with disabilities to support the preparation of the Action Plan. For this purpose, a hearing was organised for national disability organisations, and included requesting the organisations to identify the most important issues that should be addressed in the first Action Plan. Statements were submitted by 15 disability organisations and speeches were given by 17 organisations at the event.

In addition to the hearing, an electronic survey was conducted. The disability organisations and municipal disability councils were requested to share it forward. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the state of the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities in their daily life from their personal viewpoints as well as those of their close relatives, and to determine priorities for the issues that should be handled in the Action Plan. In total, 577 responses were submitted to the survey; 522 to the version of the survey in Finnish and 55 to the version in Swedish. A summary of the hearing, and a report and a summary of the survey were prepared. These have been taken into consideration in discussions held in connection with preparing the Action Plan and, through this, in preparing measures. This allows providing the relevant authorities with information about the results and the issues that have emerged.

It is known that other means for consulting persons with disabilities should be considered in the future and to also make the hearings more accessible. The fact that not all persons with disabilities are able to respond to an electronic Webropol

questionnaire in standard language must be considered. While the issues addressed in the hearings and surveys are taken into account in the process of preparing the Action Plan, it is simultaneously recognised that the sample is not representative and not all persons with disabilities had an actual opportunity for responding to the questionnaire. The UNCRPD also emphasises that children with disabilities should be heard and practices should be developed for this.

Meetings were held with the ministries with key significance to the rights of persons with disabilities in connection with the preparation of this Action Plan. These ministries included the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Finance. Obligations with significance for each administrative branch were compiled for these meetings, and the action plan working group of VANE prepared initial suggestions for measures to serve as basis for discussion. The meetings were attended by the Secretary-General, Planning Officer, Chair and members of the action plan working group from VANE as well as the public officials in charge of the discussed themes from each ministry.

3 Starting point for preparing the Action Plan

3.1 Government Programme of Prime Minister Sipilä

The Strategic Programme of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government¹ defines a vision for Finland's future: "In 2025, Finland is an inventive, caring and safe country where we all can feel important. Our society is based on trust." The objective is an ethically sustainable balance between the obligations of individuals and the responsibilities of society. Everyone is taken care of and receive help in good time.

The Government's objective is to bring the Finnish economy to a path of sustainable growth and increasing employment, and to secure the funding of public services and social security. The Government will adhere to its long-term objective for balancing general government finances and bridge the sustainability gap of EUR 10 billion. This will be covered with cost savings of EUR 4 billion and reforms of EUR 4 billion enhancing general government finances. The remaining EUR 2 billion will be covered with activities accelerating employment and growth.

In its Government Programme, the Government selected five strategic priorities, which are materialised in the form of 26 key projects. The five strategic objectives include employment and competitiveness, knowledge and education, health and wellbeing, bioeconomy and clean solutions as well as digitalisation, experiments and deregulation. The Government will also implement a pension reform, a

1 The Government Programme is available online at: <http://valtioneuvosto.fi/sipilan-hallitus/hallitusohjelma>

health and social services reform and a regional government reform, reduce the expenditure of general government finances, and reform central administration.

3.2 A summary of the hearing for disability organisations

The hearing for disability organisations was organised to support the implementation of the UNCRPD. The purpose of the hearing was to determine what the disability organisations perceived as the most important issues to promote during the term of the Action Plan. Each of the disability organisations brought up 3–5 issues perceived as the most important to be considered in the preparation of the Action Plan. The themes most frequently addressed in the event have been compiled in this summary.

Accessibility as wide thematic area came up most frequently in the speeches and statements by the organisations. Similarly as under Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the speeches by the organisations also emphasised accessibility in the widest sense of the term. In addition to the physical environment, a lot of focus was put on the accessibility of information.

Many of the speeches made reference to digitalisation and highlighted safeguarding the accessibility of digital services. In the context of digitalisation, accessibility must also be taken into account diversely from the viewpoints of different user groups. The speeches addressed issues such as cognitive accessibility and the user-friendliness of services with special aids for persons with visually impairments. The speakers also emphasised the fact that not everyone is able to use digital services and personal service must be provided to them.

Accessibility also includes the right to have access to information and the right to use services in one's own language, topics which were stressed in many of the speeches. The right to have access to information and use services in Swedish and sign language was highlighted. The importance of using plain language was also stressed.

Similarly, Article 19 of the Convention, Living independently and being included in the community, provided the second most frequently addressed, extensive theme

highlighted in the statements and speeches. In this context, the organisations often referred to housing and the fact that, under the Convention, persons with disabilities should have the opportunity to choose where and with whom they live. Among other issues, the competitive tendering for housing services (see the section on competitive tendering for further details) and the construction of excessively large housing units were perceived as a threat to the implementation of this right. Personal assistance, its development and also enabling its use in the future were named as another service that facilitates independent living.

Many of the organisations put emphasis on the significance of equal education and the right to participate in education under the general educational system, which is also required by the UNCRPD. Other concerns expressed by the organisations included the segregation of education, the currently prepared reform of vocational education and training, the accessibility of learning materials, and sign-language instruction.

Many of the organisations made reference to competitive tendering practices as a particular drawback. These were considered to threaten the right of self-determination, independent living and inclusion of persons with disabilities. A concern for the effects of competitive tendering was particularly expressed in the context of housing services and interpreter services. It is feared that, in the worst case, competitive tendering will threaten the right to life as services vital for people are made subject to the tendering process. There is a worry that the winner of the competitive tendering process will lack the necessary competence and expertise. Most of the speeches suggested setting vital or life-long services apart from the competitive tendering process in accordance with the Act on Public Procurement and Concession Contracts.

A key principle of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities involves the inclusion and consultation of persons with disabilities in connection with the decision-making that concerns them through the organisations representing them. Many of the organisations demanded stronger inclusion practices in connection with the major ongoing reforms, such as the health and social services reform. The municipal and regional disability councils as well as strengthening their role was considered important.

The speeches emphasised the significance of individual, multidisciplinary rehabilitation which Article 26 of the UNCRPD concerns. Addressed topics included the

significance of special aids, high-quality, sufficient and appropriate rehabilitation for children with disabilities, and the equal accessibility and quality of rehabilitation around the country.

3.3 Summary of the survey results

The electronic survey was conducted to support the national implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The intention was to determine how the rights of persons with disabilities were considered to be implemented in daily life, which issues the respondents felt it would be most important to promote, and how the implementation of rights should be promoted. The survey was conducted in the autumn of 2017. It was openly distributed to persons with disabilities, their close relatives as well as the personnel of the disability councils and disability organisations by email. A total of 577 responses were received. A separate report has been published on the survey results.²

Overall, the respondents felt that the rights were secured relatively poorly. Out of all the rights, equal access for persons with disabilities to health services was considered to have been realised best. On the other hand, the respondents perceived there to be a lot of regional differences in this context. The implementation of the right to work and employment on an equal basis with others was considered to have been achieved the worst. Above all, the respondents paid attention to problems with attitudes, which were considered to prevent the implementation of the right.

A need for awareness raising of the rights of persons with disabilities in society was emphasised through all the different sections of the survey. In this context, the respondents called for more training, information provision and influencing attitudes. The topic of ensuring equality in relation to the rest of the population was also addressed. The responses also highlighted the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the decision-making that concerns them, including both the decision-making on

² Hoffrén: A survey on the implementation of rights in the daily life of persons with disabilities. A report of the key survey results. Available online at: <https://vane.to/documents/2308875/2395516/Raportti+kyse-lyn+tuloksista.pdf/e6bd3b12-1554-43b4-8f6a-38a21143e419>

issues such as services at the individual level as well as the level of societal decision-making.

Ensuring accessibility was considered to be a prerequisite for the implementation of other rights and guaranteeing that actual preconditions are met. The respondents wished that accessibility would be considered extensively in a manner taking into account the special needs of different groups of persons with disabilities. The topic of accessible communications also strongly emerged. The respondents addressed issues such as the need for communications in plain language and sign language as well as taking accessibility into account in the context of digital services.

In the survey, the respondents were requested to identify the areas where particular attention should be paid within the following two years. An adequate standard of living and social protection emerged as the most important issue to be presented. In connection with this topic, the respondents especially expressed worry related to persons with disabilities living on minimum income, such as the guarantee pension, who also have a lot of costs caused by their disability or illness.

Living independently and inclusion in society were brought up as the second most important issue to be promoted. The responses emphasised supported decision-making and hearing the opinions of persons with disabilities. The respondents felt that inclusion could be best fostered by providing persons with disabilities with an opportunity to be heard and giving them the help and support that they need.

Independent living as part of a community was considered to be facilitated by an accessible environment and sufficient individual services and an adequate income. Housing services, personal assistance and transport services as well as adequate social protection were also considered important. Competitive tendering, which was considered to reduce inclusion and taking individual needs into consideration was perceived as a threat.

4 Content areas and measures

This section briefly presents the key requirements of the Convention by content areas. Measures from different administrative branches during this programme period and on a longer term have been compiled under the different content areas. Different ministries are committed to implementing the measures which are their responsibility. Any possible appropriation increases for the implementation of the Action Plan will be later agreed on as part of the General Government Fiscal Plan and budget processes.

The four initial content areas (inclusion, non-discrimination and equality of persons with disabilities, raising awareness and knowledge basis as well as accessibility and access to information) are cross-cutting themes which must also be taken into consideration in the implementation of the other Articles.

4.1 The inclusion of persons with disabilities (Article 4.3 of the UNCRPD)

The UNCRPD requires for the decision-making processes concerning persons with disabilities to include discussions with persons with disabilities and involving them in decision-making. Enhancing inclusion occurs through disability organisations. Children with disabilities must also be included in the decision-making that concerns them.

4.1.1 The implementation of inclusion

In Finland, national disability organisations have formed the Finnish Disability Forum, which is the umbrella organisation for around 30 disability organisations. In

addition, Swedish disability organisations form SAMS rf. Most disability organisations are also members of SOSTE, a national umbrella organisation for social and health care organisations. While both individual disability organisations as well as umbrella organisations are regularly consulted in connection with most major legislation and reform projects, inclusion continues to be somewhat coincidental and varies between administrative branches. For example, in key reforms of disability legislation in the field of social and health care, involving and hearing the organisations is already an established procedure. Good practices should be spread and, for instance, the instructions for preparing legislation should include an entry on the inclusion of disabled people in matters that concern them.

