## Questionnaire on the right of persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making

Special Rapporteur on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities, 4006/9C/2015 15/09/2015

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### Contribution from the Finnish NHRI/Human Rights Centre

The Human Rights Centre (HRC) would like to thank the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities for the possibility to provide input on the right of persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making in Finland

The HRC, its Delegation and the Office of the Parliamentary Ombudsman together form Finland’s National Human Rights Institution. The institution was accredited with the highest A-status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions in December 2014. According to legislation, one of the tasks of the HRC is to participate in European and international cooperation related to the promotion and protection of fundamental and human rights. The HRC generally represents the Finnish NHRI in international NHRI cooperation.

We hope that you will find our response useful for your purposes.

*1. Please provide information on the legislative and policy framework in place in your country related to the status, establishment, resourcing, and functioning of representative organizations of persons with disabilities at the national, regional and local levels;*

**Representative organisations of persons with disabilities are active and influential civil society actors in Finland.** Disabled people’s organisations (DPOs) participate in discussions on disability rights in the society, advocate for improvements in the situation of persons with disabilities and influence policy making. They are regularly consulted by the authorities on legislative reforms relevant to disability as well as in the preparation and implementation of disability policy (*see answers to questions 2 and 3*).

**The right to form associations and participate in public life is guaranteed in the Constitution of Finland** (731/1999).[[1]](#footnote-1) The Constitution guarantees everyone the freedoms of assembly and association without discrimination. Everyone has the right to arrange meetings and demonstrations without a permit and the right to participate in them. According to the constitution, freedom of association entails the right to form an association without a permit, to be a member or not to be a member of an association and to participate in the activities of an association. The freedom to form trade unions and to organise in order to look after other interests is likewise guaranteed. The Constitution states that public authorities shall promote the opportunities for the individual to participate in societal activity and to influence the decisions that concern him or her. **The Constitution provides a sound basis for the participation of disabled persons and DPOs in public and political affairs.** Detailed provisions regulating associations are laid out in the Associations Act (503/1989).[[2]](#footnote-2)

**National and local authorities as well as foundations and trusts fund DPOs and support their functioning.** Several ministries provide financial assistance to civil society organisations (CSOs). For example, the Ministry of Education and Health grants funds to disability organisations and groups for cultural activities, including accessibility of culture. The Ministry also supports the youth work of DPOs. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs provides funding to CSOs for development cooperation and global education projects. Funds for development projects concerning rights of persons with disabilities are channelled mainly through Finnish DPOs.

In addition, some municipalities provide support for DPOs. For example, the city of Espoo offers grants to organisations, including DPOs, for activities that enhance the everyday life of residents, increase their participation possibilities and improve their capabilities, health and well-being.

One important funding source for DPOs is **Finland's Slot Machine Association RAY** (*Raha-automaattiyhdistys*), a non-profit company that has monopoly over slot machines and casino games in Finland. The profits from RAY’s games are used for promoting health and social welfare in Finland. Organisations can apply for funding annually. The fund allocation is guided by policies created by RAY’s Board of Directors and a result agreement prepared with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. In 2015, RAY provided a total of 91 468 000 euros for 227 organisations working in the fields of disability or illness.

*2. Please provide information on existing legislation and policies aimed at ensuring that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, including children with disabilities, are consulted and involved in decision-making processes that directly or indirectly concern them;*

**Finland is often recognised as one of the leading democracies in the world.** The country is regarded to have a stable political system as well as an open and non-corrupt government. Legislation does not limit the rights of disabled persons to participate in decision-making in the society.

**Basic rights and liberties are guaranteed to all persons in the Constitution of Finland** (731/1999).[[3]](#footnote-3) According to the Constitution, everyone is equal before the law and no one shall, without an acceptable reason, be treated differently from other persons on the ground of sex, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, health, disability or other reason that concerns his or her person. The Constitution states that democracy entails the right of the individual to participate in and influence the development of society and his or her living conditions. Public authorities are given the task to promote the opportunities for the individual to participate in societal activity and to influence the decisions that concern him or her. With regard to electoral and participatory rights, voting rights in elections are guaranteed to all citizens who have reached 18 years of age.[[4]](#footnote-4) Everyone who has the right to vote and who is not under guardianship or legally incompetent can register as a candidate in elections, with a few exceptions.[[5]](#footnote-5) Freedom of expression and the right of access to information as well as freedom of assembly and freedom of association are granted to everyone.

