

Discrimination in Finland 2017–2019

Data report



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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Discrimination continues to be a significant problem in Finland, affecting the labour market as well as other areas of life. However, the attitudes of Finns towards minorities, persons with disabilities and older people became more tolerant in the period 2017–2019. In most cases, the attitudes are close to those most prevalent in the European Union.</p> <p>Of all immigrant minority groups, those of African origin face most discrimination, and discrimination based on ethnic background and skin colour appears to be fairly common in Finland. New data have been obtained on the discrimination of the Roma population, and attitudes towards this group are rather negative in Finland compared to the EU level. In the situation of the Sámi people, signs of structural discrimination can be observed. The problems faced by persons with disabilities and older people are largely related to the availability of services and obtaining related information, and the inaccessibility of the environment. Discrimination and harassment of gender and sexual minorities are still common, even though the situation clearly improved during the period under review.</p> <p>The operating data of the judicial and supervisory authorities only describe the tip of the iceberg of discrimination. While the number of cases is rather small, the content of the related decisions is significant. The inspections and statements of opinion of the Chancellor of Justice and the Parliamentary Ombudsman are also important sources of information on discrimination.</p> <p>During the period under review, more discrimination data were collected than before and the quality of the data has further improved.</p>			
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Tiivistelmä	<p>Syrjintä on Suomessa edelleen merkittävä ongelma niin työmarkkinoilla kuin muussakin elämässä. Suomalaisen asenteet vähemmistöjä, vammaisia ja ikääntyneitä kohtaan ovat kuitenkin muuttuneet vuosina 2017–2019 suvaitsevaisemmiksi. Ne ovat useimmiten lähellä Euroopan Unionissa yleisimmin vallitsevia asenteita.</p> <p>Maahanmuuttajavähemmistöistä syrjityin ryhmä ovat afrikkalaistaustaiset, ja etninen ja ihonväriin perustuva syrjintä vaikuttaa olevan Suomessa varsin yleistä. Romanien syrjinnästä on saatu uutta tietoa, Suomessa heitä koskevat asenteet ovat EU-tason vertailussa varsin kielteiset. Saamelaisten tilanteessa on merkkejä rakenteellisesta syrjinnästä. Vammaisten ja ikääntyneiden ongelmat liittyvät paljolti palvelujen ja niitä koskevan tiedon saantiin sekä ympäristön esteellisyyteen. Sukupuoli- ja seksuaalivähemmistöjen syrjintä ja häirintä on edelleen yleistä, vaikka tilanne on tarkastelukautena selkeästi parantunut.</p> <p>Oikeus- ja valvontaviranomaisten toimintatiedot kuvaavat syrjinnästä vain jäävuoren huipun. Tapausmäärät ovat melko pieniä, mutta ratkaisujen sisällöt ovat merkittäviä. Myös esimerkiksi valtioneuvoston oikeuskanslerin ja eduskunnan oikeusasiamiehen tarkastukset ja kannanotot ovat tärkeitä syrjintätiedon tärkeitä lähteitä.</p> <p>Tarkastelukauden aikana syrjintätietoa on kertynyt aiempaa runsaammin ja tiedon taso on entisestään kohentunut.</p>	
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Referat	<p>Diskriminering är fortfarande ett betydande problem i Finland, både på arbetsmarknaden och i det övriga livet. Finländarnas attityder till minoriteter, handikappade och äldre har dock blivit mer toleranta åren 2017–2019. De ligger oftast nära de attityder som är mest allmänna inom Europeiska unionen.</p> <p>Den mest diskriminerade gruppen bland invandrarminoriteterna är de med afrikansk bakgrund, och etnisk diskriminering och diskriminering på grund av hudfärg verkar vara vanligare i Finland än andra former av diskriminering. Man har fått ny information om diskrimineringen av romer, i Finland är attityderna till dem tämligen negativa i en jämförelse på EU-nivå. Det finns tecken på strukturell diskriminering av samer. Funktionshindrades och äldre personers problem har i hög grad att göra med tillgången till tjänster och information om dem samt med att miljön inte är tillgänglig. Diskriminering och trakasserier av könsminoriteter och sexuella minoriteter är fortfarande vanliga, även om situationen klart har förbättrats under den granskade perioden.</p> <p>Uppgifterna från rätts- och tillsynsmyndigheternas verksamhet beskriver endast toppen av isberget när det kommer till diskriminering. Antalet fall är ganska litet, men innehållet i avgörandena är anmärkningsvärt. Justitiekanslerns och riksdagens justitieombudsmans granskningar och ställningstaganden är också exempel på viktiga källor till information om diskriminering.</p> <p>Under den granskade perioden har det samlats in mer information om diskriminering än tidigare och kunskapsnivån har höjts ytterligare.</p>	
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1. BACKGROUND

This report describes discrimination and the development of discrimination in Finland in the period 2017–2019. In this context, discrimination refers to discrimination in accordance with the Non-Discrimination Act, i.e. discrimination based on the following prohibited grounds for discrimination: origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristics. There were no changes to the legislation on discrimination (particularly the Non-Discrimination Act) during the period under review.

The report was based on the National data sources for measuring discrimination (2019) report and the previous Discrimination in Finland 2015–2016 publication. During the period covered by this report, plenty of data were accrued on equality and discrimination. However, a relatively large proportion of the data sources used are new, as a result of which they cannot be used to describe development trends.

This report is divided into the indicator areas of the Ministry of Justice's national monitoring system for discrimination, which are as follows:

- Attitudes and the attitude climate
- Experiences and observations of discrimination
- Reports and decisions related to discrimination
- Hate speech and hate crimes
- Promotion of equality

The content of the data report has been, or will be, also compiled to the website of the monitoring system <http://www.syrjintatieto.fi>. The report was written by Simo Mannila.

The national discrimination monitoring system is coordinated and developed by the Ministry of Justice. The task of the monitoring system is to

- produce up-to-date information on discrimination in the Finnish society
- compile research data and statistics produced by others
- promote cooperation of people and organisations working with discrimination research, and
- suggest policy measures promoting non-discrimination.

The discrimination monitoring group has been active since 2008. The working division of the monitoring group is currently the main body developing and coordinating the monitoring of discrimination. An annual expert forum, to which representatives of various ministries, agencies, research institutes and all stakeholders are invited extensively, presents the latest and most interesting information on discrimination, and discusses discrimination and the development of non-discrimination work in Finland.

During the period under review, the Ministry of Justice and other Finnish parties have participated extensively in international cooperation, which significantly supplements the information on discrimination available for those working on the issues at the national level. This includes data collection by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, <https://fra.europa.eu>, which has also been developed for national needs (Fundamental Rights Barometer), collaboration in the EU's High Level Group on non-discrimination, diversity and equality working group and the reporting of international human rights treaties. The recommendations included in the treaties have been taken into account in documents such as the National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights 2017–2019 (https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/79277/OM_9_2017.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

Gender is also an important background factor in reporting information on discrimination. During the period under review, significant efforts have been made to measure equality, and a preliminary list of equality indicators in Finland is under way. If possible, gender should also be taken into account in a cross-cutting manner in the reporting conducted in accordance with the Non-Discrimination Act. This report includes presenting the data and commenting on them divided by gender if gender-based differences are observed.

Discrimination also involves wider discourse on inclusion and the experience of inclusion. The period under review has involved developing indicators for good demographic relations in different areas of life, considering the experiences of inclusion as part of the promotion of health and well-being, and including discrimination in the follow-up indicators for sustainable development. This report does not cover population relations

and related development in the period 2017–2019, as a separate, supplementary report will be produced on these.

While discrimination has negative effects on society as a whole, it particularly negatively affects the lives of people and population groups who face discrimination. There is plenty of national and international research on the subject, which is not presented separately in this report. Discrimination affects aspects such as a person's status in the labour market and, through this, income level. It leads to segregation in public spaces through avoidance of places and has many negative effects on wellbeing.

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2. ATTITUDES

During the period under review, no research on attitudes related to minority groups has been conducted in Finland. However, a Eurobarometer survey on discrimination has been carried out in EU Member States since 2008. The survey provides a lot of data on attitudes and enables comparison of Finland's data with those from other EU Member States. This data collection, which has varying focus areas, does fairly well at covering the need for information on attitudes towards discrimination. However, making international comparisons is problematic, as the response practices used in different countries are likely to vary, also due to cultural aspects.

According to the latest Eurobarometer (2019), 73% of Finns consider discrimination against the Roma to be common in Finland, whereas the corresponding share in the European Union as a whole was 61%. Discrimination based on ethnic origin or skin colour is also considered very common in Finland (65%). By contrast, religious discrimination is considered clearly less common than ethnic discrimination. The views of Finns are close to the European Union average, but discrimination against the Roma population is considered more common in Finland than in other countries (Figure 1 on the next page). According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer, more than half (53%) of Finns would find it uncomfortable to live next door to a Roma person.

According to the latest Eurobarometer, 57% of Finns would accept a member of an ethnic minority in a high political position, compared with the average rate of 65% in the EU. More than 70% of Finns report having no reservations to accept a person of colour or Asian person and 63% a Roma person as a co-worker. The figures were similar with those to a question on whether the respondent would accept having their child's spouse be a person of colour, Asian or Roma. In this area, tolerance has increased in both Finland and the European Union since 2015.

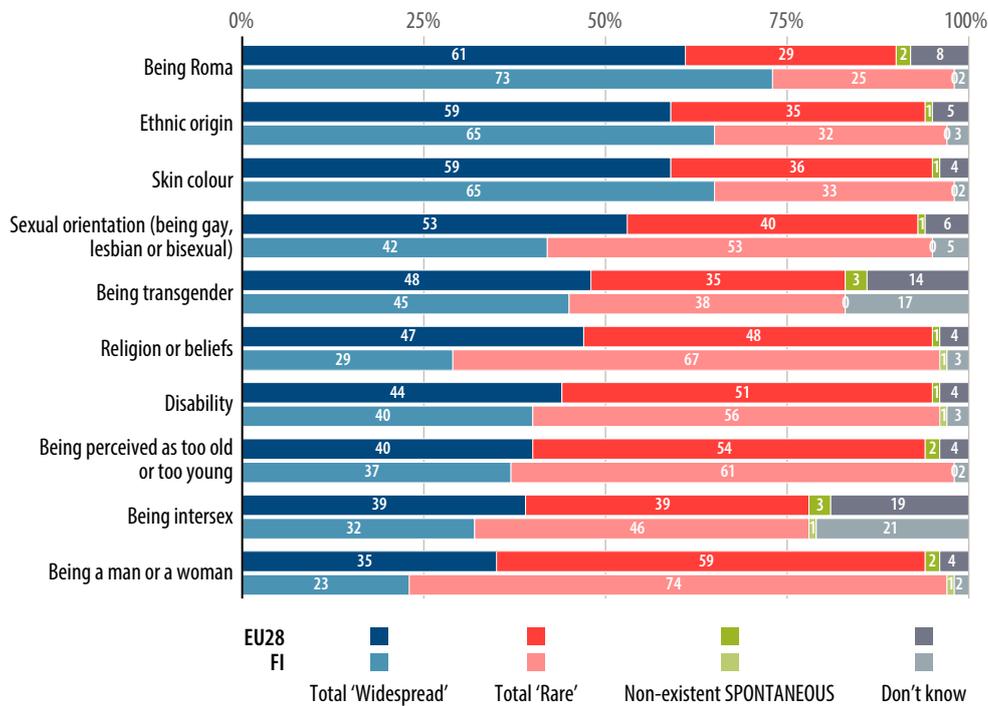


Figure 1. QC1 For each of the following types of discrimination, could you please tell me whether, in your opinion, it is very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare (IN OUR COUNTRY)?
Discrimination on the basis of...

