

FINLAND

**Reporting on National Follow-up
to the UNECE Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS)
of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)**

**The second cycle of review and appraisal of MIPAA/RIS implementation
Reporting period 2007-2011**

Executive Summary

- ***Methodology used for this report, in particular an explanation of the bottom-up participatory approach used, if any***

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (MSAH) requested opinions from various ministries and expert organisations as well as from representatives of the municipal sector, non-governmental organisations, interest groups, and trade organisations. Out of the 19 organisations that received a request for opinion 11 responded.

The answers have been formulated based on the questions mentioned in the document "Guidelines on National Reporting", and when appropriate, specific questions will be used as subtitles in the answers. In order to avoid repetition, we refer to other parts of the report when appropriate. Some references are also made to Finland's previous report, submitted in 2007.

For more information about the methodology used, please see Chapter 2 (Methodology). For the review and analysis of the national progress in fulfilling the commitments of RIS please see Chapter 3 (Review and Appraisal of National Actions to fulfill Commitments of UNECE MIPAA/RIS).

- ***Brief review of national progress in fulfilling (or lagging behind) the commitments of MIPAA/RIS. Include three to five major achievements since 2007 and three to five important aspects to be improved in the future***

Three to five major achievements since 2007

- Restructuring of service and municipalities (continues).
- A reform of the legislation on social and health services has been initiated and the work will continue over the next few years. For example, the right of the aged to health-enhancing guidance services has been reinforced by legislation. Special legislation on the access of the ageing population to social and health services is currently being prepared.
- The employment rate of the ageing population, and the average retirement age have both considerably risen.
- Based on the new Government Programme, the level of minimum benefits has been increased.

Three to five important aspects to be improved in the future

- Increasing the share of employed persons and extending working careers.
- Preventing poverty, inequality and social exclusion, in particular among young people.
- Ensuring everyone access to comprehensive social and health care services of high quality also in the future (project to restructure local government and services and successful implementation of the legislative reforms regarding social and health services and access of the aged to social and health services).
- Promoting wellbeing and health (preventive services, rehabilitation, increasing the availability of services provided at home) as well as reducing health inequalities between different population groups.
- Broad-based collaboration between different administrative sectors and other actors to respond to the challenge of population ageing
- Reinforcing inter-generational understanding and interaction.

- ***Conclusion***

Already for several years population ageing has been identified as a key challenge in Finland. In 2004, the Government published the first extensive report on ageing and a follow-up report in 2009. Issues relating to population ageing continue to be politically important in Finland.

Key challenges include the rapid population ageing and the pressure it creates for the sustainability of public finances. Regardless of positive development in many respects, the public finances will not be restored to a sustainable basis without new policy measures. The best policy response is seen as involving a reduction in the sustainability gap of public finances through measures promoting employment, enhancing the efficiency of public service provision, and improving the health and functional ability of citizens.¹

The ongoing reforms to restructure local government and services and to revise the legislation on social and health services as well as the drafting of special legislation on ageing persons' access to social and health services all play significant roles in improving the rights of the ageing. Moreover, they are used to ensure, in a sustainable manner, that both the ageing population and the rest of the population have access to the best possible services.

In many ways, the rights of the ageing have improved in recent years. Different policy sectors take the aged and their participation better into account than before and the efforts to mainstream the rights of the ageing are becoming more efficient. A challenge is to further reinforce the ageing population's full participation in society. Reaching this goal requires the development of a comprehensive social approach that the ageing population is taken into account better and better in all spheres of society.

¹ Ageing report. Overall assessment of the effects of ageing and the adequacy of preparation for demographic changes. Prime Minister's Office Publications 4/2009, abstract.

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5. Name, reference, and date of adoption or status of preparation of national strategy, action plan or similar policy document on ageing (please attach relevant documents in the annex).