According to the recently revised **Non-Discrimination Act**[[6]](#footnote-6)(1325/2014, entered into force on 1 January 2015), protection against discrimination is equal regardless of whether the discrimination is based on ethnic origin, age, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. The Act is applied to all public and private activities, excluding private life, family life and practice of religion**.** In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, and an instruction or order to discriminate, the denial of reasonable accommodations also constitutes discrimination, and the Act allows for positive differential treatment. However, unequal treatment is still allowed in certain situations, for example if it has acceptable grounds and an objective based on fundamental and human rights and if the means to achieve the objective are in proportion. **By prohibiting discrimination based on disability and by defining the denial of reasonable accommodations as discrimination, the Act promotes equal participation of disabled persons in the society.**

**The Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act** (380/1987) states that authorities need to take into account the opinions and wishes of disabled persons when deciding on their personal assistance services. **The Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients** (812/2000) guarantees the individual’s right to be heard and to participate in the decision-making concerning their services and care. According to the Act, authorities have to take into account the wishes and opinions of social welfare clients and respect their right to self-determination.

**The Sign Language Act** (359/2015), which entered into force on 1 May 2015, clarifies and strengthens the linguistic rights of sign language users and increases awareness among the authorities about sign language users as a linguistic and cultural minority. The Act obliges the authorities to promote the possibilities of sign language users to use their own language and receive information in sign language. The Act reiterates rights of sign language users guaranteed in special legislation, such as the right to education in sign language and the right to interpretation services.

 **The aim of Finnish democracy policy is to promote the realisation of citizens’ fundamental and human rights and equal possibilities for participation.** Several government initiatives have aimed to strengthen the participation possibilities of citizens at all levels and on an equal basis. Attention has been paid to access to information and emphasis has been given to understandable language, multiple information channels and accessibility.

**In elections, disabled persons can both vote and register as candidates.** Voters can decide whether they are going to vote in advance during the advance voting period or on the election day. Disabled persons can be provided transportation to polling stations in accordance with the provisions concerning transportation services in the legislation on services and supporting functions for the disabled. Advance voting is possible in operational units of the social services offering round-the-clock treatment and other units determined by the municipal board, as well as at a persons’ home if their ability to move or function is limited to the degree that they are unable to go to the polling station without undue hardship. Municipalities are required to pay attention to accessibility at polling stations, and the Ministry of Justice provides election officials with general instructions on accessibility and voting arrangements for persons with physical disabilities and physically challenged persons. General information about elections and candidate lists are provided in braille and in audio form. The Vaalit.fi website includes videos on elections in Finnish and Finland-Swedish sign language as well as videos and texts in easy-to-read language.

**The Human Rights Report of the Finnish Government** (2014), covering both national and international human rights policy, recognises that persons with disabilities encounter discrimination and human rights violations more often than other population groups. The report expresses the need to create an accessible society, strengthen the right to self-determination, and increase the participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in decision-making processes.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**In Finnish disability policy**,disability is seen as a condition caused by the interaction between environmental barriers and the individual. The principles of disability policy are the rights to equality, participation, necessary services and support. Policies aim to support the working and functional capacity of people with disabilities and their individual autonomy.

**Finland’s Disability Policy Programme** (VAMPO)[[8]](#footnote-8) for 2010–2015 lays out the basis for the inclusion and equality of disabled persons. The policy includes 122 short and long-term measures that aim to develop all relevant policy sectors from the perspective of the rights, freedoms and equal opportunities of persons with disabilities. VAMPO was also designed to function as a tool for national promotion and implementation of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[[9]](#footnote-9)

VAMPO seeks to mainstream disability policy and to clarify and strengthen sectoral responsibility. Strengthening participation and equal status of disabled persons are central cross-cutting themes in the policy. VAMPO views policy contents through the perspective of fourteen cross-sectorial social themes, one of which is social inclusion and participation. The goal of the policy programme is to influence development trends in the society so as to realise the full and active participation of persons with disabilities in all areas. VAMPO recognises persons with disabilities as key actors in disability policy at all levels, and it includes several measures that seek to increase interaction between the authorities and the civil society. With regard to elections, VAMPO pays attention to the needs to develop accessibility of voting, including information on elections and transportation to polling stations, as well as the need to develop electronic voting to ensure independent decision-making and secrecy of ballot.