Discrimination based on ethnicity or skin colour is considered particularly widespread in the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Sweden, while Lithuania, Slovakia and Latvia reported the lowest figures in the European Union. Above all, this observation is likely to depict a problem in making international comparisons. In addition to variation in response practices, the groups of people whose ethnicity or skin colour differs from the mainstream population vary between EU countries, which may also result in variation in the attitudes between countries. Overall, discrimination based on ethnic background or skin colour is considered more common than other forms of discrimination in the European Union.

According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer, 38-41% of Finns would find it uncomfortable to live next door to a Somali or Muslim person or an asylum seeker. More than half (51–54%) of Finns reported that they would feel uncomfortable if a family member married a Somali or Muslim person or an asylum seeker. According to the same source, 9% of Finns had a negative attitude towards Jewish people. While the majority of Finns considered the multiculturalism of the neighbourhood as a good thing, the majority of Finns did not wish people belonging to certain ethnic groups to live next door to them - in other words, this multiculturalism is selective.

According to the latest Eurobarometer, only 23% of Finns found gender-based discrimination common, whereas the corresponding average share was 35% in the European Union. 45% of Finns felt that discrimination against transgender people and 32% that discrimination against nonbinary people was common. These shares were somewhat lower compared to the average rate for the EU. Around half of Finns reported that they would accept it if their child had a transgender or nonbinary spouse. Finnish people's attitudes towards gender were more tolerant compared to the EU average, and tolerance has also been increasing in this area both in Finland and in the European Union since 2015.

Of the Finnish respondents, 42% considered discrimination based on sexual orientation (homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality) to be common, compared with the average share of 53% in the European Union. 69% of Finns reported that they would have no problem if one of their colleagues was homosexual, lesbian or bisexual, and 61% that they would accept it if the child's spouse was of the same sex as their child. Attitudes towards sexual orientation have also become more tolerant in both Finland and the European Union. However, there is a wide spectrum of views on both gender and sexual orientation in the EU. According to the Eurobarometer, the most tolerant countries are the Netherlands, Sweden and Great Britain, and the least tolerant are Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, Latvia, Cyprus and Greece.

According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer (2020), 29% of Russian speakers would feel uncomfortable if their neighbour was gay, lesbian or bisexual, while the corresponding share of the entire Finnish population was 11%. More than half of the respondents representing Russian and Arabic speaking minorities also felt that they would be uncomfortable if a family member was to marry a gay, lesbian or bisexual person. Of the total population, 76% found it acceptable that people of the same gender can get legally married in Finland. More than half (52%) of the Russian-speaking minority also felt this way, whereas this share was 34% among Arabic speakers.

According to the most recent Eurobarometer, 37% of Finns considered age discrimination to be common, whereas the average share in the European Union is 40%. 78% of Finns were happy to work with young and 76% with old co-workers. The shares are among the smallest in the European Union. In the EU as a whole, 89% were happy to work with young and 87% with old co-workers. Finns also perceive young or old age as a considerable disadvantage in job-seeking (63%) (Figure 2). Attitudes towards ageing are also reflected in the data on discrimination at work (Chapter 3).

According to the most recent Eurobarometer, other important grounds for discrimination in job seeking included disability (64%) and skin colour (57%), ethnic origin (56%) and personal appearance (53%). However, the most significant grounds for discrimination in

Finland was a Roma background (74%). According to Finns, gender and sexual orientation are not significant obstacles to finding work (Figure 2).

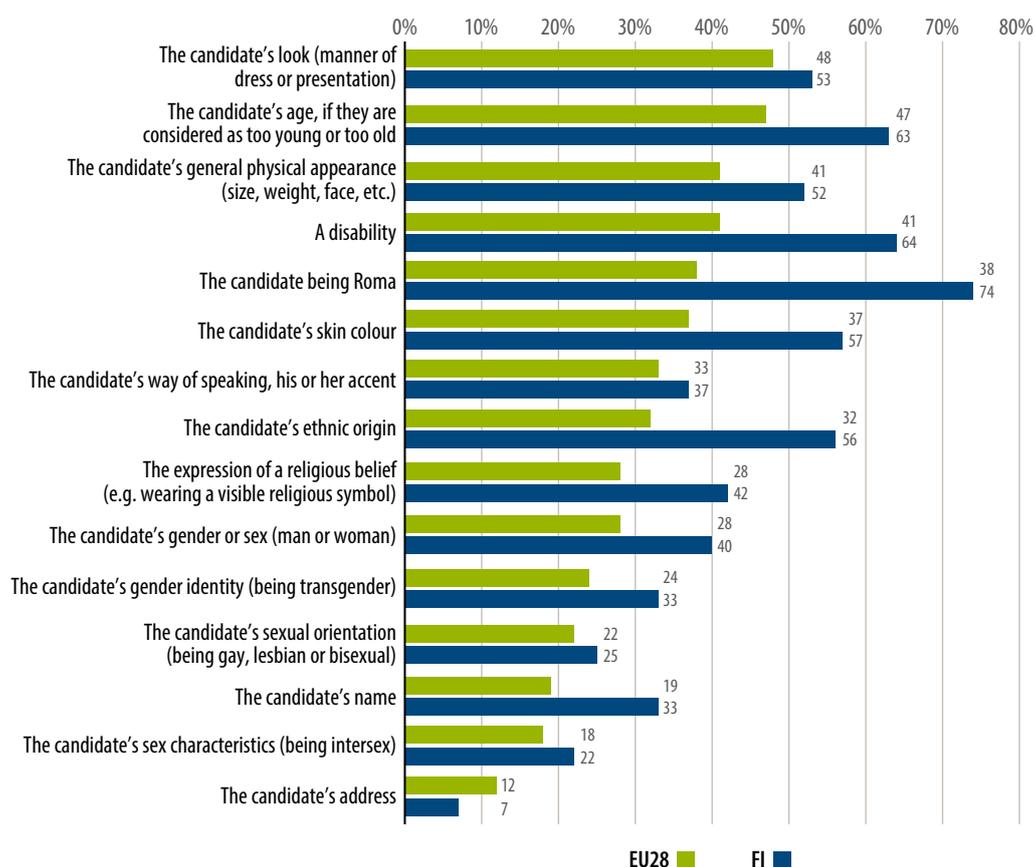


Figure 2. QC4 In (OUR COUNTRY) when a company wants to hire someone and has the choice between two candidates with equal skills and qualifications, which of the following criteria may, in your opinion, put one candidate at a disadvantage? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer, 25% of persons with disabilities considered it acceptable if a small enterprise did not employ immigrants, whereas the corresponding share among the entire population was 20%. More than half (52%) of the entire population considered that immigrants lead to more crime, but an equal amount (51%) also considered that immigrants enriched society. In total, 70% of Arabic speakers felt that immigrants generally had a positive impact on the Finnish economy, compared with 29% of the total population.

The poor status of Roma people in job-seeking is confirmed by the results of the Työnimi ("professional name") campaign. The campaign involved four well-known and merited

Finns applying for work using their own CVs, but with distinguishable Roma names. None of them heard back from the companies they contacted. According to a report commissioned by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, in addition to employers' attitudes, the Roma rules on dress and habits emerge as barriers to finding employment. Efforts should be made to influence this issue with an extensive change in the attitude climate, encounters in everyday life and by highlighting the Roma people as equal employees based on their competence.

According to the most recent Eurobarometer, 40% considered discrimination against persons with disabilities to be common in Finland, whereas the corresponding share in the European Union as a whole was 44%. This was another area where tolerance has been increasing in both Finland and the EU as a whole since 2015. According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer, only 3% of Finns felt that they would feel uncomfortable if a person with a disability lived next door to them.

Based on the results of a study conducted by an e2 idea workshop published in 2018, around two-thirds of Finns have a neutral attitude towards the status of those born in Finland and foreigners permanently living in Finland. There is a lot more disagreement about the status of asylum seekers. One in three considered the status of asylum seekers as too good and more than 40% as too poor. Only one in four respondents assessed the status of asylum seekers as neutral (neither good nor poor). Around one half of the respondents also considered the status of Finland's Swedish-speaking population people as too good and around one half estimated it as neutral. These estimates of the population groups are influenced by a dimension that can be described using a setting of social conservatism vs. social liberalism. Older people and those less educated are more likely to be social conservatives compared to others. In examination per political parties, those supporting the True Finns party stand out as social conservatives. Around half of them felt that the status of Finland's native population was too poor compared to other groups. All in all, the values of Finns reflect those of the Nordic countries - for example, the values of Eastern Europeans are more centred on the individual.

According to the most recent Youth Barometer (2018), the overall attitudes towards immigration and immigrants can be considered rather moderate or positive in Finland. Attitudes are more positive among girls than boys. While three out of four consider that foreigners have made Finnish culture more diverse, a minority feels that foreigners moving to Finland exploit tax funds. However, a relatively small minority was in favour of statements on attitudes that indicated the respondent's intolerance or racism. Attitudes towards immigration have become more favourable since the early 2000s, which is assumed to result from increasing contacts. The younger generation is more likely to encounter issues related to immigration in their day-to-day environments compared to the older generation, which increases tolerance. More than half of young people consider

it important that immigrants speak Finnish or Swedish and follow Finnish customs and traditions, whereas Finnish roots or country of birth were important to less than half of the respondents (30–40%). Only 3% of the respondents had experienced discrimination, girls more often than boys. When respondents were asked to what extent they perceived themselves as racist, the shares were only a few per cent; however, the proportion of boys was clearly higher than that of girls.

According to an analysis by the Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA, 2019), Finnish people's attitudes towards immigration are softening rather than hardening. Only 13% of Finns think that foreigners take too many jobs from Finns. 39% are in favour of, and 36% opposed to, making migration to Finland easier compared with 28% and 50% in 2000. On the other hand, the atmosphere has changed: More than half (54%) of the respondents estimate that xenophobia and racist language have become an everyday occurrence in Finland. Getting a job is difficult for those perceived as "others" in Finland: according to a recent study, having a foreign name at the recruitment stage poses a clear obstacle for jobseekers in finding a job, which reflects the prevailing attitudes. Those with Somali names face the most discrimination, but also jobseekers with English names also have fewer opportunities than those with Finnish names.