Children with disability continue to be heard relatively seldom even though families are included in many respects. Organisations for the parents of children with disability are also active. It is also important to make private service providers understand how important it would be for them to collaborate with disability organisations, for instance, in the context of developing the accessibility of services. For instance, this would reduce the need for reasonable accommodation laid down in the Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014).

The national structures pursuant to Article 33 of the UNCRPD include representatives of persons with disabilities. There is a representative of persons with disabilities in the Focal Point, and the coordination system has five representatives of persons with disabilities and their deputies, in addition to the Vice-Chair, in the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Disability Rights Committee operates as a permanent division in the Human Rights Delegation in connection with an independent mechanism.

Under the Local Government Act (410/2015), every municipality in Finland must set up a disability council on its own or together with one or more municipalities. The local executive must set up a disability council, and it must ensure that people with disabilities and their relatives and disability organisations are adequately represented on the disability council. The local executive must ensure the operational pre-conditions for the disability council.

Disability councils will also be established in the counties that will be established in the future. These structures play a role in ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities provided that they get adequate settings and are supported by both

counties and municipalities. The personal awareness and activity of persons with disabilities is also crucial in determining the actual significance of the councils. The Ministry of Finance, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have collaborated in producing a guide³ to support the establishment of regional disability councils.

However, according to research, persons with disabilities continue to be considerably less involved in society compared to other citizens with the exception of participation in organisational activities⁴. The same trend was also visible in the results of a survey conducted by the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the autumn of 2017. Out of a total of 577 respondents, 317 felt their inclusion was either poorly or relatively poorly realised, while only 99 respondents considered this to have been either well or relatively well achieved.

Studies have indicated that inclusion is prevented by issues such as a poor economic situation as well as other barriers such as the inaccessibility of the environment and services, attitudinal climate, insufficient assistance and support or the lack of adequate possibilities for involvement. Structural reforms in society, including the regional government, health and social services reform, provide an opportunity for developing new channels and forms of inclusion that will allow fostering the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

3 The guide is available online at: <http://alueuudistus.fi/documents/1477425/4064731/Opas+maakunnan+vammaisneuvoston+toimintaan+020118.pdf/9d61ad98-9650-46f4-8a25-92f19a174139>

4 Teittinen & Vesala in the publication by the National Institute for Health and Welfare Osallistuminen, hyvinvointi ja sosiaalinen osallisuus – ATH-tutkimuksen tuloksia [Involvement, wellbeing and social inclusion – results of the ATH survey]. Järjestökentän tutkimusohjelma 2015 [Research programme of the NGO sector 2015]. Available online at: https://www.julkari.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/131489/URN_IS-BN_978-952-302-757-2.pdf?sequence=1

4.1.2 Measures for fostering inclusion

Long-term measures:

1. Developing the practices for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the drafting of legislation and development projects.
Responsible bodies: all ministries
2. Promoting the genuine inclusion of persons with disabilities at the levels of both municipalities and counties. Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the regional government reform. Supporting the operations of municipal and regional disability councils to ensure their opportunities to exert influence through information steering and spreading good practices.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Justice

Measures for the Action Plan period:

3. Ensuring that both disability organisations as well as the disability councils in counties and municipalities are involved in the preparations for the health and social services reform carried out in counties.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
4. Supporting municipalities and counties in establishing disability councils.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and Ministry of Justice
5. Providing accessible information about the participation rights, the new roles of municipalities and counties as well as new e-services. Investigating the need for accessible materials and brochures..
Responsible body: Ministry of Justice
6. Supporting the participation of a representative of the disability organisations in the Conference of States Parties to the UNCRPD.
Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

4.2 Equality and non-discrimination (Articles 5, 6, 7, 12 and 13 of UNCRPD)

Everyone is equal before the law and entitled to equal protection and equal benefits. Efficient availability of legal protection must be ensured for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. Discrimination on the basis of disability is prohibited. The UNCRPD pays particular attention to the status of children and women with disability. They must be entitled to the enjoyment of all rights on an equal basis with others.

4.2.1 The implementation of equality

Finland's Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014) was reformed at the beginning of 2015. The legislative reform included a lot of improvements significant to the legal protection of persons with disabilities, most importantly the consideration of the denial of reasonable accommodation as discrimination under provisions as well as expanding the mandates of the authorities supervising the compliance with the Non-discrimination Act to include discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Under the Non-discrimination Act, the authorities, education providers and employers must assess and promote equality in connection with all prohibited grounds for discrimination, including disability. The Ministry of Justice has prepared instructions and measures in support of equality planning as well as organised training on the contents of the Non-discrimination Act together with other ministries and non-governmental organisations.

Despite the positive development of legislation, there continue to be significant problems in the implementation of equality for persons with disabilities. According to the "My disability makes me a second-class citizen"⁵ report carried out as part of the national monitoring system for discrimination, 60 per cent of the respondents to a survey conducted in connection with the report explained that they had experienced discrimination in some area of life within the past year, while over half of

5 Available online at: https://www.syrjinta.fi/documents/10181/40035/Vammaisselvitys_uusin/2506b079-2a76-4aff-ae1d-5e9728f38657

them felt that the attitudinal climate towards disabled people in Finland was poor or very poor.

The report indicated that people particularly faced discrimination in connection with the provision of services as well as recruitment and at workplaces. Based on the report, exclusion from the labour market and the attitudinal climate in the working life emerge as central problems related to the equality of persons with disabilities and their involvement in society. A survey conducted by VANE in the autumn of 2017 also supported this study finding – 357 out of 577 respondents felt that the non-discrimination of persons with disabilities was realised either poorly or relatively poorly.

Although the reports on discrimination indicated that persons with disabilities experience a lot of discrimination, they did not actively take advantage of the legal measures available for them. According to the report on the discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities, only 20 per cent of those who had encountered discrimination had filed a complaint on the discrimination. Collaboration between law enforcement authorities and disability organisations should be further increased to raise awareness about rights as well as trust in the authorities.

The attitudinal climate also affects the safety experienced by persons with disabilities. According to studies on hate crimes conducted by the Police University College, hate crimes against persons with disabilities comprise 3–5 per cent of all hate crimes. A report investigating hate speech and harassment commissioned by the Ministry of Justice also indicates that persons with disabilities particularly experience harassment and hate speech in public places (streets, parks, bars, public transport), the internet and when using services.

An increase in different events pointing to terrorism also reduce the basic security of persons with disabilities. In these situations, the position of persons with disabilities is often very poor if the persons are unable to detect or understand what is going on around them or if they are unable to move and find shelter.

4.2.2 Measures for fostering equality

Long-term measures:

7. Promoting the equality of persons with disabilities in the operations of ministries.
Responsible bodies: all ministries
8. Increasing the equality and non-discrimination of working life.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
9. Developing the monitoring of discrimination against persons with disabilities as part of a national monitoring system as well as a monitoring mechanism for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities a
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Justice, VANE and the National Institute for Health and Welfare

Measures for the Action Plan period:

10. Implementing training on equality planning and developing training material together with the authorities, non-governmental organisations that represent persons with disabilities and business and commerce.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Justice and VANE
11. Raising the awareness of persons with disabilities on the available legal remedies by providing information and organising training in cooperation with disability organisations.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Justice and Ministry for Foreign Affairs

4.3 Raising awareness and knowledge base (Articles 8 and 31 of the UNCRPD)

Awareness of persons with disabilities must be raised, and stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities must be combated. Statistical data and research knowledge must be compiled for the implementation of the UNCRPD.

4.3.1 The current status of awareness and knowledge base

Awareness and knowledge of disability are closely interlinked. We need knowledge of disability to raise awareness about disability issues. On the other hand, increasing

awareness raises the need for knowledge. Increasing awareness and knowledge is necessary for service providers, authorities and persons with disabilities alike.

Several authorities in Finland are responsible for collecting data about different issues concerning persons with disabilities (including Statistics Finland, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland Kela, National Institute for Health and Welfare). In addition, different authorities, organisations, service providers and researchers collect and/or utilise data. Finland also has some statutory registers, such as the Finnish Register of Visual Impairment.

The need for knowledge about disability is closely related to not only the monitoring of the UNCRPD, but above all the planning, assessment and provision of social and health services. It is of utmost importance that the future counties are aware of the numbers of persons with disabilities in the region and the nature of their disabilities as well as the needs of these persons and how society will take care of them. Data and knowledge are also needed for monitoring the impacts of legislative amendments.

In order to describe the circumstances of persons with disabilities comprehensively, there is a need for exhaustive data collection and analysis. There is also need for understanding on how disability or functional limitations should be determined in each situation. Over the previous couple of decades, several international organisations have actively developed the definitions related to functional limitations, i.e. disability, in research. The aim has been to obtain reliable, comprehensive and comparable data on functional limitations at the global level.

This work has resulted in several different, at times overlapping, recommendations. One of these is the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (WG)⁶, established under the United Nations Statistical Commission, which began its development work in 2001. The activities of WG involve a large number of statistics centres from different countries, other research institutes as well as disability organisations. The National Institute for Health and Welfare represents Finland in WG.

6 Further information online at: <http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/>

Currently, the data of statistical reports published by the National Institute for Health and Welfare has been collected in surveys conducted in municipalities or joint municipal authorities, or register data collected at the level of individuals from social and health services. The National Institute for Health and Welfare also conducts a lot of population surveys.

The statistical reports as well as other reporting are usually formed on a data-oriented approach instead of based on phenomena. As a result, data are distributed between a number of different places, making it potentially difficult to form an overall picture. Therefore, there is need to develop the research on persons with disabilities carried out at universities, for instance. From the perspective of monitoring disability, being able to produce knowledge of temporal changes is key. Therefore, it is important that data is systematically collected and utilised. Comparison with the rest of the population and other phenomena is also essential, and there is therefore need for developing population studies and supplementing these with targeted surveys if necessary.