VAMPO is complemented by **municipal disability policy programmes**, which deal with disability policy formation and implementation at the local level and promote the participation of disabled persons in municipal policy-making, for example, through municipal disability councils (see answer to question 3).

**The drafting process of VAMPO is a good example of participatory and inclusive policy-making.** The preparation process was open and interactive. The goal was to increase awareness about disability across different administrative sectors and in the society. VAMPO was prepared in cooperation with various ministries, Finnish Disability Forum, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, social partners, National Institute for Health and Welfare, and National Council on Disability (VANE, see answer to question 3). In addition, regional hearings as well as other events and seminars were arranged during the preparation process. The transparency and openness of the preparation phase was enhanced by the interactive VAMPO website at [www.vane.to/](http://www.vane.to/), where information about the programme preparations was available in Finnish and Swedish as well as in Finnish Sign Language, easy-to-read Finnish, the Samí language and English. The draft version of VANE could be commented on the website.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The latest monitoring report on VAMPO’s implementation was published by the National Institute for Health and Welfare in 2014.[[11]](#footnote-11) **According to the report, the measures included in VAMPO have succeeded in directing Finnish disability policy towards the aims of the programme** and 82 % of the measures introduced in VAMPO had been launched by spring 2014.

**CSOs, including DPOs, are regularly consulted by ministries and parliamentary committees**. According to a Government resolution on advancing democracy in Finland[[12]](#footnote-12), each government ministry should have a strategy concerning CSOs in order to promote the participation of both citizens and CSOs, and most ministries have guidelines and procedures on cooperating with the civil society. The most common forms of consultation are written statements. However, cooperation and hearing practices vary between ministries. In addition, each ministry has their own established channels for consultation and they often consult the same small group of CSOs, which limits the participation possibilities of especially smaller organisations. In addition, the authorities do not always recognise the variety of relevant fundamental and human rights issues involved, and matters such as disability rights might be ignored.

**Citizen’s initiatives** can encourage disabled persons and DPOs to participate in decision-making at the national level. The law concerning citizens’ initiativesentered into force in 2012. In order to be submitted to the Parliament, initiatives have to be supported by at least fifty thousand Finnish citizens entitled to vote. At the municipal level, residents of a municipality have the right to submit initiatives on matters concerning the municipality’s activities.

Disabled persons and DPOs can also benefit from the multiple **e-participation platforms and services** that have been developed by the Ministry of Justice. These services aim to increase possibilities for citizens’ participation and enable dialogue between citizens, NGOs, politicians and public servants. All platforms can be accessed through a single website, <http://demokratia.fi/>. With regard to disabled persons, **it is important to ensure that the services are accessible** and that information on the platforms and their use is available in easy-to-read language, sign language and for the visually impaired. Otherwise online services can hamper the equal participation of disabled persons.

*3. Please provide information on any consultative body or mechanism established to consult and engage with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, including information about their composition, criteria for membership (nomination, appointment, election, etc.) and functioning;*

**Advisory boards** have an important position in Finland as facilitators of networking, cooperation and information sharing between public authorities and civil society. The members of advisory boards are appointed by relevant authorities. For CSOs, a membership in an advisory board is an important recognition as well as a channel to influence policies. However, the traditional advisory board structure supports the participation of bigger, well-resourced CSOs. Therefore, open hearings remain important for smaller and regional organisations, including less-influential DPOs.

The **Advisory Board on Civil Society Policy** (*kansalaisyhteiskuntapolitiikan neuvottelukunta*, KANE) aims to promote cooperation between the authorities and the civil society. Currently, only one alternate member of KANE is from a disability organisation. However, there are a few additional representatives of DPOs in the working groups of the advisory board.