Attitudes towards women are interesting from a non-discrimination viewpoint. According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer, 13% of the entire population felt that, when children fall ill, their mother should be the one to leave work and care for the children. The corresponding share was 40% among Russian speakers and 70% among Arabic speakers. However, a clear majority of the entire population and the minorities studied (88–94%) believed that women are as good leaders as men. The differences in attitudes are related to a view of the roles of men and women in the family, not one concerning the abilities of men and women.

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3. EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

Experiences of discrimination are typically examined using the so-called crime victim survey, whose respondents are asked whether they have experienced discrimination, harassment, unfair treatment, etc. This strand of research is based on a basic consideration of social sciences that people are fairly well aware of what is happening to them and the state of their personal affairs. By contrast, observations on discrimination are events that meet the criteria of discrimination that are not always based on personal experience but rather rely on other information. The reports and judgments related to discrimination can be considered as the most significant observations on discrimination. These are discussed in the following chapter 4.

The following two sections first present information on discrimination at work based on experience and observations and then show other data divided into the grounds of discrimination in the period 2017–2019.

3.1 Discrimination in working life

According to the overall review of integration (2019), in 2017, the employment rate of men with a foreign background was only 57% while the corresponding rate of women was 49%. During the same period, the employment rate for all men of working age was 71% and for women 69%. The employment rate of persons with a foreign background was the lowest in North Karelia, Kainuu, Lapland, Kymenlaakso, South Savo and Central Finland, but in Åland, their employment rate exceeded that of the whole country. Only around 30% of people with a foreign background were considered to have a job that corresponds with their education, and both fixed-term and part-time work were more common among them compared to the mainstream population.

According to an overall review of integration, the unemployment rate of persons with a foreign background has been more than twice that of the mainstream population, even though the difference has narrowed down to some extent. However, this is a highly internally heterogeneous group. English-speaking immigrants are in the best position, while Somali and Arabic speakers have the poorest status. The employment rate of people with a foreign background varies considerably by region. The highest employment rate is found in the Åland Islands, Uusimaa and South Ostrobothnia, and the lowest in Lapland, North Karelia and Kymenlaakso.

An OECD report published in 2017, *Working Together: Skills and Labour Market Integration of Immigrants and their Children in Finland*, already called attention to the poor labour market position of immigrants in Finland. While the employment rate of Finns has been higher than the average in OECD countries, the employment rate of immigrants has remained below the average level in OECD countries. Only the situation of immigrants who speak Estonian, Swedish and to some extent Russian resembles that of the mainstream population. The employment rate of immigrant women is particularly poor in Finland. Based on the data in the overall review of integration, the rate is the lowest in the Nordic countries. According to the OECD, immigrants more often worked in low-wage sectors in Finland compared to on average in the OECD countries. The labour market is ethnically segregated, even though the number of immigrants continues to be relatively low: the exploitation of immigrants in working life is a structural phenomenon. According to the overall review of integration, in its current form, the residence permit system has also been considered to hamper equality in the labour market.

The labour market position is also significantly affected by educational background and other competence. According to the overall review of integration (2019), 29% of young men and 24% of women with a foreign background were neither employed nor studying in 2017. The shares are around ten per cent higher than in the mainstream population. Wages and incomes of self-employed persons with a foreign background accounted for around 80% of the income of the mainstream population, and the incomes were lowest among those who had moved to Finland from Africa and Asia. The income of African women was around half of the income of women in the mainstream population. Income transfers improve the status of people with a foreign background. However, only 4% of the working men in the mainstream population belonged to low-income households, whereas the corresponding share of men with Asian background was 17%. More than 40% of children with a foreign background belonged to low-income households, whereas the corresponding share of children in the mainstream population was 11%.

According to a study by Tampere University (2018), Finland stands out as a country with high discrimination at work in Europe. According to the study, the most common form of discrimination was based on systems of favouritism prevailing at workplaces which may

or may not be connected to discrimination as referred to under the Non-Discrimination Act. The study revealed that favouritism was succeeded by age, gender or both, as the second most common type of workplace discrimination, placing women in a poorer position than men. The study was mainly based on data from Statistics Finland's surveys on working conditions, in which the share of ethnic groups is small and their experiences are not visible. According to the latest working life barometer (2018), six per cent of the respondents estimated that there was discrimination against women at their workplace, while only two out of hundred had detected discrimination targeted against men. According to the barometer, there was been hardly any changes in discrimination based on gender in a slightly over ten-year period.

According to the working life barometer, fixed-term employees are most likely to be subjected to discrimination or unequal treatment. In 2018, a total of 14% of wage earners found that this occurred in their organisation. Eight per cent of employees had observed discrimination against part-time employees. The barometer has included grounds for discrimination related to the employment relationship type since 2008, and discrimination against both fixed-term and part-time employees has become more common in recent years. Immigrants are more likely to be in fixed-term employment relationships than others, also due to their occupational structure, indicating that ethnic discrimination may also occur in this context. The working life barometer includes a question for those whose workplace has immigrants on whether they have observed discrimination at the workplace related to the immigrant's non-Finnish background. According to the latest working life barometer, five per cent estimated that this existed in their workplace. The share has varied between eight and three per cent during the 2000s.

The working life barometer has only asked about health-related discrimination since 2015. Observations of health-related discrimination were fairly common; one in ten wage earners reported having encountered them. According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer, 39% of persons with disabilities had experienced discrimination in their job or related to job seeking in the previous five years.

According to the 2018 working life barometer, 34% of wage earners estimated that bullying by co-workers sometimes occurs in the workplace, and 3% said this was constantly ongoing. No clear changes had occurred in this over the previous seven years. Men reported about bullying less often than women. 29% of men and 39% of women said that there was occasionally bullying by co-workers at their workplace. The bullying could come from colleagues but also representatives of the employer as well as customers. 26% of men and 41% of women reported that customers sometimes bullied the employees at the workplace. Workplace bullying is more common in the public sector, especially the municipal sector, than in the private sector. Overall, the shares are considerable

and women are in a weaker position than men. This may also be related to the different professions of men and women.

According to the working life barometer (2018), nearly a quarter of the employees had noticed and 11 per cent had experienced violence or a threat thereof. The rates have increased during the period under review. Detecting and experiencing violence was more than twice as common among women than men. The distribution of contacts with the Ombudsman for Equality shows a similar trend: women are more likely to experience discrimination and other similar problems than men. Gender also plays an important role in many cases of discrimination, and particular attention should be paid to it when considering multiple discrimination. Another group at risk of multiple discrimination comprises asylum seekers and refugees who are likely to have poor health, which has been identified as a highly common reason of discrimination based on employment administration data.

According to the working life barometer, in 2018, six per cent estimated that there was discrimination in their organisation based on young age, while eight per cent estimated that there was discrimination based on old age at their workplace. Although the changes in age discrimination are minor, age-related discrimination has decreased slightly from the beginning of the 2000s. According to a report by the Confederation of Finnish industries one in five Finns has experienced age discrimination in their careers, and 90% of those discriminated against have never reported this. The majority of age discrimination occurs related to recruitment. According to the same study, there were no differences between the genders, and experiencing discrimination was the least common among those aged 35-44. Based on a member survey carried out in 2017 by the Service Union United PAM, 30% of those aged 41–50 felt that their age posed a significant obstacle to finding employment, and the corresponding share was as high as 82% among those over 50. These figures change dramatically as age increases: the share of people under the age of 30 was 4%. In the open responses to a survey (2019) conducted by the Centre for Regional Research of the University of Eastern Finland, all those aged over 45 perceived their age as an obstacle to employment. In a survey on the promotion of equality at workplaces, suspected discrimination was also most commonly related to age, health or “some other reason related to the individual”.

From the viewpoint of discrimination at work, job-seeking is the most crucial stage, as discrimination can prevent a person from getting hired. A study using an experimental design carried out by the University of Helsinki found that having a foreign name (English, Russian, Arabic, Somali) also emerged as a clear disadvantage in job-seeking, and non-European names were more likely than European names to negatively affect finding employment. The jobseekers whose name implied a Somali origin were in the most disadvantaged position. When submitting 1,000 job applications in which the applicants’

qualifications were identical, 390 of the applicants with Finnish names were invited to an interview, while 134 of Iraqi and 99 of Somali applicants were invited to an interview. While discrimination was less common among those applying for work using English and Russian names, such names also significantly hampered job-seeking. The results concerning skin colour offer some consolidation: according to a survey conducted in 2019, only 28% of the respondents would favour a light-skinned Finnish person in job-seeking. This result may also be caused by the fact that skin colour is not visible until the interview takes place, at which point an important threshold has been exceeded and other factors can also influence the situation.

According to the overall review of integration, 31% of people with a foreign background had experienced discrimination or unequal treatment in working life during the previous five years. Estonian men had experienced this the least often (20%), while those from India, Vietnam, Thailand, China and other parts of Asia had experienced it the most (44%). According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer, 50% of Arabic speakers and 47% of Russian speakers - the immigrant groups targeted by the survey - had experienced discrimination at work or in job-seeking, whereas the corresponding share in the entire population was 25%. Ethnic origin was most often reported as the reason for discrimination. However, 13% of Arabic speakers reported religion as the reason, while the corresponding share in the total population was only 1%. According to the data produced in the e2 idea workshop, 89% of Somali speakers considered their language group to face at least some discrimination in the labour market. The corresponding share of Arabic speakers was 57% and of Russian speakers 51%. Based on this data set, discrimination at work was also rarest among Estonian speakers (27%). While there is some variation in the results, they all indicate that discrimination is highly common. They give an idea of the ethnic hierarchy prevailing in the Finnish labour market.

For forming a situational picture of discrimination at work, data concerning criminal discrimination at work and extortionate work discrimination are also important (see Chapter 4). Human trafficking for the purpose of labour, whose number of victims is increasing, can be considered an extreme form of discrimination at work. According to the 2019 report, 33 persons were referred to the related system of assistance. The persons had worked in industries such as the restaurant, cleaning and construction sector. In most cases, those forced to work have been primarily non-Finnish citizens, but the employers also include native Finns.

3.2 Other discrimination by grounds of discrimination

Discrimination also occurs in areas of life (e.g. different private and public services, teaching, physical activity) other than in working life, and there is also structural discrimination. The following sections present data concerning discrimination other than that related to work, classified by grounds of discrimination. The relevant areas of life are presented varyingly in the sections. Discrimination fairly often takes the shape of verbal or physical harassment occurring in a public space, and sometimes involves vandalism or violence.