There continues to be a lack of accurate information on issues such as the number of persons with disabilities in the labour market or children with disability at different levels of education. While information is available on children in need for support and on persons with partial work ability, persons with disabilities hide behind the statistics. In Finland, there is a need for an extensive research and monitoring programme related to disability.⁷

⁷ Source: Disability-related information and information needs – an analysis of data production activities of the National Institute for Health and Welfare <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-302-946-0>

4.3.2 Measures for fostering awareness and knowledge base

Long-term measures:

12. Strengthening the knowledge base concerning persons with disabilities in all administrative branches in support of the implementation of the UNCRPD.
Responsible bodies: all ministries
13. Raising awareness and increasing the knowledge basis on the significance of universal design and accessible construction in new building production and renovations, and as part of systematic property management.
Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment
14. Developing data production methods for the monitoring of the objectives of participatory learning.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and VANE

Measures for the Action Plan period:

15. Raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities at different administrative levels and branches.
Responsible body: VANE
16. Including the perspective of the rights of persons with disabilities in the periodic reporting of conventions on human rights. Encouraging the organisations representing the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in the periodic reporting of conventions on human rights.
Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs
17. Preparing a report on the employment of persons with disabilities and creating tools for monitoring their employment.
Responsible body: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

4.4 Accessibility (Articles 9 and 21 of the UNCRPD)

Persons with disabilities must be guaranteed equal access with others to physical environment, transport, information provision and communications. For instance, access must be ensured to information and communication technology and systems as well as other arrangements and services open or available to the public. The right must be equally realised in both urban and rural areas.

Persons with disabilities must have the right to the freedom of expression and opinion as well as access to information. This includes the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through the form of communication of one's choice. Private entities and mass media must be encouraged to provide information and services in an accessible format.

Information intended for the general public must be provided to persons with disabilities in an accessible format without additional costs. The modes and formats of communication used by persons with disabilities, including sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication must be facilitated in official interactions and information provision.

4.4.1 The implementation of accessibility

Housing is an essential element of the physical environment. The current residential building stock of Finland continues to be somewhat inaccessible. Around 10 per cent of the current housing is accessible. There is a need for more accessible housing, not merely through new construction but also through repairs.

Accessibility regulations have been in place ever since the 1970s for constructions other than residential buildings. However, there are no comprehensive assessments on their accessibility status. Basic solutions on the accessibility of transport are realised in new construction; however, these do not always guarantee equal possibilities to act to all users. There also continues to be a lot of room for development in the accessibility of the visual and auditory environment.

The Government has issued a new decree on the accessibility of buildings (241/2017). The decree entered into force on 1 January 2018. Compared to its previous version, the decree was clarified to facilitate its harmonious application. In the decree, different measures have been presented as unambiguously and requirements as accurately as possible.

Separate requirements have been laid down for the measurements of free space in a lobby, kitchen and toilet and wash rooms in dwellings intended for sheltered living or the supported housing of a person with a mobility or functional impairment. Such a dwelling must also otherwise facilitate assistance and the use of special aids. Exclusively in the context of persons participating in education and training that

entitles them to financial aid under the Act on Financial Aid for Students (65/1994) or in dwellings intended for persons aged 18 to 29 years old, the accessibility decree has been limited to be applied in at least 5 per cent of the toilet and wash room facilities in student housing.

The Ministry of the Environment participates in several training events concerned with the new Accessibility Decree. At the time of drawing up the present Action Plan, application instructions on the decree are under preparation in the Ministry of the Environment. Instructions supporting the decree will be published at the beginning of 2018. A guide to inform planning work, Accessible building and environment, is also currently under preparation.

The Government Decree on the accessibility of construction is also applied in renovation and remodelling subject to a building permit. In this case, the scope of application for residential buildings is limited to the common areas of the residential building. Goal-oriented property management provides instructions on taking accessibility into account even if no measures requiring a building permit are pending. The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) grants subsidies for installing retrofitted lifts and removing impediments to movement. The subsidies enable the access of a person with a physical disability to a residential building, and the dwellings or other facilities located in it. ARA also grants subsidies for the repair of the dwellings of older persons and persons with disabilities with low income.

The Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014) imposes obligations on taking accessibility into consideration. Nonetheless, the Act puts emphasis on reasonable accommodations instead of alterations aiming to improve basic accessibility.

Digitalisation of services is one of the key projects of Prime Minister Sipilä's Government. In order to accomplish this, it is imperative to ensure the accessibility of e-services and related support for those unable to utilise e-services.

The accessibility of digital services is currently only accomplished at certain service points for specific agents and services even though the Suomi.fi website has been active for 15 years by now. Efforts have been launched under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance to make the website a pivotal accessible service channel. The Ministry of Finance is preparing a government proposal for the implementation

of the EU Directive on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies. The aim is to harmonise the requirements for accessibility and legal remedy for the online services of public administration at the level of statutes. The aim is to implement the national legislation beginning on 1 September 2018.

On 1 July 2016, the Ministry of Finance set up the AUTA Project for developing an operating model for supporting the use of e-services through experimental schemes carried out at the regional level. The project was completed at the end of 2017. The final report of the project presents an operating model outlining different forms of support for using digital services around the country in order to help customers who are unable to use digital services on their own. A further aim is to produce support, and the practices and models for good support for those providing different forms of support. Other possible producers of support in using digital services for persons with disabilities include public service info, libraries, one-stop public service points, municipal services, and support services of organisations and companies. In 2018, a smartphone owner will be able to download a message application, which can be used to view messages sent by the authorities as well as to personally submit enquiries to the authorities.

Accessibility also requires taking language rights into account. Section 17 of the Constitution of Finland lays down provisions on the right to one's language and culture. Under the Constitution, the national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish. The right of everyone to use his or her own language, either Finnish or Swedish, before courts of law and other authorities, and to receive official documents in that language, shall be guaranteed by an Act. The public authorities shall provide for the cultural and societal needs of the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking populations of the country on an equal basis. Under the Constitution of Finland, the rights of persons using sign language and of persons in need of interpretation or translation aid owing to disability shall be guaranteed by an Act (Section 17.3).

The legislation of different administrative branches lays down provisions on language rights, including the right to interpretation. For instance, the Act on Interpretation Services for Persons with Disabilities (133/2010) contains provisions on the right of a person with disabilities living in Finland to an interpretation service arranged by National Pensions Institute (Kela). The purpose of the Sign Language Act (359/2015) is to promote the implementation of the language rights of sign lan-

guage users. According to the Sign Language Act, the authorities must promote the opportunities of sign language users to use their own language and obtain information with their own language. In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003), the authorities must use language that is clear, easy to understand and to the point.

Nevertheless, the implementation of language rights continues to be lacking. For instance, while the authorities must promote the opportunities of sign language users for using their own language and obtaining information in their own language, this is not always achieved in practice. The preparation of the Action Plan includes improving the interpretation provided in situations of emergency. Using the emergency number 112 by an SMS has been possible since the beginning of December 2017.

The accessibility obligations also apply to television services. An amendment to the Information Society Code (917/2014) also enables imposing obligations pertaining to audio-subtitling and subtitling services to commercial TV broadcasters. In addition to the audio-subtitling and subtitling obligation continuing to apply to the TV operators with a programming

licence for public interest television broadcasting, the Ministry may use its discretion in imposing the obligation to such commercial TV operators with a significant share of viewers that operate under a regular programming licence. The most recent amendment to the Information Society Code increased the share of programming that must include audio-subtitling and subtitling from 50% to 75% on such a channel.

4.4.2 Measures for fostering accessibility

Long-term measures:

18. Taking accessibility into account in the activities of all administrative branches. Considering physical accessibility in different ways from the viewpoint of persons with disabilities as well as access to communications, materials and systems. Taking multi-channel communications as well as sign language and plain language users into account.

Responsible bodies: all ministries

19. Ensuring the availability of renovation subsidies (subsidies for the renovation of homes for elderly or disabled persons, removing impediments to accessibility and constructing lifts in blocks of flats).

Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment

20. Promoting taking universal design into account and the accessibility of the building stock and living environments through information steering and development activities.

Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment

21. Promoting the opportunities of persons with disabilities to use e-services accessibly while also taking language rights into account.

Responsible body: Ministry of Finance

Measures for the Action Plan period:

22. Implementing the Action Plan "Making digital transport and communication services accessible" through the performance guidance of the areas of responsibility of the administrative branch.

Responsible body: Ministry of Transport and Communication

23. Taking the obligations related of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the implementation of projects related to digitalisation.

Responsible body: Ministry of Finance

24. Promoting the implementation of accessibility and access to information in the health and social services reform.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

25. Highlighting the importance of accessible construction in the communications related to the Accessibility Decree. Taking the obligations of the UNCRPD into account in guides and instructions. Participating in the implementation of accessibility training aimed at designers through cooperation networks.

Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment

4.5 Living independently and inclusion (Articles 12, 14, 19 and 29 of the UNCRPD)

Persons with disabilities must have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others. Persons with disabilities have access to a range of services necessary to support living and inclusion in the community. Such services include residential services and personal assistance. Community services for the general population are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities. Independent living must be supported with specialised services, and measures and accommodation measures.

Support required in decision-making must be provided to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities must be able to effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others.

4.5.1 The implementation of independent living and inclusion

Abolition of institutional housing has been a long-term objective of the disability policy in Finland. In particular, the Kehas programme aimed to promote this goal. By the end of 2016, there were 795 long-term residents in institutions for persons with intellectual disabilities, 17% less than in 2015. Despite the objectives and implementation of the Kehas programme, the reduction in the number of places in institutional care has occurred relatively slowly.

The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) grants investment subsidies for the construction, basic improvement and acquisition of housing intended for persons with intellectual disabilities. The Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA, formerly known as RAY) grants funding for the acquisition of housing to persons with intellectual disabilities. The housing for persons with intellectual disability financed with the investment subsidy granted by ARA have been primarily group homes for 15 or more residents. The challenge is that not enough decentralised housing solutions have been provided and that the services related to housing have not been developed sufficiently with new housing production.