**The National Council on Disability (*valtakunnallinen vammaisneuvosto,* VANE)** functions as a national co-operative body for authorities, disabled people's organisations and organisations of the relatives of disabled persons. VANE was established by Government Decree 195/1986 in 1986.[[13]](#footnote-13) It has 18 members who are appointed for a period of three years. Current members include representatives of DPOs, different ministries, the National Institute for Health and Welfare, and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. According to the Government Decree, half of the members have to represent disabled persons or their representative organisations. VANE aims to ensure the rotation of membership so that different DPOs are represented in the Council in turn. The secretariat of VANE is located at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Council receives its funding from the Ministry.

VANE’s statutory tasks are to monitor social planning, decision-making and actions that promote the participation possibilities and equality of disabled persons, to make proposals and suggestions to authorities and give statements on matters which deal with the participation possibilities and equality of disabled persons, to promote collaboration between disabled persons, their organisations and authorities, and to promote the increased participation of disabled persons in matters concerning them. VANE aims to influence the living conditions of disabled persons, promotes the implementation of their human rights, influences legislation and policies, and encourages development towards an inclusive society. VANE also coordinates the monitoring and implementation of Finland’s Disability Policy (VAMPO, see answer to question 2). In addition, VANE follows developments at the EU level and participates in European cooperation on disability policy. At the local level, VANE arranges events and trainings for municipal disability councils and provides information to municipalities on current developments at the national level.

Once Finland completes the ratification process of the CRPD, VANE will be replaced by a new mechanism responsible for coordinating the implementation of the CRPD (see answer to question 6). VANE and several DPOs have been involved in the working group of the Foreign Ministry that has been preparing the ratification of CRPD.

In addition to VANE, DPOs are taking part in multiple entities dealing with human rights and equality at the national level. DPOs are represented in the **National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal of Finland** (*Yhdenvertaisuus- ja tasa-arvolautakunta*), an impartial and independent judicial body appointed by the Government, which supervises compliance with the Non-Discrimination Act and the Act on Equality between Women and Men (Equality Act). The **Coordination Group for International Disability Policy** (*kansainvälisen vammaispolitiikan koordinaatioryhmä*), convened by the Foreign Ministry, has multiple members from DPOs. The unofficial group discusses topical matters in the international sphere related to the rights of persons with disabilities. The previous **Advisory Board on International Human Rights Affairs** (*Kansainvälisten ihmisoikeusasiain neuvottelukunta*,IONK), which ended its term in March 2015, included a member from the Finnish Disability Forum (*Vammaisfoorumi*).[[14]](#footnote-14)

The Ministry of Justice has established **a sign language cooperation group** (*viittomakielen yhteistyöryhmä*), which deals with current issues concerning sign language and aims to ensure information sharing between stakeholders. The members of the group include representatives from ministries, the Finnish Association of the Deaf and the Finland-Swedish Sign Language Users (*Finlandssvenska teckenspråkiga* *rf*).

**Municipal disability councils** are mandatory according to the recently revised Local Government Act (410/2015). In order to ensure the participation and empowerment of disabled persons, municipal authorities have to establish a municipal disability council, where disabled persons, their organisations and family members have to be represented. Municipalities can also establish joint disability councils. The disability council has to be given a chance to influence the planning, drafting and monitoring of policies which affect the well-being, health, participation, living conditions, housing, transportation and services of disabled persons and their ability to cope with everyday life. Municipalities have to provide the disability councils with adequate resources. Municipal disability councils facilitate cooperation and information sharing between stakeholders and advise the authorities in issues concerning disability.

The Finnish NHRI/HRC has its own participatory body, **the Human Rights Delegation,** whose members include representatives of DPOs. The Delegation functions as a national cooperative body for fundamental and human rights actors, deals with fundamental and human rights issues of a far-reaching significance and principal importance, and yearly approves the HRC’s plan of action and annual report. The members are appointed by the Parliamentary Ombudsman for a period of four years. The application process for membership is open. The members of the Delegation do not represent their respective organisations, and individuals without organisational affiliations can also apply for membership. Permanent members of the Delegation are the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Chancellor of Justice (or their deputies), the Ombudsman for Minorities, the Ombudsman for Equality, the Ombudsman for Children, the Data Protection Ombudsman and a representative of the Sámi Parliament.

*4. Please provide information on the efforts undertaken at national, regional and/or local levels to strengthen the capacity of representative organizations of persons with disabilities, in order to facilitate their participation in legislative, policy and other decision-making processes;*

See answers to questions 1, 2 and 3.