3.2.1 Ethnic background, language, religion

According to the Finnish Roma Wellbeing Study (ROOSA), 21% of the employed respondents had experienced unfair treatment at the workplace, and 6% of men and 14% of women who had used the services of the Employment and Economic Development Offices or Labour Force Service Centre had similar experiences. More than 40% of Roma people had experienced **unfair behaviour in a public place**, such as a street or restaurant. Discrimination leads to avoiding certain places, which negatively affects a person's employment and social integration.

No similar information is available on the situation of the Sámi people, Finland's other traditional minority group. The data obtained during the preparation of the truth and reconciliation process launched in 2017 refers to structural discrimination. This has been apparent in not consulting the Sámi Parliament in making significant plans concerning the Sámi homeland. An issue detected in a study on Sámi persons with disabilities and sexual minorities that lack of knowledge is caused by a lack of materials available in Sámi language can also probably be considered structural discrimination. Nevertheless, information available on the situation of both the Roma and Sámi speakers has increased during the period under review.

More than half of the Swedish-speaking minority have experienced restrictions when using public **transport** and nearly half when eating in a restaurant. No language barometer was carried out in Finland during the period under review in the present report. The data of the previous language barometer date back to 2016. However, to recapitulate, 44% of Swedish speakers in bilingual municipalities felt that they had been often or sometimes harassed and/or discriminated against because of their language, whereas this figure for Finnish speakers was 20%.

According to the FinMonik study (2019), nearly 40% of the Finnish population with a foreign background have experienced discrimination or harassment in the last year. The definition of discrimination and harassment was very broad and took into account various

situations. Experiences of discrimination were most common among those originating from the Middle East and North Africa (43%) and elsewhere in Africa (55%), and the least common among those from Russia and other regions of the former Soviet Union (32%) – rather common among them, too. Among others, the group “elsewhere in Africa” included those with a Somali background.

According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA 2018), people with an African background experience an exceptionally high amount of racism in Finland. As many as 63% reported having faced racist harassment in the previous five years, whereas the corresponding share in Denmark and Sweden, for example, was 41%, and the average in the 12 participating countries was 30%. The racist harassment manifested as aggressive gestures, inappropriate staring, threatening comments and threats of violence or physical violence. In most cases, the perpetrator was a complete stranger. In Finland, as many as 14% of the interviewees with an African background had experienced physical violence with racist motivation in the previous five years. The results of the FinMonik study are similar concerning experiences of violence, for instance. In the light of these figures, experiences of racism are exceptionally common in Finland, even though there has been positive development in the attitudes during the period under review.

According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer, particularly Arabic speakers reported having been subjected to harassment situations, such as insulting and name-calling (60%), offensive or threatening gestures or staring (62%) more often than the entire population. Arabic speakers had also experienced violence more often than others. The perpetrators were typically members of the mainstream population. In total, 26% of men and 33% of women felt unsafe in public places. The data of the FinMonik study (2019) concerning the experiences of insecurity in Finland were very similar. According to the National Council for Crime Prevention (2019), belonging to an ethnic minority may even double the risk of becoming a victim of violence.

According to a separate study conducted based on the 2017 School Health Promotion Survey, racist bullying (skin colour, language, foreign background) **at school or during leisure time** had been encountered by 13% of young people with a multicultural background, 26% of young people with a second-generation foreign background and 31% of young people with a first-generation foreign background during the previous school year. In addition to young people born in the Middle East (Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan) and Somalia, experiences of racism were also common in many other groups of countries of origin. Problems related to school attendance had been detected among the young people who had arrived to Finland as refugees, particularly those of Somali origin, including both first and second generation immigrants. The problems emerged in connection with issues such as applying for upper secondary education, dropping out of

studies and school performance. By contrast, there were no difference between the other second-generation immigrants and the mainstream population.

However, according to the data of the e2 study, those belonging to the large language minorities enjoyed their time in Finland. Only under 10% reported not enjoying their time in Finland, and the largest groups of unsatisfied people were Estonian and Arabic speakers.

Religious discrimination is less common in Finland than discrimination based on ethnic background (see Chapter 2). Of the five large minority language groups, Somali speakers are the most religious; 84% of them reported being highly religious in the survey conducted in the e2 study. Estonian speakers were the least religious, as more than half of them were either not very or not at all religious.

3.2.2 Disability, poor health

Instead of discourse on disability, or related to it, Finland is taking steps towards reflecting on functional limitations and their impacts, and several currently ongoing data collection efforts include internationally comparable questions from the so-called Washington group, which measure functional limitations. This enables measuring not only disability, but also the link between poor health and discrimination. There is evidence from the previous review period that poor health is one of the main causes of discrimination at work.

In the Fundamental Rights Barometer conducted together with the FRA, disability has been defined based on functional limitations. According to the results, trust in the authorities is poorer among persons with disabilities than that of the rest of the population. Three of the most important problems are related to **public services**, including difficulty in finding information, slow processing of issues shortcomings in information available online. A total of 60% of persons with disabilities complained about the difficulty of finding information, whereas the corresponding share of the entire population and groups such as Russian speakers was 30%. In total, 15% of persons with disabilities complained that in the previous five years, the public administration had rejected their request or application without providing an explanation, whereas the corresponding share in the population as a whole was only 2%. According to the Fundamental Rights Barometer, 24% of persons with disabilities felt that they had not been treated equally with others, whereas the corresponding share of the entire population was 17%.

In a survey by the Human Rights Centre and the Finnish Disability Forum (2019), 70% of the respondents needed personal assistance and 43% felt that the received assistance was

inadequate. The shares for using transportation services and rehabilitation and related dissatisfaction were similar. More than half reported that they needed mobility or other special aids, and around one out of four that they had not been provided with these. The responses indicated that the difference between needs and reality was the great in young age groups: "I cannot use the toilet when I need to. I would rather do something other than sit in a ring in front of the TV in the evenings and I also do not want to go to bed at 7 PM." More than half of those under the age of 16 or their families had experienced inappropriate treatment in **health care** due to their disability. This share is higher than in other age groups. Nearly half of those who had experienced such treatment considered that the right to life of a disabled child had been questioned directly or indirectly. The problems in the services are related not only to being provided with the appropriate services, but also to finding information about them and seeking the services. According to children with disabilities or their parents, 52% had experienced discrimination in access to education, 64% in education and 61% in making reasonable accommodations. It is also not unusual that Swedish-speaking young people are only offered services in Finnish. In many cases, services for people with disabilities concern restricting fundamental rights instead of involving "just" discrimination.

The report highlights **poverty, environmental barriers and accessibility of information** as problems faced by persons with disabilities. 51% of female respondents had experienced discrimination in working life, while the corresponding rate among men was 41%. Inappropriate treatment of women had been recently increased more than that of men, and women with disabilities experienced violence 2-3 times more often than men. According to the survey, bullying, discrimination and inappropriate behaviour were commonly occurring phenomena in the recreational physical activities for children and young people with disabilities.

3.2.3 Age

As ageing leads to an increase in functional limitations at some point, the issues described above concerning discrimination against persons with disabilities are also relevant to age discrimination.

According to reports by older people aged 55-84 (2019), three out of four respondents felt that there is a great deal of discrimination based on age in Finland, and 64% felt that older people were treated as second-class citizens. The results indicated that young people also recognise age discrimination, and only one in five felt that the interests of pensioners are taken into account excessively in decision-making. Older people often need more **social and particularly health care services** than younger people, and a fairly large proportion of them feel that they are not provided with enough services or are unsatisfied with the service quality. For example, 23% of those aged 65 or over had received either insufficient

or no medical services at the health centre. Dissatisfaction with the use of home care services was roughly the same.

The use of services for older people is affected by the income level: over 10% of those aged 65 or over in the lowest two income quadrants had not visited a doctor during the previous year due to a lack of money, whereas the share in the other groups was a few per cent. The majority of older people with the lowest income also feel that they do not receive enough social assistance. Finland has a lot of pensioners with poor income. According to the data of the Finnish Centre for Pensions, 17% of men and 23% of women receive a pension amounting to less than EUR 1,000 per month, which is below the threshold for relative poverty, unless they live in owner-occupied dwellings. With age, the connection between the income level and education and health increases rather than decreases. These are **structural** problems and are therefore linked to discrimination.

3.2.4 Gender and sexual minorities

According to the recent LGBTI II study by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, half of the members of gender or sexual minorities in Finland express their gender or sexual orientation fairly openly. The share is roughly the same as the average rate in the European Union. In Finland, 70% of those belonging to gender or sexual minorities consider that tolerance has increased in the previous five years, while 11% feel that this has decreased. The corresponding shares in the European Union were 40% and 36%. More than 60% of the Finnish respondents also felt that the Government of Finland was actively working to reduce prejudices and intolerance, whereas the share at the EU level was one third. Finnish respondents also felt that tolerance had increased in schools and places of education more often than those in the EU countries on average. 15% reported avoiding some places in Finland due to a fear of violence, whereas the corresponding share in the EU as a whole was 33%. 14% had experiences of discrimination at work during the previous year, compared with 21% in the European Union.

According to the LGBTI II study, there was less information about discrimination, harassment and violence experienced by sexual and gender minorities in Finland compared to the European Union on average. However, experiences of harassment were also common in Finland. 51% of the respondents had experienced harassment on some grounds during the previous 12 months, 32% of them due to belonging to a gender or sexual minority. 31% of the respondents had experienced discrimination in one area of life in the previous 12 months. The respondents are a fairly heterogeneous group: for example, 46% of transgender people and 70% of intersex people had experienced discrimination in some area of life during the previous month. Victims of discrimination and violence very rarely report their experiences to the police. Only 7% of the respondents had reported the most recent discrimination experience, while 9% had reported harassment.

The situation of gender and sexual minorities has also been studied in Finland in studies describing multiple discrimination involving persons belonging to different religious communities or ethnic minorities or persons with disabilities. One of the key conclusions of the reports was that persons exposed to discrimination on multiple grounds will more likely and frequently encounter discrimination.

According to the school health promotion study, bullying of LGBTI youth, particularly boys, is rather common. According to data from 2017, 7% of LGBTI boys were bullied at least once a week in **upper secondary school** while the corresponding rate was 16% in **vocational institutions**. 22% of LGBTI boys studying in upper secondary schools and 27% of students studying in vocational institutions had experienced physical threats during the year. Bullying had a negative impact on issues such as health, even though the majority of the bullied youths feel that they will receive help in their situation if necessary. According to data from 2019, the situation has not improved. LGBTI youth are also more likely than others to experience mental or physical violence at **home**.