- Programme of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's Government, 22 June 2011.
<http://www.valtioneuvosto.fi/hallitus/hallitusohjelma/pdf332889/en334743.pdf>
- Socially sustainable Finland 2020. Strategy for social and health policy. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2010. http://www.stm.fi/en/publications/publication/_julkaisu/1550874#en
- Ageing report. Overall assessment of the effects of ageing and the adequacy of preparation for demographic changes. Prime Minister's Office Publications 4/2009.
<http://www.vnk.fi/julkaisukansio/2009/j01-ikaantymisraportti-j04-ageing-report/pdf/en265431.pdf>

1. National ageing situation

– Demographic indicators

Over the next few decades, Finland's demographic challenges lie in the ageing of its population. Several demographic factors provide the background for this phenomenon, the most crucial probably being the entry of the baby boomer generations, born after the war, into retirement age. Concurrently, both decreasing mortality and a falling birth rate will intensify the growth in the proportion of the aged. According to Statistics Finland's population projection for 2007, the share of over-64 year-olds of the population will increase to 27% in 2040. Over one third of these will be over 80 years old. Regardless of the uncertainty in connection with projections, it is clear that the population's age structure will continue shifting in the direction of older age groups.

Demographic development will move in different directions in different areas of the country. Differences between regions in age structure, natural population growth and migration are already significant at present but over the next 30 years it is predicted that regions will become increasingly differentiated in this respect. In 2006–2030 the number of over-85 year-olds will grow dramatically, by 105–170% depending on the region, (table 2.1). Therefore, the population will undergo significant changes in various regions.²

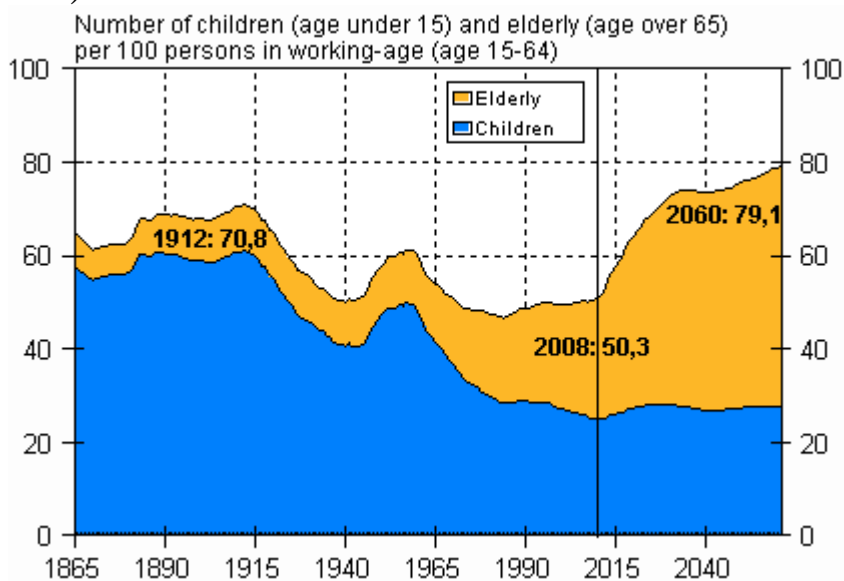
Population projection

	Unit	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
Population	1 000	5 378	5 636	5 850	5 985	6 090	6 213
0–14 years	%	16	17	16	15	16	15
15–64 years	%	66	60	58	58	57	56
65– years	%	18	23	26	27	28	29

Source: [Statistics Finland, Demographic statistics](#)

Last Modified: 11.12.2009

Number of children (age under 15) and ageing persons (age over 65) per 100 persons in working-age (age 15-64)



Source: Population Statistics 2009. Statistics Finland

² Ageing report 2009, 34.

– *Social and economic indicators*

According to the latest outlook of the Ministry of Finance, the Finnish economy maintained solid momentum in the first half of 2011. However the sense of uncertainty that began to take hold late in the summer, especially in the eurozone, is once again quickly feeding through into the real economy. Since the early autumn, economic statistics have indicated a broadly based slowdown in activity both in Finland and across Europe.