Attention must be paid to developing versatile housing solutions and services that support these, and living in normal housing stock should particularly be promoted.

The housing solutions should always be based on individual need, and the inclusion of persons with disabilities and their close relatives must be at the focus of the implementation of the housing solutions.

Adequate and high-quality services are also an essential element of the implementation of independent living. A disability legislation reform has been pending for several years already. The new legislation, which would replace both the current Disability Services Act and the Act on Special Care for People with Intellectual Disabilities is intended to be brought before the Parliament in the spring of 2018. The new legislation would enter into force in 2020.

Legislation on the right of self-determination is currently under preparation and will similarly be brought before the Parliament in the spring of 2018. Amendments and appendices necessary for the UNCRPD concerning restrictions to the right of self-determination were made to the Act on Special Care for People with Intellectual Disabilities (519/1977) in the summer of 2016. The future regional government, health and social services reform also affects the lives of persons with disabilities. The national legislation continues to exclude supported decision-making; indeed, developing this is a challenge for the coming years.

In connection with political rights, the Ministry of Justice has prepared instructions to ensure the accessibility of voting facilities. The Ministry of Justice provides information of elections in Finnish and Swedish sign language as well as plain language, and finances voting materials intended for persons with visual impairment. The Ministry of Justice has produced election videos in plain language together with different partners. In 2017, a working group of the Ministry of Justice considering online voting noted that although online voting could benefit certain groups such as persons with disabilities, the risks in online voting continue to be considerable.

4.5.2 Measures for fostering independent living and inclusion

Long-term measures:

26. Promoting the implementation of freedom of choice in the specialised services for persons with disabilities.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
27. Developing supported decision-making and related good practices.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Justice
28. Contributing to the abolition of institutional housing by the end of 2020. Contributing to ensuring that the housing production aimed at persons with disabilities facilitates living in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Paying particular attention to the abolition of children's institutional housing.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
29. Contributing to providing persons with disabilities with actual freedom to choose their place and form of residence.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for the Action Plan period:

30. Investigating the good practices for supported decision-making together with disability organisations.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Justice
31. Ensuring that the special needs of persons with disabilities and the obligations pursuant to the UNCRPD are taken into account in the preparation and later implementation of the legislation concerning the right of self-determination.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
32. Ensuring that the new disability legislation and its implementation take into account obligations pursuant to the UNCRPD.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
33. Organising a follow-up meeting for the Kehas programme with an aim to promote the abolition of institutional housing and development of individual housing solutions pursuant to the UNCRPD. Contributing to ensuring that enough different housing solutions that fulfil the needs persons with disabilities are available, particularly as part of the ordinary housing stock.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of the Environment

34. Utilising the results of a survey on the equality of housing for persons with intellectual disabilities in improving their living arrangements.

Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment

35. Specifying the instructions for personal assistance through the Handbook on Disability Services, for instance. Collaborating with experts from disability organisations in this matter.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

36. Supporting the implementation by counties: Ensuring that the special needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account and individual solutions are realised.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

37. Specifying the application instructions for social welfare and disability services to ensure that the privacy of persons with disabilities is respected and their convictions taken into account when appointing assisting and nursing staff.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

38. Raising awareness of the application of the Act on Public Procurement and Concession Contracts to ensure the implementation of the right of persons with disabilities to independent living, necessary services and the right of self-determination.

Responsible bodies: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

4.6 Movement and mobility (Articles 9, 18 and 20 of the UNCRPD)

Persons with disabilities must have an opportunity to the liberty of movement. Persons with disabilities are entitled to personal mobility with the greatest possible independence. The personal mobility of persons with disabilities must be facilitated in the manner and at the time of their choice and by providing them with the necessary reasonable assistance and support. Safeguarding accessible transport and accessible information about the services is also important.

4.6.1 Implementation of the right to independent movement and mobility

The comprehensive reform of the legislation regulating transport services also affects the mobility of persons with disabilities. The first stage of implementing the Act on Transport Services is ongoing and includes, for instance, the deregulation of taxi services in the summer of 2018. The second stage parliamentary proceedings were still ongoing at the time of preparing the present Action Plan. The provisions on taxi services are founded on national legislation. Beginning on 1 July 2018, taxi services will be primarily regulated under the Act on Transport Services (320/2017), which gives a special status for the assistance of a client with disability to ensure a good quality of service.

Transport service providers, including both bus and taxi entrepreneurs, have the duty to ensure that essential information about services and accessible fleet is available for passengers. Separate provisions have been laid down on the technical requirements for accessible vehicles and tax reliefs may also be granted to such fleet in the future.

EU directives on the rights of passengers contain regulations on issues such as the assistance of persons with disabilities and reduced mobility. The scope of the rights somewhat varies between different modes of transport. For instance, provisions on training provided to personnel have so far been laid down in all the other regulations except for the regulation on rail passengers' rights and obligations.

However, an amendment to the regulation of rail transport is pending. The European Commission aims to use the amendment to improve the rights of disabled passengers by means such as increasing the requirements concerning the accessibility of passenger information and setting requirements for the competence of personnel. The amendment also aims to ensure that the rights of passengers will correspond with the changes that have occurred in the operating environment and EU legislation as the railway market has been opened for competition.

A common accessibility directive (European Accessibility Act) is under preparation in the EU. For instance, the proposed Act includes suggestions for the accessibility of all transport services and products used in these, including those concerning passenger rights, mostly in order to improve the status of persons with visual and hearing impairments.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications has prepared the Making digital transport and communication services accessible action programme. The programme proposes measures for the Finnish Transport Agency, Finnish Transport Safety Agency and the Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority for the purpose of mainstreaming digital services in transport and communications, increasing the determination and availability of accessibility information and raising awareness among service providers as well as making daily life easier for persons still unable to use e-services and developing studies on accessible digital services. The programme also puts emphasis on the importance of clarifying legislation and updating instructions.

Many persons with disabilities have unreasonable difficulties in using public transport. In such cases, the aim is to ensure their mobility through transport services in accordance with disability legislation. Legislation concerning transport services will be reformed in connection with the comprehensive reform of disability legislation. There are currently over 100,000 users of passenger transport services in Finland and their numbers should be reduced by developing the accessibility of public transport.

4.6.2 Measures for fostering the right to independent movement and mobility

Long-term measures:

39. Promoting the accessibility of transport and communications.
Responsible body: Ministry of Transport and Communication
40. Monitoring the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities or reduced mobility and the implementation of the rights in accordance with the possible amendments to the regulation on rail passengers' rights and obligations. The Finnish Transport Safety Agency is responsible for the monitoring together with the Consumer Ombudsman.
Responsible body: Ministry of Transport and Communication
41. Assessing the appropriateness of the vehicle tax subsidy for persons with disabilities. Determining the possibility for replacing this by developing the service system of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
Responsible body: Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measure for the Action Plan period:

42. Monitoring the implementation of the Act on Transport Services and following its impacts on the mobility of persons with disabilities in the context of taxi service, for instance.

Responsible body: Ministry of Transport and Communication

4.7 Education (Article 24 of the UNCRPD)

Persons with disabilities are entitled to education on an equal basis with others. Persons with disabilities may not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of their disability. Persons with disabilities must be able to access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education in the communities in which they live. Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirement must be provided for the persons with disabilities. They must receive the support required, within the general education system.

4.7.1 The implementation of equal opportunities for education

The Ministry of Education and Culture launched the New Comprehensive School programme in 2016 aiming at a renewal of comprehensive schools. Three-tier support is used in comprehensive education. The objectives include improving learning outcomes, responding to future competence challenges, renewing pedagogy through experimentations and making learning inspiring through the course of people's lives. Tutor teachers support the renewal of pedagogy.

The Oppiva Suomi ('Learning Finland') team has started working in connection with the Finnish National Agency for Education, has the duty to support the renewing ecosystem and promote a culture of experimentation in education. Fostering an operating culture that responds to the challenges of the present time is important to prevent education from separating itself into an institution disconnected from the rest of society. Competence in recognising and intervening in mechanisms of social exclusion is fostered by developing teacher education.

As a starting point, the support for the learning of children and young people, pre-primary education and school attendance as well as student welfare services

form an entity. The aim is to provide sufficient support for learning and school attendance for every child and young person as soon as the need arises. The purpose of this support is to prevent problems from getting more complicated and profound as well as avert their long-term impacts.

In pre-primary education and during school days, the interaction between children, young people and group teachers should be close. The support is primarily based on pedagogical expertise and cooperation with the home as well as multidisciplinary cooperation between teachers and other professionals providing support in detecting need for support, assessing support as well as planning and implementing support. The significance of cooperation between home and school is emphasised in the implementation of the support for children and young people.

Student welfare is closely connected to the educational and teaching task of pre-primary education and schools. As the development environment of children and young people and the operating environment of pre-primary education and school are changing, pupil welfare has become an increasingly important part of the basic activities of the school. The best interest of the child and young person are the starting points of student welfare work. In pre-primary education and schools, this is used to promote the learning, health, welfare and inclusion of children and young people and ensuring early support for those who need it. Student welfare is based on its implementation as a primarily preventive and communal pupil welfare supporting the entire pre-primary education and school community. In connection with pupil welfare, children and young people have an opportunity for individual pupil welfare, including school physician and public health nurse services as well as school psychologist and welfare officer services.

In order to implement the support for learning and school attendance for children and young people, education providers, schools and teachers often need competence from outside. Particularly in the context of the implementation of more demanding support, municipalities not only have major need for external consultation but also for consultation visits, implementation of different support episodes for children and young people, assessment of functional ability, carrying out rehabilitation, preparing individual materials as well as needs related to supported housing.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is about to launch VIP guidance and service networks conforming with the five collaborative catchment areas of the health and

social services reform. The purpose of the networks is to support the opportunities for municipalities and private education providers to utilise the competence in hospital schools, Elmeri schools, reform schools, research and education units in special pedagogics at universities as well as the competence of Valteri Centre for Learning and Consulting.