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4. REPORTS AND JUDGMENTS RELATED TO DISCRIMINATION

The reports and judgments related to discrimination form a very important part of discrimination data. When applying the laws, the supervisory and judicial authorities define in a concrete manner what discrimination means in legal terms, for instance, in accordance with the Non-Discrimination Act. This definition also means that some of the decisions made by the supervisory and judicial authorities set forth that the issue did not concern discrimination. On the other hand, it is known that only a fraction of discrimination cases come to the attention of the supervisory and judicial authorities: applying for justice is often a rather burdensome process and involves both financial and non-financial risks. Advice and the promotion of equality are also part of the work of the ombudsmen and occupational safety and health authorities. The activities of the supreme supervisory and judicial authorities are particularly important for defining structural problems, as is noted in the annual report of the Chancellor of Justice (2018) among other sources.

Table 1 below presents data on the measures by the supervisory and judicial authorities related to discrimination in the period 2017–2018. However, the operational data of the Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court will be presented later. Data related to offence category “ethnic agitation” is presented in connection with hate crime.

Table 1. Discrimination cases processed by the supervisory and judicial authorities in the period 2017–2018. The Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court are not included in the table.

Authority and act	2017	2018	2019
SUPERVISORY AUTHORITIES			
• Non-Discrimination Ombudsman (cases pending)	824	984	920
• Occupational safety and health authorities (requests for supervisory measures)	197	200	180
• Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal	77	130	51
DISTRICT COURTS			
• discrimination offence (Criminal Code 11:11)	9	12	9
• work discrimination (Criminal Code 47:3, 47:3a)	18	9	9
• Act on Equality between Women and Men	14	10	33
• Non-Discrimination Act	25	11	
COURTS OF APPEAL			
• discrimination offence (Criminal Code 11:11)	2	2	1
• work discrimination (Criminal Code 4:3, 47:3a)	6	2	4
• Act on Equality between Women and Men	6	2	2
• Non-Discrimination Act	2	23	4
ADMINISTRATIVE COURTS			
• Act on Equality between Women and Men (decisions)	9	12	
• Non-Discrimination Act			

During the period under review, the number of work discrimination cases has exceeded the number of discrimination offences. More cases appear to have been processed based on the Non-Discrimination Act than the Act on Equality between Women and Men.

Table 2 presents discrimination issues from pre-trial investigations by the police to the prosecutor and judgments by the District Courts 2017-2018.

Table 2. Criminal cases concerning discrimination in the period 2017-2018.

Name	2017			2018		
	pre-trial investigation	charge	judgment	pre-trial investigation	charge	judgment
Discrimination	60	21	5	44	24	9
Work discrimination / extortionate work discrimination	89	60	8	89	48	10

Statistics show, as before, that criminal reports of discrimination rarely lead to a conviction. However, in the case of discrimination offences, the proportion of reports leading to a judgment has risen from 19% in 2017 to 39% in 2018 and 31% in 2019.

The distinction between the pre-trial investigation and the convictions is particularly clear in the context of work discrimination and extortionate work discrimination, possibly due to the parties reaching an agreement on the cases during the process.

4.1 Occupational safety and health monitoring

The occupational safety and health authorities operating under the regional administration received around 200 requests for monitoring related to discrimination at work in 2018 and around 180 requests in 2019. The total number of contacts was more than twice this number. The requests led to performing 157 inspections in 2018 and 110 inspections in 2019. In both years, the employer had acted in a discriminatory manner in around one third of the cases.

However, the occupational safety and health authority also monitors discrimination based on the initiative of the authorities, especially as part of the supervision of the use of foreign labour. The number of these inspections is several times higher than the number of inspections performed based on contacts, for instance, totalling at 1,100 in 2018.

In 2018, the occupational safety and health authority supervised the prohibition of discrimination with over 700 inspections related to the supervision of foreign labour. Discrimination on the basis of origin, language or nationality in the payment of wages or other minimum conditions was observed by almost 60 inspections. The largest number of cases was detected in the construction sector, and in the housing and catering sectors.

Job advertisements were found to have discriminatory characteristics in 17 cases in 2018 and 6 cases in 2019. In most of the cases, the discrimination was related to origin, language or nationality. Examples:

- An employer was looking for a cleaner and required for the hired person to be a citizen of Finland.
- The job advertisement for a car washer required that the applicant has completed military service.

In one third of the requests for inspections, the reason for the request concerned the applicants' health status in 2018 and 2019, which was also the most common grounds for discrimination based on inspections initiated by the authorities. The second most common grounds for discrimination experienced were "other reason related to the person" in both requests and inspections. Many of these requests for supervision concerned situations in which an employee had addressed failures in his or her working conditions

or asserted his or her rights at the workplace. The employee had been subsequently dismissed or selected for a lay-off, the employer's attitude towards the employee had changed, the employee had been issued a warning, or duties had been taken away from the employee. The smallest number of contacts were related to religion, political activities and sexual orientation (Figure 3).

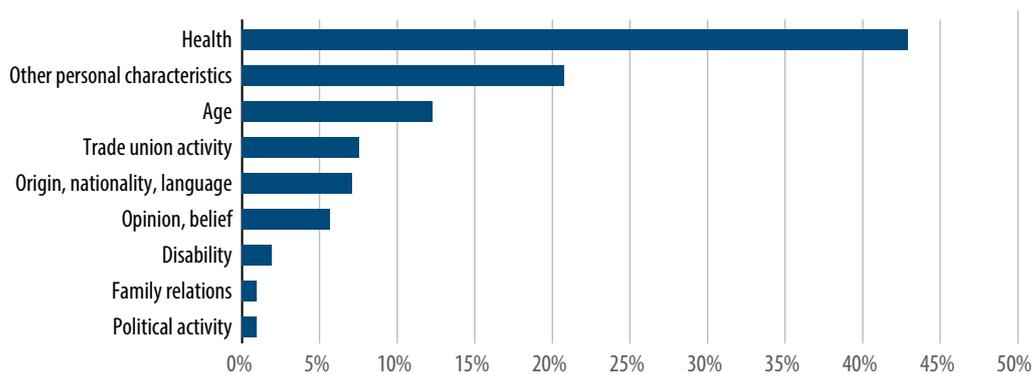


Figure 3. Grounds for discrimination in inspections carried out on the basis of requests for supervisory measures in 2018. (Occupational safety and health administration 2018, p. 9)

In 2018, the occupational safety and health authority reported a total of 21 cases of suspected discrimination at work. 12 of these cases involved suspected discrimination on the basis of the person's health status.

Equality plans and the employer's obligation to promote equality were monitored in a total of 360 inspections in 2018 and 304 inspections in 2019. Slightly under half of the inspections revealed failures in 2018, while the corresponding number was 197 in 2019. These were also caused by the fact that many workplaces do not understand what the promotion of equality is about. Typical shortcomings included:

- The assessment of the non-discrimination situation at the workplace was completely missing or inadequate. The assessment did not include investigating the implementation of equality from the perspective of different grounds of discrimination, or the assessment did not cover all circumstances or approaches, such as recruitment practices.
- The non-discrimination situation had only been assessed from the perspective of the prohibition of discrimination, not from an actual equality viewpoint. The workplace had no knowledge of which grounds for discrimination were relevant to the realisation of equality at the workplace.
- There was no equality plan.

In the period 2017–2019, the Regional State Administrative Agency of Southern Finland issued a reprimand to 498 companies regarding pay or non-compliance with a generally applicable collective agreement. The cases may also involve the exploitation of undocumented persons or immigrants in the context of pay discrimination.

The first of the following case descriptions addresses a previously prevailing practice, according to which the reduction of labour force was mostly targeted at older workers, as they could take advantage of a kind of unemployment path to retirement instantly or within the following few years. The second description highlights the status of foreign workforce.

- Only the dismissal of older workers was deemed discriminatory. The employer dismissed eight employees, all of whom were over 50 years old, for production-related and financial reasons. As the employer had mostly chosen to dismiss older employees, the case was presumed to involve discrimination. According to the employer, the employees were not dismissed based on their age. Instead, the employer had wanted to retain employees with the most relevant competence and professional skills from a business perspective, who would also have broader capacities to respond to future professional challenges. The inspection deemed that the employer's report was not sufficient for revoking the presumed discrimination. The employer did in no way indicate how the competence and professional skills of the younger employees who got to keep their jobs made them more qualified to respond to future professional challenges, nor did the employer identify, what these professional challenges were. The employer was found to have discriminated against employees based on their age.
- Foreign workers were discriminated against in payment and working hours. All the employees of a real estate company were non-EU citizens. Most of them had been doing extra and overtime work, which had not been compensated for in accordance with the collective agreement for workers in the real estate services sector. Some of the employees had been working without any time off work during the week. There was reason for presuming discrimination. The employer denied discrimination and reported only hiring Thai and Vietnamese workers. According to the employer, the employees themselves wanted to work long hours when more work was available. The employer reported being under the impression that overtime should only be compensated for if the employees asked for it. Based on the inspection, the

employer was considered to have violated against the prohibition of discrimination.

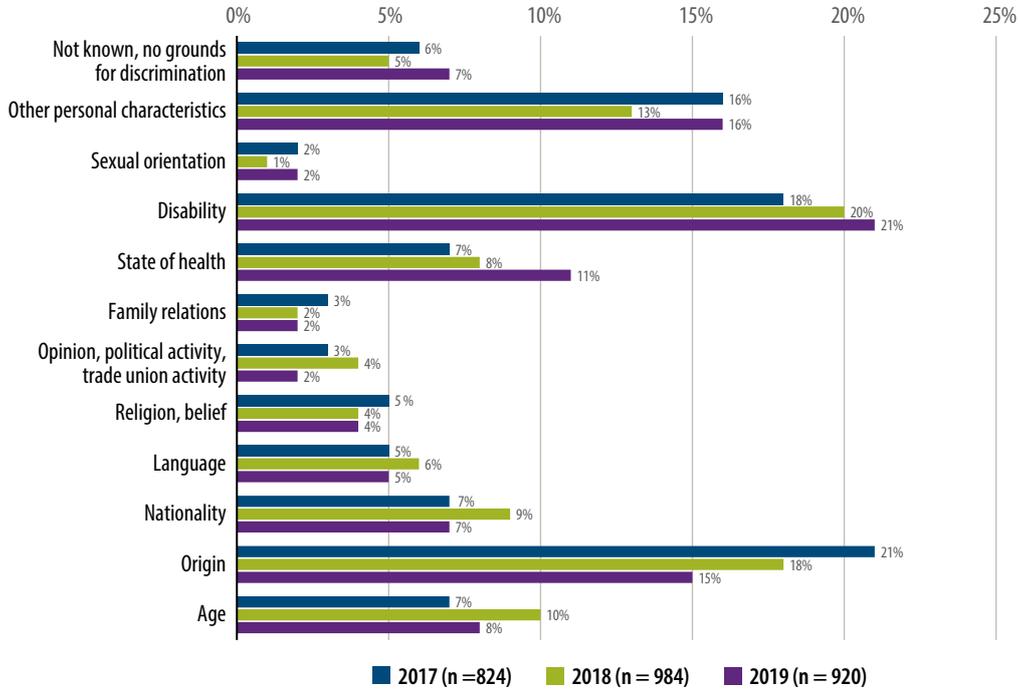
The data on occupational safety and health monitoring form a similar picture of the significance of different grounds for discrimination in working life as the experiences and observations of discrimination described above.