The Finnish economy is projected to post growth of 2.5% in 2011, falling short of earlier forecasts. It is estimated that in 2012 economic growth will slow to around 0.5%, with the main growth contribution coming towards the end of the year. The forecast includes the possibility that the economy will dip into recession in late 2011 and early 2012. Growth in 2012 will depend almost entirely on domestic demand.

It is projected that the unemployment rate will start rising slightly and in 2012 unemployment rate is forecast at 8.1%. In 2013 unemployment will begin slowly to come down with the recovery of labour demand. The projected unemployment rate for 2013 is 8.0%. The declining number of people of working age (15–64 years) will significantly impact the operation of the labour market over the next few years.

The number of people of working age will decrease by 10,000 in 2011 and by 17,000 in 2012. The changing demographic structure is most clearly reflected in the fact that despite the declining number of persons employed, the employment rate will not fall in 2012. The employment rate will remain at 68.5% next year.

Social protection

The Finnish social protection system includes various forms of financial support and benefits. The development of the economic dependency ratio is the most significant national challenge for the economy of social protection. Demographic projections show that the number of ageing people will increase rapidly beyond 2010, as the large age groups reach retirement age and the average life span increases. The working age population will decrease, but only moderately if immigration remains at the same level as in recent years.

The percentage of children in the population is also expected to remain more or less stable. The development of the economic dependency ratio depends not only on the age structure of the population but on the number of employed people, so a positive trend in the employment rate would help keep the economic dependency ratio within reasonable limits.

Trends in social expenditure can be estimated with the aid of population projections and economic projections. The calculations here are based on trends under current legislation and show how the ratio of social expenditure to total production would develop by 2050 if no action were taken. The baseline scenario assumes that the productivity of work will increase by 1.75% in the long term and that the GDP will increase by an average of 1.8% per year. It is further assumed that by 2030 the employment rate will increase to 74.5% and the unemployment rate will decrease to 6.5%.

Because of the economic recession that began in 2009, the ratio of social expenditure to GDP is anticipated to come close to 30% between 2010 and 2013. A recession causes a spike in unemployment benefits and income support in particular. However, the increase in the ratio of social expenditure to GDP is primarily due to a decrease in GDP. In the long-term, population ageing will increase social expenditure, above all employment pensions and the costs of health care and long-term care. According to the calculation, the ratio of social expenditure to GDP would increase by about six percentage points from 2008 by 2030.³

³ Socially sustainable Finland 2020. Strategy for social and health policy. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2010, 19-20. <http://www.stm.fi/en/publications/publication/julkaisu/1550874#en>

Social expenditure by function

	Net expenditure, EUR million											
	2000	%	2005	%	2006	%	2007	%	2008	%	2009	%
Sickness and health	7 637	23.0	10 528	25.1	11 139	25.4	11 683	25.6	12 654	26.1	13 078	24.9
Disability ¹⁾	4 467	13.5	5 262	12.5	5 369	12.3	5 570	12.2	5 947	12.2	6 244	11.9
Old age ¹⁾	10 233	30.9	13 697	32.6	14 531	33.2	15 451	33.9	16 301	33.6	17 989	34.3
Survivors	1 276	3.9	1 470	3.5	1 507	3.4	1 549	3.4	1 591	3.3	1 666	3.2
Family and children	4 007	12.1	4 705	11.2	4 848	11.1	5 101	11.2	5 414	11.1	5 687	10.8
Unemployment	3 372	10.2	3 770	9.0	3 622	8.3	3 430	7.5	3 346	6.9	4 147	7.9
Housing ¹⁾	467	1.4	437	1.0	439	1.0	431	0.9	778	1.6	852	1.6
Other social protection	671	2.0	813	1.9	950	2.2	984	2.2	1 054	2.2	1 234	2.4
Administration	1 011	3.1	1 318	3.1	1 397	3.2	1 415	3.1	1 485	3.1	1 530	2.9
Total of social expenditure	33 142	100	42 001	100	43 802	100	45 615	100	48 572	100	52 427	100
As % of GDP	25.1		26.7		26.2		25.4		26.3		30.6	