The purpose of the VIP activities is to update, develop and establish the organisation of the cooperation of education providers in demanding special support. The networks have the duty to develop demanding special support, supporting and guiding the schools of municipal and private education providers in questions concerning demanding specialised support in their area as well as to consult individual teachers in planning, implementing and assessing demanding specialised support.

The reform of vocational education and training is one of the Government's key projects. The reform of vocational education involves reforming the legislation concerning the operations of the entity of vocational education and training. This includes repealing the Act on Vocational Education (630/1998) and Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998) and enacting the new act on vocational education and training (531/2017). The act on vocational education and training and the decrees laid down on the basis of the act will enter into force on 1 January 2018. Competence-basis and customer orientation are starting points.

The act on vocational education and training also includes renewing the financing, guidance and operating processes, degree system and structures of education and training providers. These renewals are needed as the entire operating environment is changing. The renewal is unavoidable as new kind of competence and proficiency is required in the working life of the future.

The objective of the reform of vocational education and training is to enable flexible access to training via different application channels and safeguard a study place to every person finishing basic education, including the applicants in need of demanding special support. The education and training for those in need of special support is primarily organised together with others in vocational education and training. The free right to apply to education and training enables those in need of demanding specialised support to study in a vocational special education institution.

The aim is to find a degree or education or training which best suits the individual and enables the person to find employment after the completion of studies or otherwise meaningful work or life (vocational qualification, preparatory education for vocational training Valma or preparatory training for work and independent living Telma). Personal competence development plans are prepared for students. The different needs of individuals, including their need for support and guidance, need for special support, and need for studies supporting study skills or preparatory training, are taken into account as part of the plans. Learning under a training agreement is realised with the help of necessary support and guidance or special support at workplaces, which promotes students in finding employment after their studies.

Exceptions can be made on the qualification criteria by adjusting the assessment of competence for those studying for a vocational upper secondary qualification. The need for reasonable accommodation in accordance with the Non-discrimination Act must also be taken into account in the training. There is an aim of increasing the inclusion of students and hearing students, e.g. through a student body.

A group for developing demanding specialised support in vocational education and training will be established to support the implementation of the reform, whose task is to promote the cooperation between different actors and determining the challenges and needs related to the implementation of vocational education and training for students in need of demanding special support. Suggestions for developing demanding specialised support and a report aiming to improve the education and training opportunities for students in need of demanding specialised support will be prepared as part of this work.

4.7.2 Measures for fostering equal opportunities for education and training

Long-term measures:

43. Monitoring the implementation of inclusive education under Article 24 of the UNCRPD in the implementation of legislation for all levels of education.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

44. Enabling persons with disabilities to have access to education and training and allowing them to participate in education and training in a manner that takes their individual needs into account and enables necessary support services.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

45. Promoting equal opportunities for education and training as well as the acquisition of competence at different stages of life according to education and training needs from the perspective of lifelong learning (degrees, parts of degrees, re-education, supplementing competence etc.)

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

46. Promoting the equal participation of persons with disabilities in early childhood education and care, basic education, general upper secondary education, vocational education and training, liberal adult education and higher education by raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

47. Raising awareness of the possibilities for reasonable accommodation in education and training in accordance with the Non-discrimination Act.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

Measures for the Action Plan period:

48. Contributing to taking special needs of children and young people into account in the Finnish Schools on the Move programme.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

49. Promoting and following the preparation of equality plans in education and training.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

50. Collecting and spreading good practices of inclusive instruction.

Responsible body: Finnish National Agency for Education

51. Promoting the utilisation of accessible technology in education and training as well as in the guidance and communications concerning education (including special aids and accessible digital learning environments).

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

52. Promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the work of pupil and student bodies.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

4.8 Health and rehabilitation (Articles 25 and 26 of the UNCRPD)

Persons with disabilities have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health without discrimination on the basis of disability. Persons with disabilities must be provided with the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable services as provided to other persons. Persons with disabilities are also entitled to the health services that they need particularly due to their disability. The health services must be provided as close as possible to people's own communities, including in rural areas.

Comprehensive rehabilitation services must be provided to persons with disabilities, for instance, through peer support, to enable persons with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence, full physical, mental and social ability, and full inclusion and participation in all aspects of life.

4.8.1 Implementation of equal access to rehabilitation and health services

The ongoing regional government, health and social services reform also affects the access of persons with disabilities to health services. When enacted, the legislation concerning the freedom of choice will also affect persons with disabilities. In the future, direct-choice services and unincorporated county enterprise services will also increase the opportunities for persons with disabilities to choose the health care that suits them the best. The equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to choose services may be restricted by, for instance, accessible possibilities for mobility or lack of accessible information on the available services.

One of the objectives of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government was implementing a comprehensive reform of rehabilitation. The current legislation on rehabilitation is comprised of a number of acts concerning service and insurance systems enacted at different times. Over past decades, the system has formed into a fragmented entity where partial systems have different, at times overlapping, functions from the perspective of the whole. Separate provisions on the tasks of different agents related to rehabilitation and the division of responsibilities and funding in rehabilitation are laid down in the legislation concerning each agent.

The reform is concerned with the development of the legislation, guidance and cooperation processes of the development of the medical, social and vocational rehabilitation whose aim is to improve access to rehabilitation and the effectiveness of rehabilitation. For this reform, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health set up a rehabilitation reform committee in the autumn of 2016. Suggestions prepared by the committee were submitted to the ministry in November 2017.

The 55 proposals by the committee are concerned with the rehabilitation process and a common operating model for rehabilitation, including the processes of rehabilitation at different stages of life, as well as the provision of rehabilitation. Proposals on the provision of special aids services have also been made. Other proposals concerning the rehabilitation system deal with the information system, training for rehabilitation, research and development, and incentives.

Based on the proposal, the responsibility for the provision and funding of the medical and social rehabilitation of social and health care would be transferred to counties. For the time being, National Pensions Institute (Kela) will organise demanding medical rehabilitation and rehabilitation psychotherapy until decisions have been made on the final content of the health and social services reform, the reform of multisource financing and the appeal systems concerning rehabilitation. The committee also proposes regional experiments and their assessment.

Proposals concerning the rehabilitation process of persons of working age are concerned with issues such as clarification of the role of occupational health care, regular assessment of the rehabilitation need as well as legislative adjustments to acts. In connection with the provision of rehabilitation, it is proposed that persons with long-term unemployment and partial work ability as well as persons on a disability pension are taken into account when organising growth services. The most essential contents requiring further examination include studies on appeals on social and health care and rehabilitation services, the legal protection of clients, and the development of incentives.

According to the committee, the arrangements for special aid services and renovations must create clear ground rules between actors at the level of the entire country, regions and counties. Special aid centres in counties coordinate all special aids services (including service voucher) and renovation work in the local region. They

can make arrangements for short-term borrowing of necessary special aids related to the treatment of illness on an on-call basis.

At the moment, the decision-making processes (legal protection and appeals) concerning special aids vary under different statutes. Medical rehabilitation aids are provided pursuant to the Health Care Act. The renovation work, instruments, machinery and equipment in accordance with the Disability Services Act will also be transferred to the new legislative proposal on disability services, where the right of appeal has been retained.

Based on a proposal by the committee, the special aids of vocational rehabilitation can be transferred as part of the legislation on disability services under section 8 of the Act on the Social Insurance Institution of Finland's Rehabilitation Benefits and Rehabilitation Allowance Benefits. If this is carried through, the fact that not all persons with disabilities fall under the scope of the legislation on disability services must be taken into account. Therefore, it is vital to also ensure the availability of vocational rehabilitation aids for these persons under other legislation. This requires applying a customer-oriented approach in assessing needs and cross-sectoral collaboration in organising special aids as well as clear regulation on the responsibility for organising the services (responsibilities of health and social services, education and growth services).

Special aids related to studies and work have been related to the vocational rehabilitation offered by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland. The proposal would transfer the responsibility for organising the services to the counties. The currently prepared national criteria for the provision of special aids has not taken this possibly oncoming change into account.

4.8.2 Measures for fostering the access to rehabilitation and health services

Long-term measure:

53. Ensuring the access of persons with disabilities to rehabilitation and health services in accordance with the UNCRPD.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for the Action Plan period:

54. Taking obligations under the UNCRPD into account in the comprehensive reform of rehabilitation in accordance with the Government Programme.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

55. Guaranteeing sufficient and high quality special aid services by specifying the criteria for the provision of special aids and improving legal protection.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

4.9 Work and employment (Article 27 of the UNCRPD)

Persons with disabilities are entitled to work on an equal basis with others. They have the right to gain a living by work freely chosen. The work environment must be open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. The right to work must also be ensured for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment.

4.9.1 The implementation of equal work and employment

According to a survey conducted by VANE, out of all disability rights, the right to work is realised the worst in Finland. While no precise numbers are available on the employment rate of persons with disabilities, studies on the social status of persons with visual impairment carried out by the Finnish Register of Visual Impairment have noted that only slightly over 20% of the working-aged persons with visual impairment are in full-time employment.

Around 1.9 million Finns of working age, i.e. over half of the working-age population have a long-term disease or injury. Of them, 600,000 evaluate that their disease or injury affect their work or opportunities for work⁸. People with partial work ability are also at a higher risk of unemployment than other people. Injury or long-term illness often prevents a return to work or to getting a job in the first place.

⁸ Labour force survey of Statistics Finland, 2011

At the end of November 2017, there were in total 33,625 unemployed persons with partial work ability in a customer relationship with Employment and Economic Development Office (TE Office). This is 5,647 (14.4 %) fewer than at the same time in the previous year. Despite this positive development, the employment of persons with partial work ability is increasing at a slower rate compared to persons with full work ability. As no register is kept of persons with disabilities in Finland, no up-to-date information on the employment or unemployment rates of the group is available. At the moment, such information must be obtained with separate studies whose data concerns the provision of a specific benefit or service.