4.2 Non-discrimination Ombudsman and Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal

In 2018, the experts of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman processed a total of 1,192 contacts related to discrimination. Contacts related to discrimination are considered to include cases involving discrimination (around 90%), refusal of reasonable accommodation or harassment. In 2018, 984 contacts led to pending cases, which was nearly 20% more than in 2017. A large share of the contacts concerned providing advice. This was the case with 72% of all processed cases in 2017. The number of contacts whose processing was initiated slightly dropped in 2019; the total number of processed cases was 920 in the year (Table 1 above).

During the period under review, disability has replaced origin of birth as the most common reason for contacts. This may be linked to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the resulting increase in awareness. The third most significant reason for contacting the ombudsman involved other personal characteristics. An examination based on areas of life revealed that the contacts were mostly related to “other” private or public services or working life. The share of other private services has increased strongly during the period, while the number of contacts concerning other public services and working life decreased significantly in 2019 (Figure 4).

Contacts related to discrimination by grounds for discrimination



Contacts related to discrimination by areas of life

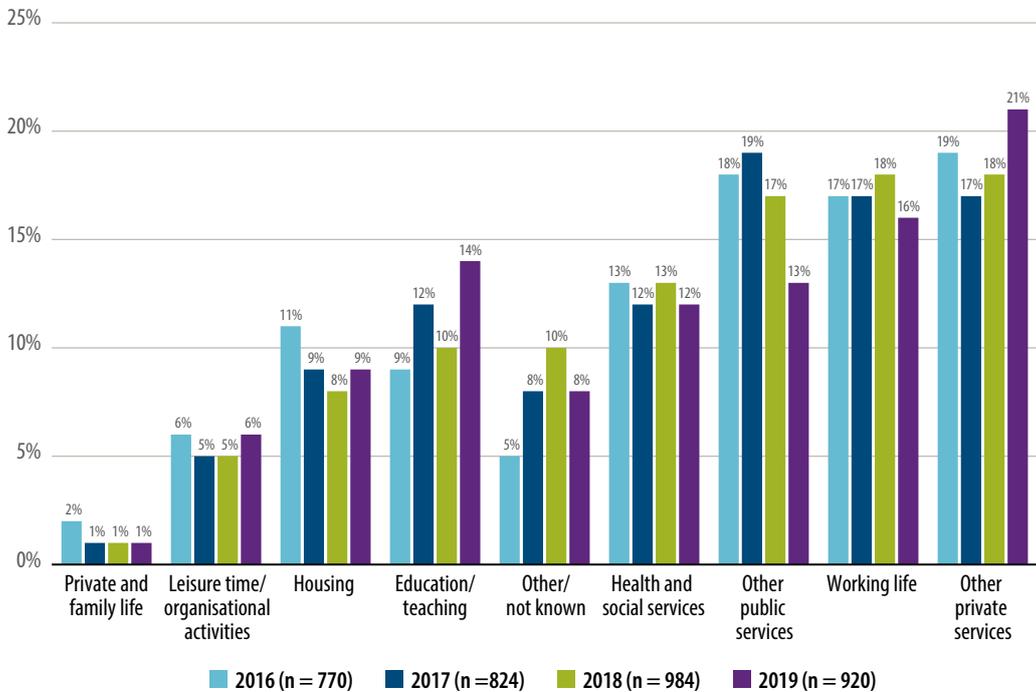


Figure 4. Contacts related to discrimination divided by grounds of discrimination and areas of life according to the statistics of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman in the period 2016–2019 (new preliminary information, will be included in the 2019 report).

Contacts by members of the Roma population mostly concerned housing in addition to private services during the period under review. Disability was the most common reason for filing a complaint concerning social welfare and health care services, other public and private services, and education. However, in contacts concerning private services, origin of birth was equally common, and in contacts concerning housing, it was the most common. In contacts related to working life, other personal characteristics were the most common, and health status the second most common, reason for contacting the ombudsman.

Examples:

- One gym clearly indicated that it did not welcome asylum seekers as its customers. However, there are no acceptable grounds for such a restriction. The basis for non-discrimination is that people must be treated and evaluated as individuals, not based on prejudice as the representatives of some group.
- Cases concerning age discrimination are often related to age limits set without acceptable grounds. These have involved not letting young people in a self-service library or a service station, not allowing those aged 65 or over to apply for positions of trust in an association, a medical centre terminating the employment contracts of physicians aged 70 or over without an individual assessment, or not providing students aged 30 or over with the same discounts as those under the age of 30. In some of these cases, discrimination may have also occurred not only based on age but also on the basis of gender, disability or ethnic origin. In fact, age is one of the most typical grounds for discrimination in cases of multiple discrimination.
- The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman made a statement to the Helsinki Administrative Court concerning an application for a residence permit of a Somali employee. It was impossible for the person to obtain the travel document needed for the application. Finland's authorities do not accept a Somali passport as a valid travel document. The ombudsman drew the attention of the Administrative Court to the fact that the position taken by the Finnish Immigration Service not to issue an alien's passport to the person can be considered to result in indirect discrimination on grounds of nationality prohibited by section 13 of the Non-Discrimination Act and an unreasonable outcome for the applicant. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment had issued a positive partial decision on the matter regarding granting a residence permit. The ombudsman also drew the

attention of the Administrative Court to two decisions by the Supreme Administrative Court (KHO:2015:107 and KHO:2014:22), which stated that refusal to grant a residence permit in a family reunification case on the grounds that the person did not have, and could not receive from the Somali State, a travel document that would be approved by the Finnish authorities was more restrictive to the rights of the applicant than necessary.

The annual report (2018) of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman drew attention to issues such as accessibility, the risks of discrimination related to the use of artificial intelligence, the operations of the housing market, parasports, promotion of equality in the army, human trafficking, the right of refugees to family life, and supervision of deportation. In a report drawn up for the Parliament (2018), the Ombudsman discussed the same matters and used a study conducted by the agency to extensively cover issues such as the status of asylum seekers and related changes, and human trafficking, while also presenting development suggestions. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman is the national rapporteur on human trafficking.

The National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal is an independent and unbiased legal protection body appointed by the Government. The tribunal supervises compliance with the Non-Discrimination Act and the Act on Equality between Women and Men in private activities and public administration and business. With regard to the Non-Discrimination Act, cases can be referred to the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal by the party affected by a discriminatory procedure or, with the consent of the injured party, by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman or a community promoting equality. In so far as the matter relates to the Equality Act, it can be brought before the Non-Discrimination and Equality Board by the Ombudsman for Equality or a central labour market organisation. The National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal may prohibit the continuation or renewal of discrimination or retaliation and impose a notice of a conditional fine to ensure compliance with the decision. The tribunal may order the person concerned to take measures to fulfil the obligations laid down in the Non-Discrimination Act within a reasonable period of time. The tribunal cannot order compensation or other compensation to be paid. Appeals against decisions made by the tribunal can be filed with the Administrative Court.

Most or at least a very large proportion of the decisions of the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal concern discrimination or disqualification based on disability.

The National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal processed a total of 77 cases in 2017, 130 in 2018 and 51 in 2019 (Table 1 above). In this context, the cases are considered to include applications and claims for rectification.

4.3 Parliamentary Ombudsman

The oversight of the Parliamentary Ombudsman produces significant information about discrimination in Finland. The Ombudsman implements oversight of the legality of different institutions and authorities, carries out inspections for this purpose and makes decisions on complaints. This is important for the implementation of the rights of foreigners, children, older people and persons with disabilities, and from a non-discrimination viewpoint.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman is, among other things, part of the national structure in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The 2018 annual report also comments on the oversight concerning the rights of older people and children. The Parliamentary Ombudsman oversees the right of older people to equal treatment, self-determination, personal freedom and integrity, the right to privacy, freedom of religion and conscience, rights to participate, linguistic rights and legal protection, also when these are not related to social and health care services. The Human Rights Centre, established under the Ombudsman, monitors the implementation of the rights of older people and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities approved by Finland, but it does not process complaints. The Human Rights Delegation, appointed for four years at a time, also assists the Ombudsman in this task.

In the 2017 and 2018 annual reports, the Ombudsman listed ten key fundamental and human rights issues. These are:

- Deficiencies in the conditions and treatment of persons with disabilities
- Deficiencies in child protection
- Deficiencies in the implementation of the rights of persons with disabilities
- Restrictive practices that violate the right to self-determination of persons in institutions
- Deficiencies in legal aid for foreigners and the insecurity of the undocumented immigrants

- Shortcomings in the conditions and treatment of prisoners and remand prisoners
- Deficiencies in the availability of health services and legislation
- Deficiencies in the learning environment and decision-making in basic education
- Lengthy processing times of judicial processes and shortcomings in the structural independence of courts
- Deficiencies in preventing and compensating for fundamental and human rights violations

The number of complaints concerning the rights of persons with disabilities resolved was 257 in 2018, and this number has been growing: 166 complaints were solved in 2017. The largest number of complaints concerned social welfare cases (150). Decisions were made on 38 cases concerned with personal assistance in accordance with the Act on Services and Assistance for the Disabled 28 with the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities and 19 cases with transport services. The solved cases also included 55 cases concerning health care services, 28 concerning social insurances and 7 concerning education. Complaints concerning services in accordance with Act on Services and Assistance for the Disabled covered issues such as decision-making related to services and customer fees, advice and guidance concerning a service, treatment in a customer service situation or at a housing unit, assessment of service needs, delay in processing an application or a complaint, application instructions provided by a municipality on services and the provision of services. The practices of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) were assessed as the provider of interpretation services for persons with disabilities and as the provider of benefits, such as disability benefits and rehabilitation allowance. The cases concerning the health care services covered the care and treatment of mental health rehabilitees, replacing a medical rehabilitative aid, organising medical rehabilitation and providing adequate health care services. Complaints concerning services for disabled people or special care for persons with intellectual disabilities often concerned deficiencies in decision-making or delays in processing an issue.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman also inspects the operation of housing and institutional units and psychiatric hospitals for persons with disabilities and also takes a stand on fundamental rights. In 2018, critical observations were made in the inspections on accessibility and the promotion of inclusion. In 2017, the Ombudsman commented on the promotion of equality by means of reasonable adjustments needed to remedy an inaccessible environment. There are two examples from 2018:

- The quality of social welfare is not good if the service is not available in Swedish for those wishing to use the service in the language. Language is a key factor for the quality of home care.

The Ombudsman also found the situation problematic from the perspective of non-discrimination as a protected fundamental right, as customers in need of home care were treated differently on linguistic grounds. However, this was not a case of not providing Swedish speakers with home care services but rather the language used, affecting the quality of the service and resulting in related differences.