1) The National Pensions Act was revised on 1 January 2008, which also brought changes to the legislation on pensions and disability allowances

l line across a time series shows substantial breaks in the homogeneity of a series

Statistics Finland⁴

Pensions

According to a report Pensions and Pensioner Income 2000–2010⁵, published by the Finnish Centre for Pensions, the number of pension recipients grew by nearly 200,000 during the 2000s.

The real-term average total pension has increased by 20%. The rise in the total pension has been affected by growth in the number of old-age pension recipients. The pension level of retirees on a part-time pension has also increased, while the level of the average disability pension has not changed considerably during the 2000s.

The average old-age pension in 2010 amounted to approximately 50% of the average income. The old-age pension has remained on a relatively even level throughout the period under review.

New old-age pensions have been on a 60% level throughout the 2000s, whereas the pensions of new retirees on a disability pension have decreased from 41% to 36%. While more than half of the pensions paid in 2000 were below EUR 1,000/month, the equivalent figure in 2010 was 35%. In 2010, nearly one fourth of the pensions were between EUR 1,000 and 1,300. More than 60% of pensions paid were between EUR 700 and 1,600.

On average, the income of pensioners was 74% of the income of the employed population in 2009. Compared to the income of the population at large, the income of pensioners was 85%. The changes in the 2000s have been moderate.

Income differences in the pensioner population are smaller than in the population at large. However, pensioners' income differences have widened and were equal to those of the working population at the end of the review period. In the 2000s, pensioners' poverty risk as measured in the EU has also increased more rapidly than that of the population at large. According to the EU definition of poverty risk, 14% of

⁴ Statistics Finland, http://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_sosiaaliturva_en.html

⁵ Pensions and Pensioner Income 2000–2010, Mikko Kautto (ed.), published the Finnish Centre for Pensions, Reports 04/2011 (report only in Finnish), english summary http://www.etk.fi/fi/gateway/PTARGS_0_2712_459_440_3034_43/http%3B/content.etk.fi%3B7087/publishedcontent/publish/etkfi/fi/julkaisut/tutkimusjulkaisut/raportit/elakkeet_ja_elakkeensaajien_toimeentulo_2000_2010_9.pdf

pensioners faced the risk of poverty in 2009. In 2000, the equivalent figure was 11%. The poverty risk increased particularly rapidly in the mid-2000s and up to 2007. Since then, it has diminished.⁶

In 2011 statutory pensions amounted to EUR 23.6 billion, with an increase of 5.2% from 2010. It represents 12.4% of the GDP, down from 12.5% in 2010 (as the GDP has been recovering again in 2011). The Finnish Centre for Pensions has calculated that in 2030 the pension budget will represent 15% of the GDP; from then onward, the cost will decrease by around 1.5 percentage points by 2075.

– *Social, economic and political situation*

The new Government led by Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen was appointed on 22 June 2011. It is a majority coalition formed by the National Coalition Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Left Alliance, the Swedish People's Party in Finland, the Green League and the Christian Democratic Party. The Government has 19 ministers.

The new Government aims at achieving a caring and successful Finland. The Government Programme's⁷ main priority areas are the prevention of poverty, inequality and social exclusion, the consolidation of public finances and the strengthening of sustainable economic growth, employment and competitiveness.

The Government will act with determination to develop and reinforce the basic structures of the welfare society. Poverty and inequality of all types will be reduced. Equality between generations is also an important goal for the Government. The sufficiency of equally-provided, high-quality public services and social security resources will be ensured by maintaining well-managed public finances. Similarly, sustainable funding of pensions and their adequacy for future generations will be ensured.