*5. Please explain whether and how persons with disabilities participate in monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 33, para. 3), and in the nomination of experts to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 34, para. 3);*

Finland has not yet ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Government Bill (284/2014) on the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention was submitted to the Parliament on 4 December 2014**.** The Parliament accepted the ratification of the CRPD on 3 March 2015. However, according to the decision of the Parliament, the ratification will not be finalised until national legislation has been amended so that it is consistent with the Convention. **The ratification will not be completed before existing legislation on persons with intellectual disabilities is reformed with regard to provisions on self-determination and the conditions for the use of restrictive measures**.[[15]](#footnote-15) The Government has been widely criticised for the delays in the ratification process. However, according to Finnish policy, national legislation has to be in line with international conventions before they can be ratified.

The Government Bill on the ratification of the CRPD stipulates that **the independent mechanism according to article 33(2), responsible for promoting, protecting and monitoring the national implementation of the Convention, will be formed by the Parliamentary Ombudsman, Human Rights Centre and its Delegation, i.e. the Finnish NHRI.** This is the first statutory duty that will be assigned to the NHRI as one entity. According to the Government Bill, this arrangement would also ensure the full participation of civil society and persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in the monitoring process, according to article 33(3). The participation could be realised by establishing a separate disability rights section for the Human Rights Delegation. In addition, disabled persons and their organisation could participate in an advisory capacity in the monitoring work of the NHRI through hearings and by taking part in inspections conducted by the Ombudsman’s Office.

**The NHRI is already preparing for its upcoming new duties under the Convention.** The Human Rights Delegation currently has a working group that is preparing for the establishment of a disability rights section under the umbrella of the Delegation. The members of the working group include three members of the Human Rights Delegation representing DPOs, as well as representatives from the HRC, the Parliamentary Ombudsman’s Office, the Office of the Equality Ombudsman and the Foreign Ministry. The task of the working group is to draft the rules of procedure for the disability section and to discuss how the involvement and participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in accordance with article 33(3) could be realised through the Human Rights Delegation. The disability section will be established once the ratification of the CRPD is finalised.

**According to the Government Bill on the ratification of the CRPD, the National Council on Disability (VANE) will be reformed to function as the national coordination mechanism under article 33(1).** The coordination mechanism will highlight the needs of disabled persons and gaps in the realisation of their rights, as well as gather information, arrange training and participate in periodic reporting on the implementation of the CRPD. Emphasis will be on increasing dialogue and sharing of information with the grassroots level and participation of local-level actors. One challenge for VANE will be how the new duties can be realised with current resources.

*6. Please identify the main challenges faced by the diversity of persons with disabilities in participating in mainstream and disability-specific decision-making processes at the national, regional and local levels, including challenges faced by persons who experience multiple discrimination (e.g., on the basis of disability, age, gender, ethnic origin, geographical location).*

The revised **Non-Discrimination Act** (1325/2014) improves protection from discrimination based on disability and multiple discrimination, and the Act provides better possibilities for discriminated persons to get advice and legal aid. The new Non-Discrimination Ombudsmanhas a mandate to supervise compliance with the Act with regard to all grounds of discrimination. However, the Ombudsman for (Gender) Equality continues to supervise compliance with the Equality Act on gender-based discrimination. The National Discrimination Tribunal and the (Gender) Equality Board were merged and the mandate of the new National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunalcovers all discrimination grounds. Compliance with the provisions on equality in working life in individual cases will continue to be supervised by occupational safety authorities, although the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman has some powers relating to equality in working life. **However, as the revised Act entered into force in January 2015**, **its concrete impact on the equality of disabled persons is difficult to assess.**

Despite some positive developments and structures that strengthen the participation of disabled persons in decision-making, **there are still problems with the realisation of participation rights and equality of disabled persons.** Structural barriers, prejudicial attitudes, lack of information and regional inequalities persist in the Finnish society. Despite the aspirational goals and principles of the Disability Policy Programme (VAMPO, see answer to question 2), persons with disabilities remain underrepresented in social activities, municipal and national decision-making bodies and the parliament, and their rights are not always fully recognised. Established structures for consultation benefit larger and already influential CSOs. Especially disabled children, older persons with disabilities and persons with intellectual disabilities face barriers to being heard in policy-making and legislative processes.