The key project Career opportunities for persons with partial work ability (see below), which has collaborated with a working group to address inequality issues led by Juho Saari, has obtained research data on the working life inclusion and entrepreneurship of those receiving a care allowance for a pensioner or a disability allowance for persons aged 16 years or over from the Social Insurance Institution of Finland. Out of the persons whose disability has been categorised in these ways, 38.4% have been in full-time employment and 31.0% in part-time employment during the previous two years. Out of the respondents who had been employed, 53.5% were satisfied with their current working hours/time and only 13.2% wished for an increase in their working hours. Out of those interested in joining the workforce, 26.1% wished for full-time employment and 25.1% for part-time employment. 33% of the respondents considered themselves unable to work. The rest of the respondents wished to work occasionally at most.

Career opportunities for people with partial work ability is one of the key projects of Prime Minister Sipilä's Government. The project seeks solutions to improve the position of persons with partial work ability in being able to continue in the working life or fare better at finding employment in the open market. The key project (2016–2018) includes eight projects which create and test new measures for supporting the employment and inclusion of persons with partial work ability.

The Career opportunities for people with partial work ability disseminates the models supporting the employment of persons with partial work ability, which were developed in the Osku programme for persons with partial work capacity (2013–2015). For example, work and working conditions can be adapted to ensure that a person's disability or illness has no effect on his or her ability to work. The competence of professionals working in the services for people with partial work ability is

developed by organising training for work ability coordinators around Finland. The OSKU online service⁹ includes topical information about the services and benefits related to partial work ability, the effectiveness of the measures as well as research and up-to-date legislation.

A study was conducted of the factors preventing and promoting entrepreneurship of persons with disabilities and partial work ability¹⁰. In addition, the key project has obtained further information through research materials acquired through the aforementioned working group to address inequality issues led by Juho Saari. This material and the proposals of a study by the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities are used as the basis for concrete measures promoting the entrepreneurship of persons with disabilities together with labour market organisations, entrepreneur organisations and disability organisations.

A research project investigating the views of employers on the opportunities and barriers for persons with partial work ability in finding employment was carried out as part of a national ESF project, Work ability coordinator pilots for promoting the employment of persons with partial work ability coordinated by the Southwest Finland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the environment (ELY Centre). The project was funded by the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. According to the study, most companies perceive motivation to work as the most important criterion and quality, even when a jobseeker is a person with partial work ability. A disability or an illness is therefore not the deciding factor when hiring new employees. Based on the study, it appears that attitudes towards partial ability to work are taking a more positive turn. Measures for lowering the threshold for recruitment will be implemented based on the recommendations of the study. Information about and examples of well-functioning solutions and models will be disseminated to employers, for instance, in the form of regional training.¹¹

The operating models and culture of the services required by persons with partial work ability as well as related legislation will be reformed to allow persons with

9 Further information: www.tietyoelamaan.fi

10 Publications by the Government's analysis, assessment and research activities 22/2017

11 Publications of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment Publications 42/2017.

disabilities and partial work ability to have access to the services they need more efficiently than currently. Another aim is for an increasing number of persons with partial work ability to be able to proceed on their path for finding employment. The reform is concerned with the training for work activities of, e.g. persons with physical and intellectual disabilities. The objectives and working approaches of the activities will be changed so that the aim is more on work under an employment contract. The intention is to change the training for work activities carried out at companies (known as community employment of disabled people) to work trials on a fixed-term basis. A timely and customer-oriented operating model for supporting work ability used in treatment and rehabilitation will also be created for persons with partial work ability. The operating models will be developed in regional experiments.

In the Career opportunities for people with partial work ability, a tripartite working group prepared a report on reducing incentive traps related to partial work ability. The working group proposed a so-called linear model, which refers to combining pension and earned income and where the income reduces the pensions currently being paid in a straightforward manner. As a result of the linear model, a raise in the work income will increase the amount of gross income and will not lead to incentive traps.

As part of the regional government reform, which has been proposed to come into force in 2020, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Health is preparing a reform of growth services and related legislation. The reform will transfer the task of the current ELY Centres, TE Offices and regional councils to counties, clarifying services and increasing their customer-orientation. The intention is to submit government proposals for legislation on regional development and growth services as well as regulations concerning the growth services to the Parliament in the spring of 2018.

Some of the growth services would be organised at the national and others at the county level. All services should be implemented as harmonised and appropriate entities. The counties would be responsible for organising sufficient growth services promoting the opportunities for unemployed persons to find work at the county level. A future possibility for counties to provide services corresponding to the needs of clients can foster equality among clients. The counties must follow the international obligations that bind Finland, and the state may impose obligations related to these for the counties. In particular, these obligations include equality in the availability of services as well as the non-discriminating treatment of different

client groups and individual clients. Their implementation will be annually evaluated in a dialogue between the state and counties.¹²

4.9.2 Measures for fostering equal employment and access to work

Long-term measures:

56. Reducing the gap in the employment rates of persons with and without disabilities.
 - a. Reducing the length of the unemployment of persons with disabilities to correspond with other jobseeker groups. The reasons for ending client relationships must better correspond with the distribution of other jobseeker groups.
 - b. Increasing registration as jobseekers among persons with disabilities.
 - c. Increasing registration as jobseekers among persons with disabilities.

Responsible body: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

57. Ensuring that persons with disabilities will be provided with the support they need for finding employment in the new service structures.

Responsible body: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

58. Raising awareness about the available services and forms of support among employers.

Responsible body: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

59. Reducing incentive traps preventing the employment of persons with disabilities.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for the Action Plan period:

60. Adapting working conditions at workplaces is promoted as part of the Career opportunities for people with partial work ability key project.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

¹² Further information: <http://tem.fi/aluekehittamis-ja-kasvupalvelulakiuudistus> (draft acts on regional development and growth services in October 2017) <http://tem.fi/kasvupalvelun-sisaltolait-marraskuussa-2017> (draft acts on growth services in November 2017)

61. Renewing legislation on training for work activities for persons with physical and intellectual disabilities as part of the Career opportunities for people with partial work ability key project. Laying down more detailed provisions on the training for work activities carried out at workplaces (known as community employment of disabled people).

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

62. Reducing incentive traps relating to disability pension and earned income by preparing a government proposal on legal reforms caused by the so-called linear model as part of the Career opportunities for people with partial work ability key project.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

4.10 Adequate standard of living and social protection (Article 28 of the UNCRPD)

Persons with disabilities must be ensured an adequate standard of living and social protection for themselves and their families. Their right to adequate food, clothing and housing must be recognised. Ensuring access to affordable services, devices and other assistance for needs related to disability is key.

4.10.1 Implementation of an adequate standard of living and social protection

Persons with disabilities have often low income and face a lot of extra costs and customer payments caused by their disability despite compensations. The Act on Guarantee Pensions has been valid since 2011 (703/2010). A guarantee pension has been introduced to ensure an income for persons with low incomes. There have been aims to revise the extent of the guarantee pension from time to time; at increase of some EUR 15 was added to the guarantee pension at the beginning of 2018, raising the total guarantee pension to around EUR 775.27. The minimum amount of rehabilitation allowance for young people and the rehabilitation allowance for persons in vocational rehabilitation was also increased to correspond with the amount of the guarantee pension.

Payment caps have been introduced to ensure the adequacy of the income of those who need a lot of services. Nevertheless, client fees cause financial difficulties for those in need of a lot of services. Reforming client fees is considered in a working group established by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. For example, the co-payment of travel costs related to health care reimbursed under health insurance schemes is currently EUR 25 per each trip, which causes difficulties for persons with disabilities in need of therapies, for instance, at the beginning of the year before the payment cap has been reached.

The TOIMI project is carried out by the Prime Minister's Office. The project aims at preparing a comprehensive reform of basic security which improves employment and activity and reduces inequality.

The project includes preparing several alternative models for the comprehensive reform.

4.10.2 Measures for fostering adequate standard of living and social protection

Long-term measures:

63. Ensuring the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living and social protection.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

64. Examining and developing the entity of client fees and copayments to ensure that it is clear and the fee burden to clients is reasonable and does not prevent them from using services.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for the Action Plan period:

65. Taking the obligations of the UNCRPD into account in issues pertaining to client fees, pharmaceutical reimbursements and travel reimbursements as well as any changes that concern these. Ensuring the right of persons with disabilities to adequate social protection in connection with the reforms.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

66. Contributing to ensuring that the obligations of the UNCRPD are taken into account in the preparation of the comprehensive reform of social protection (the TOIMI project).

Responsible body: Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

67. Paying attention to issues such as an opportunity to reduce and alleviate client fees in the implementation of the Act on client fees in social welfare and health care.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

4.11 Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (Article 30 of the UNCRPD)

Persons with disabilities are entitled to participate in cultural life, and develop their creative, artistic and intellectual potential and understanding. It is key to ensure the accessibility of facilities and services as well as equal opportunities for participation.

Persons with disabilities are entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture.

4.11.1 Implementation of equal participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

The goal state of the Strategy for Cultural Policy 2020 is that cultural and library services are accessible and available to all on an equal basis, and the inclusion of different population groups and their opportunities for cultural pursuits are realised in the Finnish cultural scene. A guide on the accessibility of cultural events was published in 2015. Opportunities for persons with disabilities to consume and produce culture have been promoted in multiple ways, for instance, by improving accessibility and granting their assistants free access to cultural and sport events. The EU Disability Card, which will be made available in the summer of 2018, is prone to increase these opportunities. However, only few cultural and sport events are provided in sign language and descriptive interpretation.

The aim of the National Sports Council is to assess the impacts of the central government measures in the area of sport. This assessment task refers to making visible the objectives, measures and resourcing as well as the outcomes and impacts of the measures in all areas of responsibility. Based on the assessment, the Council must make proposals on the promotion and development needs of exercise and sport as part of the central government activities during each term.

The assessment by the National Sports Council is constructed on four central content areas, namely the promotion of physical activity, engagement in independent and guided physical activity or leisure time physical activity, civic action related to physical activity as well as top-level sports. The premises of equality and non-discrimination are also assessed in connection with all of these content areas. Central government is responsible for creating preconditions for the population to engage in wide-ranging physical activity and top-level sports.