While the new Government Programme announces budget cuts until 2015, the same programme records a reallocation of EUR 400 million to social security and EUR 200 million for measures to increase employment (especially that of young people). It is clearly stated that the aim is to secure more resources to guarantee an improved livelihood for the most disadvantaged people. A major bulk of the announced reallocation would be directed to the development of social and health care services, especially in the form of a planned legislation on old-age care services. At the same time, the cuts in the government transfers to local governments and the increasing responsibility of the municipalities to provide services will challenge the ability of local governments to keep up with the growing demand.

Demographic change, the globalisation of the economy and technological advancements are changing the operational field of social protection, challenging established practices. Finland's population will age faster than that of most other countries in the near future. This will have an impact on all of society. Finland must be able to provide social welfare and health care services, pensions and other forms of social protection to everyone regardless of the increasing pressures on public finances.⁸

⁶ Pensions and Pensioner Income 2000–2010, Mikko Kautto (ed.), summary.

⁷ Accepted on 22 June 2011.

⁸ Socially sustainable Finland 2020. Strategy for social and health policy. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2010, 5.

2. Methodology

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (MSAH) requested opinions from various ministries and expert organisations as well as from representatives of the municipal sector, non-governmental organisations, interest groups, and trade organisations. Out of the 19 organisations that received a request for opinion 11 responded.

- (1) MSAH (Advisory Staff, Department for Occupational Safety and Health, Department for Family and Social Affairs, Health Department, Finance and Planning Department, Gender Equality Unit, and Insurance Department);
- (2) The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL); (3) Finnish Institute of Occupational Health;
- (4) Ministry of Finance; (5) Ministry of Education; (6) Ministry of Transport and Communications; (7) Ministry of the Environment; (8) Ministry of Employment and the Economy; (9) Ministry of Justice
- (10) Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities;
- (11) Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged;
- (12) VALLI - The Union for Senior Services
Association for Old Age and Neighbour Service;
- (13) Association of Care Giving Relatives and Friends;
- (14) Interest Group of Pensioner Associations (EETU)
- (15) The Federation of Finnish Enterprises;
- (16) The Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK);
- (17) Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK); (18) Finnish Confederation of Professionals (STTK); (19) the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava)

3. Review and Appraisal of National Actions to fulfil Commitments of UNECE MIPAA/RIS

RIS Commitment 1: To mainstream ageing in all policy fields with the aim of bringing societies and economies into harmony with demographic change to achieve a society for all ages

Preparing for ageing has been a key policy issue in Finland for years. In 2004 the Finnish Government submitted to the Finnish Parliament a report on the future concerning demographic trends, population policy and preparing for ageing. The report, entitled "Finland for people of all ages" defined the objectives of a broad-based ageing policy, including a follow-up obligation saying that "a broader assessment of the population ageing trend and its impacts, and the related preparations, should be made regularly in the future, using updated information on population trends".

The first such broader assessment was released in 2009. Its objective was to assess the adequacy of policy measures and discuss their development needs and potentials. The ageing report reviews developments in the ageing of the population, the effects of ageing and Finland's ageing policy, on which basis it assesses the adequacy of the preparations for this, and the need for new policy measures.

With demographic change public expenditure will increase. At the same time, the working age population is decreasing and the growth potential of the economy is declining. Social and economic sustainability require a high employment rate, healthy and capable citizens, and effective and efficient social welfare and health care services.

A welfare state pursues both social and economic goals. Economic development provides the operating potential for the welfare state, while social protection strengthens the balance of society and of the economy.

Social protection increases people's welfare by supporting health and functional capacity, by providing security in changing life situations, by reinforcing a sense of community and by equalising differences in society. Social protection also promotes stable economic growth and competitiveness by reinforcing work ability and by offering opportunities for employment, training and rehabilitation.

The purpose is to achieve a socially and economically sustainable society in which people are treated equally, everyone has the opportunity to participate and everyone's health and functional capacity is supported. This requires extensive national and international cooperation, interaction and open communication.