**Delays in the ratification process of the CRPD are of great concern.** As the schedule of the legislative changes needed for finalising the ratification process is still open, there is no certainty on when the ratification to be finalised.

**Multiple disability groups are unable to participate fully in political and public affairs and decision-making in the society** due to problems relating to accessibility, access to information, and prejudicial attitudes. The needs of specific groups of persons with disabilities are not always sufficiently recognised**.** For example, in elections the blind are dependent on assistants to mark their ballots. Electronic voting, which would facilitate voting for disabled persons, is not yet possible. In addition, accessibility of information is a persistent problem. For instance, according to the Finnish Association of the Deaf, the deaf do not receive enough information in sign language about political and public affairs, which results in a general disinterest in politics. In addition, prejudicial attitudes persist in the Finnish society, as the deaf are not seen as capable of holding public offices and high political positions. There is a need to raise awareness about hearing disabilities as well as to increase information available in sign language.[[16]](#footnote-16)

**In elections, there are still problems with accessibility of premises and secrecy of ballot.** Officers of the Parliamentary Ombudsman’s Office conducted unannounced inspections to advance polling stations before the recent parliamentary elections in April 2015. The inspections revealed a number of shortcomings related to accessibility and voting arrangements around the metropolitan area**,** including lack of wheelchair access and insufficient arrangements to protect the privacy of wheelchair users while voting. Prompted by the inspection results, the Parliamentary Ombudsman decided to examine the voting arrangements in the metropolitan area on his own initiative.

The economic downturn and decrease of state funding reduce the financial resources available to CSOs. **The Government Programme** of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä’s new Government, appointed in May 2015, introduced further cuts to the state budget, including the funding granted to CSOs. The exact allocation and the impact of these measures for DPOs or CSOs in general are not yet known. However, funds for development cooperation will be cut by 43 percent. These budget cuts are likely to have a serious impact on DPOs engaged in development cooperation as well as on other development CSOs working in the field of disability rights.

On behalf of the Finnish NHRI/Human Rights Centre,

Sirpa Rautio

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Hanna Rönty

Associate Expert

1. Unofficial English translation: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990731.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Unofficial English translation: <https://www.prh.fi/en/yhdistysrekisteri/act.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Unofficial English translation: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/1999/en19990731.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Constitution also includes provisions on the voting rights of EU citizens and foreigners permanently residing in Finland in European parliamentary elections and municipal elections. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Detailed information on the right to stand in different types of elections can be found in <http://www.vaalit.fi/en/index/onelections.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Unofficial English translation: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/2014/en20141325.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Government of Finland Human Rights Report 2014. <http://formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=139469&GUID=%7B443276F9-5832-4FEC-86C5-FE731052EEA0%7D> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. A Strong Bas is for Inclusion and Equality. Finland’s Disability Policy Programme VAMPO 2010–2015. Publications of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2012:17. English version available at <http://www.vane.to/images/stories/vampo2012/vampo2012_english.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The convention has not yet been ratified. See answer to question 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For a detailed account of the preparation process, see p. 18–22 of VAMPO. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. VAMPO-seurantaraportti II. Katsaus Suomen vammaispoliittisen ohjelman (VAMPO) 2010–2015 toimeenpanon tilanteeseen. National Institute for Health and Welfare: 2014. <https://www.julkari.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/116678/URN_ISBN_978-952-302-288-1.pdf?sequence=1> The report includes a summary in English. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös demokratian edistämisestä Suomessa. Publication of the Ministry of Justice, 17/2010. <http://www.oikeusministerio.fi/fi/index/julkaisut/julkaisuarkisto/172010periaatepaatosdemokratianedistamisestasuomessa/Files/OMML_17_2010_Periaatepaatos_demokratian_edistamisesta_Suomessa.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The original Decree was replaced by Government Decree 1648/2009 in 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The next IONK has yet to be appointed. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The previous Government Bill proposing a new Act on Self-Determination was withdrawn from Parliament in 2015 due to the Parliamentary Constitutional Committee’s assessment that the Act conflicted with the Constitution. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Based on information provided by the Finnish Association of the Deaf to the HRC in February 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)