- (-) it was clear that, under the Constitution of Finland and international conventions binding on Finland, central government should have ensured without undue delay that the names of the Sámi people can be entered in the Population Information System in the form they appear in the Sámi language. This was an essential factor in implementing the Sámi people's right to maintain and develop their culture and to preserve their identity.

In 2018, a total of 142 complaints by foreign citizens were submitted to the Ombudsman and 133 of them were resolved; in 2017, the number of complaints was 136 and 138 were resolved. The proportion of complaints by foreign citizens of all complains varies between 1% and 3%. The complaints typically concern dissatisfaction with the authorities' refusal of residence permit or asylum decisions and dissatisfaction with the authorities' procedures. Complaints were filed due to issues such as the long processing times of the authorities and approaches that were considered to be contrary to good administrative practice. The Parliamentary Ombudsman issued six reprimands to the Finnish Immigration Service.

According to the 2018 report, problems related to the implementation of the rights of older people have often been related to home care and access to information. Problems related to the implementation of the rights of the child have often involved defining the interface between limitations and growth. In 2018, only one decision was directly related to discrimination, concerning the upper age limits set to arts in basic education, which were considered to violate the Non-Discrimination Act (case number 6832/2017). The Ombudsman proposed that amendments to the legislation on the activities concerned or other measures be investigated. In 2017, there were no cases directly related to discrimination.

4.4 Chancellor of Justice

In 2017, the Chancellor of Justice commented on the consideration of fundamental and human rights in the drafting of statutes and on the delay of processing by the authorities. During the same year, an inspection visit was made to the Finnish Immigration Service,

and this revealed some unlawful procedures related to asylum seekers and paid attention to issues such as recording the interviews of applicants. During the period under review, 2017–2019, the decisions made by the Chancellor of Justice related to non-discrimination included the following.

- **A job advertisement should not have included a requirement for a certain age.** Case number: OKV/377/1/2016. A city was looking to hire a project coordinator for a fixed-term employment relationship in its museums. The job advertisement stated that the applicant should be under 30 years of age. The case could not be considered as a situation justifying different treatment under valid legislation, in which case an employment policy or labour market objective could have served as grounds for the treatment.
- **Patients are entitled to high-quality health care and medical treatment.** Case number: OKV/1121/1/2017. The emergency clinic at a central hospital was made aware of the fact that the complainant's care at the clinic did not in all respects comply with the provisions of the Act on the Status and Rights of Patients, be of high quality and meet the requirements of the patient's health condition. The complainant suspected discrimination based on a foreign last name and bipolar disorder diagnosis.
- **Device-independent online services would promote equality.** Case number: OKV/338/1/2018. The online services provided by the employment and economic administration to jobseekers have not been adapted to all mobile devices. The Chancellor of Justice requested that ministry provide a report by the end of 2019 of the measures it has taken to safeguard the service principle in using the services in person at the service units as well as making arrangements for providing access to the services digitally independent of devices.

4.5 Supreme Court and Supreme Administrative Court

While only some, individual cases relevant to discrimination and the application of the Non-Discrimination Act have been solved in the Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court, these have been all the more significant. In addition to the application of the Non-Discrimination Act, any other issues may also refer to the equality provision in section 6 of the Constitution. Table 3 presents the number of cases during the period under review.

Table 3. Decisions of the Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court referring to the Act on Equality Between Women and Men and Non-Discrimination Act, 2017–2019.

	2017	2018	2019
SUPREME COURT			
• Act on Equality between Women and Men	2	0	
• Non-Discrimination Act	1	2	2
SUPREME ADMINISTRATIVE COURT			
• Act on Equality between Women and Men	8	7	
• Non-Discrimination Act	2	3	2

According to the search information, five cases falling within the scope of the Non-Discrimination Act and related to discrimination were resolved in the Supreme Court during the review period. While the Non-Discrimination Act was invoked in several cases, the Court often considered that the issues at hand did not fall within the scope of the Act.

However, the following case on which the Court of Appeal made a decision is also of interest from the perspective of the present report.

- The Supreme Court does not investigate a criminal case which concerned sentencing a man who had refused military service and non-military service for pacifist reasons for refusing non-military service. As a result, an acquittal by the Helsinki Court of Appeal remained in force. The prosecutor applied for a leave to appeal from the Supreme Court. In February 2018, the Court of Appeal rejected the indictment against the man for the refusal of non-military service. According to the Court of Appeal, the defendant's pacifist conviction could not be placed on an unequal footing with the convictions of Jehovah's witnesses. The application of the provisions on punishments of the Non-Military Service Act would have led to a manifest conflict with the principle of non-discrimination and the prohibition of discrimination in the Constitution of Finland. Following the ruling of the Court of Appeal, a bill has been submitted to Parliament proposing the repeal of the Act on the exemption of Jehovah's witnesses from military service under certain conditions (case number R2018/286, 13.11.2018).

Seven cases falling within the scope of the Non-Discrimination Act and related to discrimination were resolved in the Supreme Administrative Court during the period under review. While the Act was invoked in several cases, the Court again often ruled that the cases concerned did not fall within the scope of the Non-Discrimination Act.

In case law, non-discrimination is also discussed in contexts such as the equal treatment of a company's shareholders or all tenders included in a competitive tendering process.

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5. HATE CRIME AND HATE SPEECH

Finland's national legislation has not determined an offence under the name "hate speech". The definition of hate speech was extensively discussed in a report by the working group led by Archbishop Mäkinen in 2019. According to the report, hate speech is a crime when it fulfils the characteristics of some offence. The most common offence in this context is ethnic agitation or its aggravated form. The groups subject to protection against ethnic agitation offences are determined based on skin colour, origin of birth, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation or disability, or other grounds comparable with these. When acts related to hate speech are directed at one or more identifiable persons, the case may concern a defamation offence or an illegal threat. The case may also fulfil the characteristics of public incitement to an offence, dissemination of information violating personal privacy, stalking or incitement to war. When hate speech meets the characteristics of a crime, it is considered a hate crime.

A hate crime can be an offence against a person, a group, someone's property, an institution or a representative of the former. The offence is motivated by prejudice or hostility towards the victim's presumed or actual ethnic or national background, religious belief or worldview, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or, for example, disability. A hate crime motive meets the grounds increasing the punishment. Penalisation has been extended beyond actual involvement: for example, under the Criminal Code, racist organisations are treated as organised crime groups and participation in their activities is a punishable offence.

Even if hate speech did not meet the characteristics of an offence, it may be prohibited as harassment under the Non-Discrimination Act (1325 / 2014). This refers to behaviour that deliberately or effectively violates a person's human dignity, if the behaviour is used to create a degrading, humiliating or threatening, hostile or offensive atmosphere because of a person's origin, disability or sexual orientation, for instance. The Act on Equality between Women and Men (Act on Equality between Women and Men, 609/1986) prohibits sexual harassment and gender-based harassment. Legislation also imposes limits to freedom of expression in other ways. For example, inappropriate marketing that violates or discriminates against human dignity is prohibited.

A police officer receiving a report of an offence will decide whether a reported offence is classified as a hate crime based on the joint written instructions of the police. Written instructions prepared for this process are used to assist this classification. Based on the classification, an offence is defined as a hate crime if one of the parties involved in the case (police, victim, witness, etc.) suspects that the offence was partly or fully motivated by suspicion or hostility towards one of the victim's (presumed) reference groups. These may include 1) ethnicity or nationality, 2) religion or belief, 3) sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, or 4) disability-related reference groups.

A case is also defined as hate crime if the explanatory part of the report of an offence hints at a hate crime basis, for instance by including racist language by the suspect. An analysis of hate crimes indicates that the motives of the crimes can often intertwine. This is often the case with e.g. ethnic background, skin colour and religion, as well as gender identity and sexual orientation.

5.1 Hate crimes 2017-2019

In 2018, a total of 910 reports of an offence were made to the police concerning suspected hate crimes. The number of reports decreased by 255 cases from the previous year (-22%). 1,300 suspected principal offences were found, down by 256 (-16%) from the previous year. Total cases classified as hate crimes by the police leading to a sentence amounted to 62 in 2017, 55 in 2018 and only 22 in 2019.

The majority of reported hate crimes received by the police are not classified as hate crimes. There is considerable variation between years, which is also reflected in the period considered. The classification was used for 39% of cases in 2017 and 26% in 2018. In 2018, the motive of the cases for which a specific motive had been recorded was ethnic or national background (80%) or religion or belief (16%). The third most common motive was gender identity, sexual orientation or gender expression. There are also cases in the police information system where a hate motive has emerged in the investigation, but the offence has not been recorded as a hate crime (Figure 5).

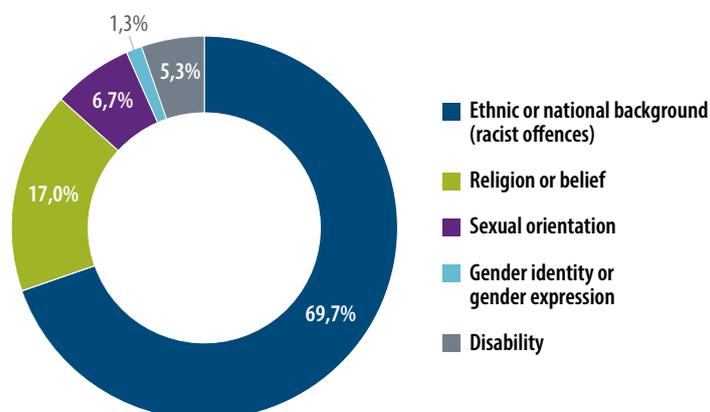


Figure 5. Proportions of different motives in reported hate crimes in 2018 (Rauta 2019, p. 10, Figure 3.)

As in previous years, the most common type of crime reported to the police in 2018 was assault (37%), but the number of cases has decreased by 17% since 2017. The next largest number was defamation, the number of which also decreased (-7%). The number of illegal threats increased by 3% and the number of damages increased by 7%. By contrast, the number of ethnic agitation cases significant decreased (-78%). The number of discrimination offences and invasion of domestic premises cases has somewhat increased.

Examples:

- A man verbally abused another customer at a bar because of the latter's ethnic background, after which he was assaulted by the victim. One is suspected of defamation and the other of assault.
- The defendant, together with an unknown person, has committed an act of physical violence against injured party A and injured party B. The offences have been motivated by the sexual orientation of A and B. The defendant has confessed acting as described in the indictment. The District Court rules that the defendant has been guilty of assault by injured parties unknown to him or her, for which there has been no explanation other than the sexual orientation of the injured parties. When an offence has been motivated by the victim's sexual orientation, the District Court accepts the prosecutor's demand for applying the grounds for increasing the punishment. The District Court sentenced the defendant to an unconditional sentence of imprisonment of 80 days.