– Areas in which ageing is mainstreamed

Public finance/economy

The Ministry of Finance has striven to raise the awareness of the challenges involved in population ageing by taking part in public debates in many different ways. The aim has been to adjust the Finnish society, economy and public finances to the demographic change. Two extensive reports on the challenge regarding the sustainability of public finances were published in 2010. The sustainability of public finances is also analysed in the annual stability programmes submitted to the EU. The goal has been to raise the awareness regarding the need to extend working careers and invigorate the general government finances.

Employment

Because the working age population is decreasing, working careers must be extended both at the beginning and the end of working life. In addition, unemployment must be reduced, and disabilities and absences due to illness must be curtailed. The overall aim is to lengthen working careers by an average of three years by 2020.

The attractiveness of working life must be increased by improving working conditions and wellbeing at work. The better people feel in the workplace and the more healthy they are, the longer their working careers

will be and the more productive they will be. Working conditions must be jointly developed by management and personnel. The pension system will be reformed to take into account better longer life expectancies, the reconciliation of work and family life, changing working conditions and cross-border migration.

The employment and enterprise strategy of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the strategy for the Centres of Economic Development, Transport and the Environment as well as the regional strategy all identify population ageing as one of the key factors changing the operating environment. Among the goals in these strategies is to respond to the challenge regarding the availability of skilled labour force. The measures emphasise economic incentives for ageing persons to continue in working life, high level of working life quality, skills and work ability as well as sufficient demand for ageing labour force.

Population ageing increases both the need for services and staff in this sector. By 2020, around 50% of the people working in the social and health sector will have retired. In 2009, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy launched a project to develop the welfare sector from the viewpoint of the employment and industrial policies. The objectives of the welfare project include the securing of the availability of skilled labour force, improving the conditions for enterprises and entrepreneurship as well as improving the productivity of the sector.

The 2007–2011 policy programme for employment, entrepreneurship and worklife aimed at securing the financial basis for welfare. The participation of ageing persons in working life has improved significantly in recent years and the negative trend in the employment rate has been smaller than for other age groups. The longer working careers are partly the result of a pension reform and some other policy measures.

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy will be launching a strategic programme Structural change and labour market performance as one of its key measures and projects. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy will also lead the work on a development strategy for working life. Next in line is an extensive national cooperation project targeting workplaces.

Social and health care

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health incorporates Finland's national ageing policy in its strategy “Socially sustainable Finland 2020”⁹, implementing it with the help of legislation, quality guidelines, programmes and projects.

MLP: Robust basic health and welfare services are capable of early intervention in problems and illnesses and of supporting clients to cope independently. Minority groups and those living in difficult conditions also need targeted services. Independent living, functional capacity and participation of ageing persons will be primarily supported in their own living environment, with the assistance of new technology. The starting point here is available, equitable, effective and client-oriented services.

Social and health care legislation

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is preparing a draft for an act to ensure the right of ageing persons to services according to their needs once their needs have been assessed from various aspects. The drafting of the legislation on services for the aged was started in autumn 2009. The proposed act aims to strengthen the National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People¹⁰, issued in 2008, and the latest proposals by expert working groups. The main idea in the draft act is to organise services so that ageing persons can live a dignified life. The services must be based on information on the client's needs, and the

⁹ Socially sustainable Finland 2020. Strategy for social and health policy. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2010.

¹⁰ National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Publications 2008:5. <http://www.stm.fi/julkaisut/nayta/julkaisu/1063089>

service provision should be client-centred, of a high quality and secure. The act is a part of the overall reform of the social welfare and health care legislation.