The implementation of the rights and opportunities of persons with disabilities related to the physical activity, engaging in exercise or top-level sports require for the Council to take questions of equality and non-discrimination extensively into account when processing central government objectives, measures, resourcing as well as performance and effects of the activities in different areas.

There is an ongoing assessment of adapted physical activity, one of whose areas concerns the opportunities for persons with disabilities to exercise as well as engage in physical activity and competitive and top-level sports. The assessment is comprised of seven entities, including issues such as recommendations for developing central government steering, knowledge base and an impact assessment system as well as increasing collaboration between different actors. The assessment will be carried out between September 2017 and March 2018.

4.11.2 Measures for fostering equal participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

Long-term measures:

68. Promoting the equal participation of persons with disabilities in exercise, art and culture as well as youth work activities by raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

69. Paying an increasing amount of attention to the implementation of equality and putting it into practice in subsidy programmes for practical implementation and in information steering.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

Measures for the Action Plan period:

70. Taking children and young people and their special needs into account in the Harrastustakuu ('Recreational activity guarantee') programme.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

71. Assessing the measures and policy instruments of the central government related to the daily exercise, physical activity and top-level sports of persons with a mobility or functional impairment.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture and National Sports Council

4.12 International cooperation (Articles 11, 32 and 33 of the UNCRPD)

The rights of persons with disabilities must also be ensured in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflicts humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters. The participation of persons with disabilities in international cooperation must be supported. Development activities must be supported by means including the exchange and sharing of information, experiences, training programmes and best practices internationally.

4.12.1 Implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities in international cooperation

The implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities is one of the focus areas of Finland's human rights policy and a cross-cutting goal in the country's development policy. The objective is to foster the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities through means such as supporting the involvement of persons with disabilities in political decision-making in both Finland and internationally. The rights of persons with disabilities are taken into account as part of international promotion of human rights by the EU, UN, the Council of Europe, OSCE and also other international organisations according to possibilities.

The views of persons with disabilities and the organisations that represent them will be taken into account as extensively as possible when forming Finland's policies. Hearings will be held within the framework of the International coordination working group for disability policy led by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for instance. The rights of persons with disabilities are highlighted in addresses held by different organisations in Finland as well as in negotiations on resolutions. Marko Vuoriheimo, also known as Signmark, serves as a special representative of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in questions concerning the rights of persons with disabilities.

According to Finland's report on development policy, persons with disabilities must be taken into account in all activities. Finland actively promotes the rights of persons with disabilities in international forums, in its efforts in exerting influence and by implementing an approach based on human rights in a development according to which all Finland's development cooperation projects must make sure that human rights principles, including non-discrimination, accessibility, inclusion and involvement, and transparency, are implemented.

Finland is committed to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities through three primary channels: through special projects, mainstreaming as well as political influence and dialogue. Finland finances projects that promote the rights of persons with disabilities around the globe. In order to strengthen related financial monitoring, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs introduced the so-called disability funding marker in 2016. Disability funding is also developed as a more strategic part of the development policy.

The world has around a billion persons with a physical or intellectual disability who are among the most vulnerable people at the occurrence of a humanitarian crisis. In a crisis, persons with disabilities often end up being discriminated against and are often left without the necessary help, services and information. For example, if access to information is insufficient, information about evacuations or other security measures may not reach persons with disabilities in time. According to studies, the number of persons with disabilities perishing in natural disasters and conflicts has been estimated to be four times higher than persons without disabilities. Women and girls are at a particularly high risk at becoming victims of sexual violence as well as abuse and intersectional discrimination.

In recent years, Finland has been paying particular attention to the status of persons with disabilities in humanitarian crises. Finland has also strengthened taking into account the status of persons with disabilities, especially in the context of refugees. A total of EUR 2 million has been allocated for 2014– 2017 to implement the project.

Since the beginning of 2014, World Vision Finland has carried out operations in refugee camps in Uganda, Kenya and Iraq with the humanitarian assistance funding of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The focus of the operations has been to improve the availability of clean water and sanitation possibilities to ensure the recognition of the right and possibility of persons with disabilities living in the camps to more independent life. The humanitarian projects of other organisations have also included components supporting the status of persons with disabilities, such as FinnChurch Aid and Finnish Red Cross. Finnish organisations have also used the expertise of disability organisations in planning humanitarian aid.

As a result of the advocating by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), a network for cooperation of humanitarian assistance, has started developing guidelines dealing with the status of persons with disabilities in the context of humanitarian action. This process widely affects the practices of the agents involved in humanitarian aid. Finland financially supports the preparation of the guidelines. The instructions create standards for good practices and strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency and human rights basis for humanitarian aid.

4.12.2 Measures for fostering the rights of persons with disabilities in international cooperation

Long-term measure:

72. Working actively in favour of mainstreaming the perspective of persons with disabilities in the policies and programmes of UN organisations and Finnish non-governmental organisations concerning humanitarian aid.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Measures for the Action Plan period:

73. Actively highlighting the rights of persons with disabilities in the operations of international organisations, including the EU, UN, the Council of Europe, OSCE and other international organisations if possible as well as different global political processes and negotiations, including the framework on the rights of refugees and migrants.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

74. Continuing providing political and, if possible, also financial support for the activities of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the work on disability by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

75. Linking the promotion of persons with disabilities more closely with the focus areas, objectives and performance reports of the development policy, and developing follow-up indicators for disability funding.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

76. Continuing advocating with UN organisations, for instance, by highlighting the need to appoint a person in charge of disability issues in the boards of directors of UN organisations, allocate funds to disability activities and acquire the necessary know-how.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

77. Putting emphasis on disability activities in humanitarian crises. Finland financially supports the humanitarian aid work of UN organisations and Finnish organisations and is engaged in active dialogue with them about the mainstreaming of the disability perspective.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

78. Continuing supporting the UN Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and its implementation in the activities of the organisations.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

79. Taking the rights of persons with disabilities into account in the training on human rights organised by the Ministry. In addition, better integrating the rights of persons with disabilities in the training on the cross-cutting objectives and the implementation of a human rights-based approach.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

80. Promoting the status of sign language in the Council of Europe, particularly during the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (from November 2018 to May 2019).

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

81. Under Article 35 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, preparing the first interim report on the implementation of the Convention for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Taking the participation of organisations representing persons with disabilities into account in accordance with Article 4(3) of the Convention.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

82. Fostering the involvement of persons with disabilities in planning and implementing development cooperation.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

5 Monitoring

The current term of office of the Advisory Board for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (VANE) will last until the end of April 2019. The duration of the measures set for this term of office is shorter than regularly. VANE coordinates the monitoring of the implementation of the measures. The parties responsible for the different measures report on the progress of the measures at the end of the Action Plan period. The Ministries have also been asked to reflect on the indicators which could be used for monitoring the implementation of the measures.

In the future, as VANE will operate based on four-year terms, the monitoring will occur in two stages: interim monitoring and reporting will take place midway through the term and another monitoring will be implemented at the end of the term.

Appendix 1 List of measures

Measures for fostering inclusion

Long-term measures:

1. Developing the practices for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the drafting of legislation and development projects.
Responsible bodies: all ministries
2. Promoting the genuine inclusion of persons with disabilities at the levels of both municipalities and counties. Ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the regional government reform. Supporting the operations of municipal and regional disability councils to ensure their opportunities to exert influence through information steering and spreading good practices.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Justice

Measures for the Action Plan period:

3. Ensuring that both disability organisations as well as the disability councils in counties and municipalities are involved in the preparations for the health and social services reform carried out in counties.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
4. Supporting municipalities and counties in establishing disability councils.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Justice
5. Providing accessible information about the participation rights, the new roles of municipalities and counties as well as new e-services. Investigating the need for accessible materials and brochures.
Responsible body: Ministry of Justice
6. Supporting the participation of a representative of the disability organisations in the Conference of States Parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Measures for fostering equality

Long-term measures:

7. Promoting the equality of persons with disabilities in the operations of ministries.
Responsible bodies: all ministries
8. Increasing the equality and non-discrimination of working life.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.
9. Developing the monitoring of discrimination against persons with disabilities as part of a national monitoring system as well as a monitoring mechanism for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Justice, VANE and the National Institute for Health and Welfare

Measures for the Action Plan period:

10. Implementing training on equality planning and developing training material together with the authorities, non-governmental organisations that represent persons with disabilities and business and commerce.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Justice and VANE
11. Raising the awareness of persons with disabilities on the available legal remedies by providing information and organising training in cooperation with disability organisations.
Responsible body: Ministry of Justice and Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Measures for fostering awareness and knowledge base

Long-term measures:

12. Strengthening the knowledge base concerning persons with disabilities in all administrative branches in support of the implementation of the UNCRPD.
Responsible bodies: all ministries
13. Raising awareness and increasing the knowledge basis on the significance of universal design and accessible construction in new building production and renovations, and as part of systematic property management.
Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment
14. Developing data production methods for the monitoring of the objectives of participatory learning.
Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and VANE

Measures for the Action Plan period:

15. Raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities at different administrative levels and branches.
Responsible body: VANE
16. Including the perspective of the rights of persons with disabilities in the periodic reporting of conventions on human rights. Encouraging the organisations representing the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in the periodic reporting of conventions on human rights.
Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs
17. Preparing a report on the employment of persons with disabilities and creating tools for monitoring their employment.
Responsible body: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

Measures for fostering accessibility and access to information

Long-term measures:

18. Taking accessibility into account in the activities of all administrative branches. Considering physical accessibility in different ways from the viewpoint of persons with disabilities as well as access to communications, materials and systems. Taking multi-channel communications as well as sign language and plain language users into account.
Responsible bodies: all ministries
19. Ensuring the availability of renovation subsidies (subsidies for the renovation of homes for elderly or disabled persons, removing impediments to accessibility and constructing lifts in blocks of flats).
Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment
20. Promoting taking universal design into account and the accessibility of the building stock and living environments through information steering and development activities.
Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment
21. Promoting the opportunities of persons with disabilities to use e-services accessibly while also taking language rights into account.
Responsible body: Ministry of Finance