During the year under review, the injured party of all primary offences involving a hate motive was male in 66 and female in 34 per cent of cases (Table 5). The shares of the

motives were very similar in both groups. When examined by offence type, men were the most commonly subjected to an assault (47%), whereas defamation was the most common offence against women (35%).

While ethnic agitation has been a very rarely occurring hate crime in Finland, it has become more common at least temporarily. The number of judgments in which ethnic agitation was the principal offence issued in district courts was 13 in 2017 and 31 in 2018. In 2019, 29 of such judgments were issued. The total number of reported offences was clearly higher; for instance, 189 in 2017 and 34 in 2018 (Table 4).

Table 4. Cases concerning ethnic agitation (number) from pre-trial investigation to prosecution and a sentence by the district courts in the period 2017–2019.

Name	2017			2018			2019
	pre-trial investigation	charge	judgment	pre-trial investigation	charge	judgment	judgment
Ethnic agitation/aggravated ethnic agitation	189	87	13	34	72	31	29

5.2 Occurrence of hate speech and its impacts

Hate speech and related victimisation seems to be the most common in young age groups. According to a survey conducted by Statistics Finland, 39% of respondents had witnessed hate speech on social media in 2017; the share had grown by 13% in four years.

The International Press Institute has investigated online harassment against Finnish journalists. According to the Institute, journalists writing about asylum seekers, immigration and Russia are often subjected to online harassment. According to a survey on wellbeing at work sent to municipal leaders, 41% of municipal leaders had experienced threats or harassment. However, there had been a decrease in the experienced harassment in the past ten years. According to a survey conducted by the Finnish Association of Prosecutors, 40% of prosecutors reported in 2018 that they had been subjected to inappropriate behaviour due to their work; according to a survey by the Finnish Association of Judges, two thirds of judges considered that they had been subjected to inappropriate behaviour or persuasion. The situation has been deteriorating in the context of judicial authorities. Hate speech and harassment are apparently linked to the perceived confidence in the authorities.

According to a study commissioned by the Government, 45% of Members of Parliament and their assistants, and also around 15% of their families and friends, had been subjected to hate speech. However, less than half of the Members of Parliament responded to the questionnaire. Based on this survey, hate speech targeted at men more often than women, an experiencing hate speech has been particularly common in the Helsinki Uusimaa region. The majority of hate speech targeted at municipal decision-makers is by a person the victim is unfamiliar with. However, it is interesting that nearly half of the respondents had also been subjected to hate speech from local councillors or persons working in positions of trust, and nearly 40% were familiar with the perpetrator. Municipal decision-makers have rarely reported hate speech; instead, they have most often reported the incident to their party (41%) or the police (24%). As the most important support measure, the respondents reported finding it necessary to condemn hate speech and harassment in public, and most also needed instructions on what to do when subjected to hate speech. More than one half of the hate messages received by parliamentarians on Twitter, totalling at 5,500, had been sent from 204 accounts. In total, hate messages had been sent from 2,200 accounts, meaning that less than 10% had sent more than half of the messages, and the most active account had sent 115 messages. It was also investigated to what extent the accounts sending hate messages interacted. Around 75% of the hate messages could be traced to a single network characterised by conservative and anti-immigration ideology.

In addition to physical violence, gender-based violence refers to sexual harassment and hate speech based on gender or its expression. Analyses of the equality barometer show that women experience this clearly more often than men. Young age, belonging to a minority and low income also significantly increase the risk of accumulation of such experiences. From a perspective of multiple discrimination, gender is the most significant background factor: women are often at a greater risk than men.

According to the School Health Promotion Study, children with a foreign background and disability are more likely to experience bullying and harassment than others. According to a survey conducted in 2017, more than half of respondents representing different minorities had experienced hate speech or harassment, and this had made them avoid some places. Only around one in four reported the incidents they had encountered. The most common reason for not reporting an incident was believing that reporting it would lead nowhere.

The authors of report on the impact of hate speech on public decision-making divided hateful communications in Finland into three main categories:

- political pressuring
- hate speech emerging from adversarial politics and
- impulsive harassment

A working group appointed by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education and Culture proposed the following methods of intervening in hate speech:

- preparing an operational programme against hate speech
- establishing a centre of expertise, increasing research and knowledge-based management
- developing legislation
- value leadership by decision-makers and intervening in hate speech
- setting clear boundaries for acceptable speech within the political system
- determining clearer parties responsible and selection of approaches for election candidates and those working in municipal positions
- developing the responsibility of platforms for removing hostile messages and closing accounts and
- making hate speech aiming to influence politics visible
- providing teachers and school staff with more opportunities to intervene in hate speech and online bullying
- ensuring that the employer's and the client's responsibility is realised when an employee is subjected to hate speech or a hate campaign
- improving the support available for hate speech victims

The effects of hate speech and hate crimes are similar to those of discrimination, they exist in many different forms and over a long period, and discrimination is also hate crime. Hate speech affects physical and psychological health, a person's sense of security and need for seeking shelter, willingness to appear in public and participate in public discussions, and trust in unfamiliar people. According to a Finnish study, the most obvious negative effects are trust in unfamiliar people (50%), willingness to appear in public (42%) and a general sense of security (41%).

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6. PROMOTION OF EQUALITY

Under the Non-Discrimination Act, the authorities, education providers and employers are obliged to promote equality. Equality planning is the most important tool for promoting equality and non-discrimination. Equality planning means that the organisation evaluates and develops its activities in a systematic and goal-oriented manner from the perspective of the implementation of equality. The Ministry of Justice develops guidelines and methods for equality planning and assessment, maintains a system for monitoring discrimination and coordinates national information campaigns against discrimination. The Yhdenvertaisuus.fi website on equality maintained by the Ministry of Justice offers practical tools and good practices for equality planning. The website contains information on legislation and research, training materials, and the campaigns and projects related to promoting equality.

The Ministry of Justice has also published a tool for assessing equality, see. <https://yhdenvertaisuus.fi/documents/5232670/5376058/Yhdenvertaisuuden+arvioinnin+opas>.

The content of the guide includes:

- Why - what are the benefits of assessing and promoting equality?
- Who is subject to the assessment obligation?
- The assessment of equality in the Non-Discrimination Act: public authority / education provider / employer
- What is assessed: identifying and intervening in discrimination; monitoring discrimination and prohibiting the processing of sensitive data; discrimination in different population groups
- Promoting equality: group-specific examination; examination of the organisation's activities; examination of good relations within the population
- How is the assessment carried out? - analysis of results and launching planning; from results to actions.

The work of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health extensively promotes equality. Under the heading of a functional work community, the Institute has produced a lot of information and learning materials on topics such as age management and diversity in working life, bullying and combating it, and also information for immigrants. During the period under review, it has published, for example, a guide on identifying and developing competence at multicultural workplaces (<http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-261-803-0>).

The occupational safety and health administration has published guidelines for employers to promote equality at the workplace. According to the guidelines, the promotion of equality must occur as regular development activities in four stages:

1. determine the equality situation at the workplace
2. assess the needs of the workplace
3. implement the measures necessary for promoting equality
4. monitor the effectiveness of the measures.

Source: https://www.tyosuojelu.fi/documents/14660/2426906/Yhdenvertaisuus_opas/00ca52a7-d845-ff24-1f7e-8ec9067f9053.

Integration work can also be considered as part of promoting equality. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has compiled an extensive review containing information on immigration and integration and related measures. In the review, integration is linked to growth and wellbeing policy (<https://tem.fi/documents/1410877/11992263/Faktatietoa+maahanmuutosta+ja+kotouttamisesta+25012019/faa5862e-9f95-d674-199e-f8cf9b4ba2c4/Faktatietoa+maahanmuutosta+ja+kotouttamisesta+25012019.pdf>).

Activity in local administration is important in promoting equality. For example, the City of Tampere wants to be the “capital of equality” and implement a series of actions promoting equality with the theme of “Tampere. Equally yours”, starting in 2019. The first actions to be made public promote the equality of children and young people as well as accessible event activities. Equality has also been selected as a major theme in the joint application process for the Capital of Culture of Tampere and Pirkanmaa.

According to inspections carried out by the Regional State Administrative Agency for Southern Finland, employers have an interest in promoting equality, but have little knowledge of how to do this. There is a need for more information provision and dissemination of good practices. Good practices include:

- Paying attention to different limitations related to aspects such as ergonomics, fragrance allergies and difficulties concentrating in the planning of multi-purpose spaces.
- During the recruitment process, ensuring that electronic job search systems are also accessible to special groups, such as the visually impaired.
- Taking the needs of people of different ages into account, for example, by increasing the flexibility of work to maintain the work ability of older people.
- A job advertisement encouraged people belonging to minorities to apply for a job.
- Approaching a company's customers with information sheets aiming at preventing inappropriate behaviour against foreign employees.
- Taking the holidays of different religions and cultures into account in shift planning.
- Primarily hiring persons with disabilities as summer employees.
- Establishing a Pride group aiming at improving the status of sexual minorities at a workplace, and allowing anyone to join it.

According to a survey conducted by the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities in 2017, the majority of municipalities (79%, 100 municipalities) had drawn up an equality plan for its personnel. A total of 12% (15 municipalities) had no plan, but there was an intention to draw one up. Only 9% (11 municipalities) reported that they had no such plan concerning their staff. The survey was conducted in all Finland's municipalities, but the response rate was only 42%. The respondents represented Finland's different regions and different types of municipalities comprehensively. Fewer municipalities had an operational plan promoting equality (36%) or were planning to prepare one (17%). Other respondents reported that they did not have such a plan and were not planning one. The results concerning equality planning were similar. Large cities had drawn up the required plans more often than small municipalities, and their plans were extensive without an exception. Of the target groups in the Non-Discrimination Act, the plans fared best at taking into account age and disability, and most often aimed at improving the availability of services and raising awareness, and influencing attitudes and the discussion culture. The plans are monitored in accordance with the best practice as part of the municipality's or city's budget and strategy monitoring.

The study on the freedom of choice and accessibility of social and health care services emphasised linguistic accessibility, a concept broader than language rights. This means that the client or patient is aware of services, receives services, is understood, also understands the instructions related to care and is therefore able to take personal

responsibility for their treatment. This requires, among other things, providing information, guidance and counselling through multiple channels, the availability of interpretation services and the accessibility of electronic services. As a result, in promoting equality, particular attention must be paid to the groups that find it most difficult to obtain information. To promote linguistic accessibility, recommendations have been prepared in a study produced by the Ministry of Justice.

A recent study on the promotion of equality at workplaces identifies shortcomings in drawing up and implementing plans as practical problems. A relatively large share of those taking part in the study noted that the work carried out did not have an impact on equality, although some also noted that there had been no problems in the matter previously. Only around one in five employees and employers felt that promoting equality had resulted in a positive impact. Discrimination issues are still not particularly well known, and the discourse on equality and non-discrimination continue to be confused with each other. There are still inadequacies in identifying good practices.

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