Security

Ministry of the Interior has prepared an action plan on a safe life for the aged. The action plan deals for example with safety issues in housing, prevention of accidents, safety in traffic, mistreatments, violence and crimes suffered by the aged. The overall aim of the plan is to find ways to prevent insecurity of the aged.¹¹

Communication and information

Ministry of Transport and Communications has prepared an action programme “Towards a barrier-free information society. Action Programme 2011–2015”.¹² The aim of the programme is to improve accessibility of the information society for all citizens. Creating accessible services from the start will reduce the need for later fixes and thus cut down on the costs. The accessibility perspective often improves general accessibility for all user groups.¹³

Housing

The Finnish Government has recognised in the recent decade the need to support housing of the ageing population. This includes the goal of providing the necessary support to allow ageing persons and persons with disabilities to continue living at home. Under the Finnish housing policy, state renovation grants are awarded for the installation of lifts in existing multi-storey residential buildings and, on social grounds, for repairs and renovations of the homes of ageing persons and persons with disabilities. The government is financing also service housing/sheltered housing for persons with severe dementia or with otherwise low functional capacity through the Housing Finance and Development Centre ARA. For this purpose investment grants up to 40% of the total costs provided for the construction of service housing.

Culture

The promotion of the cultural participation of the ageing population is linked with measures to improve access to arts and culture and to eradicate barriers to participation. The Ministry of Education and Culture has invested in developing this area for several years now. In 2006–2010 the Ministry of Education and Culture implemented a programme on access to arts and culture, after which a working group (2009–2011) prepared proposals for future policies and measures. The promotion of accessibility has focused especially on persons with disabilities and cultural minorities. A goal has been also to promote the participation opportunities of all people, including ageing persons.

Sport

On the proposal of the Committee for Health-Enhancing Physical Activity, appointed by the Government, the steering group for the national programme on health-enhancing physical activity (2005–2014) has drawn up a national action plan to promote the physical activity of the aged (published in 2011 by the Ministry of Education and Culture). The target group in the action plan is the ageing persons who take too little physical activity for health benefit: 1) 60+-year-olds who are soon retiring; 2) 75+-year-olds who live independently and are beginning to have problems with their functional capacity; and 3) ageing persons who receive

¹¹ Turvallinen elämä ikääntyneille - Toimintaohjelma ikääntyneiden turvallisuuden parantamiseksi. Sisäasiainministeriön julkaisut 19/2011, 8.

[http://www.intermin.fi/intermin/hankkeet/turva/home.nsf/files/192011%20nettiin/\\$file/192011%20nettiin.pdf](http://www.intermin.fi/intermin/hankkeet/turva/home.nsf/files/192011%20nettiin/$file/192011%20nettiin.pdf) (in Finnish)

¹² Towards a barrier-free information society. Action Programme 2011–2015. Ministry of Transport and Communications. Programmes and strategies 3/2011.

http://www.lvm.fi/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=1551287&name=DLFE-11897.pdf&title=Ohjelmia%20ja%20strategioita%203-2011%20Information%20society

¹³ Towards a barrier-free information society. Action Programme 2011–2015, 7.

services at home, live in service housing units or long-term institutional care. The basic principle is to increase daily activity and encourage ageing persons to take physical activity either on their own or as part supervised sport services.¹⁴

– ***Extent to which the different policies related to ageing pursue a holistic approach and are coordinated and applied consistently***

Measures relating population ageing are taken in many policy areas in Finland, but there is a need for more comprehensive approach. In 2011 the Ministry of Employment and the Economy appointed a working group to create a basis for a tool to assess the impact of ageing and to raise the awareness of ageing. A key recommendation of the working group was that instead of an ageing policy we should have a life-cycle policy where the entire life-cycle of people is taken account. Youth marginalisation is a key challenge also from the viewpoint of the production and financing of ageing-related services. The working group stated that Finland needs a broad-based life-cycle programme and that some actor must take the main responsibility in bringing ageing into the centre of decision-making in different policies. (A working group report on changing from age policy to life-cycle policy, Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2011). The working group proposed that the ageing impact assessment tool is introduced into social decision-making and planning.