Measures for the Action Plan period:

22. Implementing the Action Plan "Making digital transport and communication services accessible" through the performance guidance of the areas of responsibility of the administrative branch.
Responsible body: Ministry of Transport and Communication

23. Taking the obligations related of the UNCRPD in the implementation of projects related to digitalisation.
Responsible body: Ministry of Finance
24. Promoting the implementation of accessibility and access to information in the health and social services reform.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
25. Highlighting the importance of accessible construction in the communications related to the Accessibility Decree. Taking the obligations of the UNCRPD into account in guides and instructions. Participating in the implementation of accessibility training aimed at designers through cooperation networks.
Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment

Measures for fostering independent living and inclusion

Long-term measures:

26. Promoting the implementation of freedom of choice in the specialised services for persons with disabilities.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
27. Developing supported decision-making and related good practices.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Justice
28. Contributing to the abolition of institutional housing by the end of 2020. Contributing to ensuring that the housing production aimed at persons with disabilities facilitates living in accordance with the UNCRPD. Paying particular attention to the abolition of children's institutional housing.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
29. Contributing to providing persons with disabilities with actual freedom to choose their place and form of residence.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for the Action Plan period:

30. Investigating the good practices for supported decision-making together with disability organisations.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of Justice
31. Ensuring that the special needs of persons with disabilities and the obligations pursuant to the UNCRPD are taken into account in the preparation and later implementation of the legislation concerning the right of self-determination.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

32. Ensuring that the new disability legislation and its implementation take into account obligations pursuant to the UNCRPD.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
33. Organising a follow-up meeting for the Kehas programme with an aim to promote the abolition of institutional housing and development of individual housing solutions pursuant to the UNCRPD. Contributing to ensuring that enough different housing solutions that fulfil the needs persons with disabilities are available, particularly as part of the ordinary housing stock.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Ministry of the Environment
34. Utilising the results of a survey on the equality of housing for persons with intellectual disabilities in improving their living arrangements.
Responsible body: Ministry of the Environment
35. Specifying the instructions for personal assistance through the Handbook on Disability Services, for instance. Collaborating with experts from disability organisations in this matter.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
36. 36. Supporting the implementation by counties: Ensuring that the special needs of persons with disabilities are taken into account and individual solutions are realised.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
37. Specifying the application instructions for social welfare and disability services to ensure that the privacy of persons with disabilities is respected and their convictions taken into account when appointing assisting and nursing staff.
Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
38. Raising awareness of the application of the Act on Public Procurement and Concession Contracts to ensure the implementation of the right of persons with disabilities to independent living, necessary services and the right of self-determination.
Responsible bodies: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for fostering the right to independent movement and mobility

Long-term measures:

39. Promoting the accessibility of transport and communications.
Responsible body: Ministry of Transport and Communication

40. Monitoring the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities or reduced mobility and the implementation of the rights in accordance with the possible amendments to the regulation on rail passengers' rights and obligations. The Finnish Transport Safety Agency is responsible for the monitoring together with the Consumer Ombudsman.

Responsible body: Ministry of Transport and Communication

41. Assessing the appropriateness of the vehicle tax subsidy for persons with disabilities. Determining the possibility for replacing this by developing the service system of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Responsible body: Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measure for the Action Plan period:

42. Monitoring the implementation of the Act on Transport Services and following its impacts on the mobility of persons with disabilities in the context of taxi service, for instance.

Responsible body: Ministry of Transport and Communication

Measures for fostering equal opportunities for education and training

Long-term measures:

43. Monitoring the implementation of inclusive education under Article 24 of the UNCRPD in the implementation of legislation for all levels of education.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

44. Enabling persons with disabilities to have access to education and training and allowing them to participate in education and training in a manner that takes their individual needs into account and enables necessary support services.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

45. Promoting equal opportunities for education and training as well as the acquisition of competence at different stages of life according to education and training needs from the perspective of lifelong learning (degrees, parts of degrees, re-education, supplementing competence etc.)

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

46. Promoting the equal participation of persons with disabilities in early childhood education and care, basic education, general upper secondary education, vocational education and training, liberal adult education and higher education by raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

47. Raising awareness of the possibilities for reasonable accommodation in education and training in accordance with the Non-discrimination Act.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

Measures for the Action Plan period:

48. Contributing to taking special needs of children and young people into account in the Finnish Schools on the Move programme.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

49. Promoting and following the preparation of equality plans in education and training.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

50. Collecting and spreading good practices of inclusive instruction.

Responsible body: Finnish National Agency for Education

51. Promoting the utilisation of accessible technology in education and training as well as in the guidance and communications concerning education (including special aids and accessible digital learning environments).

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

52. Promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the work of pupil and student bodies.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

Measures for fostering the access to rehabilitation and health services

Long-term measure:

53. Ensuring the access of persons with disabilities to rehabilitation and health services in accordance with the UNCRPD.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for the Action Plan period:

54. Taking obligations under the UNCRPD into account in the comprehensive reform of rehabilitation in accordance with the Government Programme.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

55. Guaranteeing sufficient and high quality special aid services by specifying the criteria for the provision of special aids and improving legal protection.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for fostering equal employment and access to work

Long-term measures:

56. Reducing the gap in the employment rates of persons with and without disabilities.
 - a. Reducing the length of the unemployment of persons with disabilities to correspond with other jobseeker groups. The reasons for ending client relationships must better correspond with the distribution of other jobseeker groups.
 - b. Increasing registration as jobseekers among persons with disabilities.
 - c. Developing the monitoring of employment of persons with disabilities.

Responsible body: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

57. Ensuring that persons with disabilities will be provided with the support they need for finding employment in the new service structures.

Responsible body: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

58. Raising awareness about the available services and forms of support among employers.

Responsible body: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

59. Reducing incentive traps preventing the employment of persons with disabilities.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for the Action Plan period:

60. Adapting working conditions at workplaces is promoted as part of the Career opportunities for people with partial work ability key project.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

61. Renewing legislation on training for work activities for persons with physical and intellectual disabilities as part of the Career opportunities for people with partial work ability key project. Laying down more detailed provisions on the training for work activities carried out at workplaces (known as community employment of disabled people).

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

62. Reducing incentive traps relating to disability pension and earned income by preparing a government proposal on legal reforms caused by the so-called linear model as part of the Career opportunities for people with partial work ability key project.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for fostering adequate standard of living and social protection

Long-term measures:

63. Ensuring the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living and social protection.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

64. Examining and developing the entity of client fees and copayments to ensure that it is clear and the fee burden to clients is reasonable and does not prevent them from using services.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for the Action Plan period:

65. Taking the obligations of the UNCRPD into account in issues pertaining to client fees, pharmaceutical reimbursements and travel reimbursements as well as any changes that concern these. Ensuring the right of persons with disabilities to adequate social protection in connection with the reforms.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

66. Contributing to ensuring that the obligations of the UNCRPD are taken into account in the preparation of the comprehensive reform of social protection (the TOIMI project).

Responsible body: Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

67. Paying attention to issues such as an opportunity to reduce and alleviate client fees in the implementation of the Act on client fees in social welfare and health care.

Responsible body: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

Measures for fostering equal participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

Long-term measures:

68. Promoting the equal participation of persons with disabilities in exercise, art and culture as well as youth work activities by raising awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

69. Paying an increasing amount of attention to the implementation of equality and putting it into practice in subsidy programmes for practical implementation and in information steering.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

Measures for the Action Plan period:

70. Taking children and young people and their special needs into account in the Harrastus-takuu ('Recreational activity guarantee') programme.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture

71. Assessing the measures and policy instruments of the central government related to the daily exercise, physical activity and top-level sports of persons with a mobility or functional impairment.

Responsible body: Ministry of Education and Culture, National Sports Council

Measures for fostering the rights of persons with disabilities in international cooperation

Long-term measure:

72. Working actively in favour of mainstreaming the perspective of persons with disabilities in the policies and programmes of UN organisations and Finnish non-governmental organisations concerning humanitarian aid.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Measures for the Action Plan period:

73. Actively highlighting the rights of persons with disabilities in the operations of international organisations, including the EU, UN, the Council of Europe, OSCE and other international organisations if possible as well as different global political processes and negotiations, including the framework on the rights of refugees and migrants.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

74. Continuing providing political and, if possible, also financial support for the activities of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the work on disability by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

75. Linking the promotion of persons with disabilities more closely with the focus areas, objectives and performance reports of the development policy, and developing follow-up indicators for disability funding.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

76. Continuing advocating with UN organisations, for instance, by highlighting the need to appoint a person in charge of disability issues in the boards of directors of UN organisations, allocate funds to disability activities and acquire the necessary know-how.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

77. Putting emphasis on disability activities in humanitarian crises. Finland financially supports the humanitarian aid work of UN organisations and Finnish organisations and

is engaged in active dialogue with them about the mainstreaming of the disability perspective.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

78. Continuing supporting the UN Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and its implementation in the activities or the organisations.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

79. Taking the rights of persons with disabilities into account in the training on human rights organised by the Ministry. In addition, better integrating the rights of persons with disabilities in the training on the cross-cutting objectives and the implementation of a human rights-based approach.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

80. Promoting the status of sign language in the Council of Europe, particularly during the Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (from November 2018 to May 2019).

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

81. Under Article 35 of the UNCRPD, preparing the first interim report on the implementation of the Convention for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Taking the participation of organisations representing persons with disabilities into account in accordance with Article 4(3) of the Convention.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

82. Fostering the involvement of persons with disabilities in planning and implementing development cooperation.

Responsible body: Ministry for Foreign Affairs



The National Action Plan for implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines the measures needed to promote the implementation of the Convention in various administrative sectors. The Action Plan consists of 82 measures in 12 content categories.

The Action Plan emphasises that participation of people with disabilities is essential in a changing operating environment, and that availability and accessibility are prerequisites for the implementation of other rights.

The Action Plan aims to raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and to mainstream their rights in different administrative sectors and in the whole society.

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