– ***Initiatives taken by your country to tackle age discrimination***

Labour market discrimination against aged workers is seen as one of the most common forms of discrimination. Especially workers over 55 years old are seen to be exposed to discrimination. This concerns for example recruitment, career drive, equal pay, access to on-job and further training, work arrangements and accommodation of working conditions.

However, attention has been paid to the prevention and reduction of age discrimination at workplaces during the whole of the 2000s, and ageing workers are also protected by some special measures: First, the periods of notice have been linked to the uninterrupted duration of the employment relationship. The ageing workers have usually longer periods of notice. Second, the employer, who has a legal ground to terminate an employment contract on production-related or financial grounds has not right to terminate the ageing worker's employment contract due to his or her age. And third, in the consideration of the amount of compensation, the following issues should be taken into account: estimated time without employment and loss of earnings, duration of the employment relationship, employee's age and possibility to find work corresponding to their profession, or education and training, the employer's termination procedure and the employee's and the employer's circumstances in general and other comparable factors.

A good practice for promoting and monitoring on age equality is also for example the enlargement of the pay comparison of men and women, which is based on the Gender Equality Act, which in addition to gender, covers age in order to assess the simultaneous impact of age and gender on equal pay. According to the preparatory documents relating to the gender equality legislation, comparisons must take into account the nature and content of the work, and the associated working conditions. Assessments must be based on the actual working conditions of individual employees and not on generic job descriptions or employment contracts, if these differ from the reality.

In the "Work and Health" interview studies, carried out by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, only 4% of the respondents assessed that the people at their workplace are of fairly the same age. These studies have also often included questions on employed persons' views on equal treatment of different age groups at

¹⁴ Ikäihmisten liikunnan kansallinen toimenpideohjelma; Liikunnasta terveyttä ja hyvinvointia, tekijät Elina Karvinen, Pirjo Kalmari, Kari Koivumäki, Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriön julkaisuja 2011:30. <http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2011/liitteet/OKM30.pdf?lang=fi>.

their own workplace. More than 50% of the respondents have felt employees of different ages are treated equally at the workplace. If unequal treatment had been detected, young employees saw that it was directed against the young, while older employees considered it was directed against the ageing employees. The older employees' experiences of age discrimination have decreased by 30 percentage points in the 2000s, and the older age groups are more drawn to their work than the younger age groups. Nevertheless, in 2009, 56% of 55–64-year-old women and 42% of men felt that age discrimination against ageing employees occurs at the workplace. In recruiting, persons in these age groups feel they have "become invisible".

It is, however, significant that attitudes towards ageing workers have improved with 30 percentage points. The downward trend in age discrimination may be a result of the debate on longer working careers that has been going on different forums in the 2000s. Also, the coping at work of different age groups has been studied and measures to support it have been disseminated. For example, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health has developed a training programme to encourage better utilisation of the resources of different age groups in working life. Hundreds of persons have already gone through the training and are now training other at their workplaces. In addition, an evaluation system for age management practices at workplaces has been developed.

In general the Nordic model of broad-based public responsibility for welfare is widely appreciated by Finns. No major intergenerational conflicts concerning the 'social contract' implied by such a model have occurred or are expected in the immediate future. Present system has solid support across all age groups. [Ageing report states that Finland for people of all ages is a challenge but not a Utopian idea.]¹⁵

- ***Participation of older persons in the development of policies and strategies and in their implementation and involvement of NGOs and the private sector in policy development and their role in the implementation of policies and programmes.***

Pensioners' organisations have a seat in certain authorities' groups or committees. In addition many Finnish municipalities have ageing people's councils which coordinate ageing people's affairs locally and regionally. According to the Interest Group of Pensioner Associations (EETU), the involvement of NGOs in policy making has so far mainly taken place on an *ad hoc* basis, but the situation is improving. Moreover, the NGO sector is now consulted as experts in national ministry-level working group that deal with issues of ageing.

Age discrimination is also a human rights' issue. The drafting of the national human rights' programme takes into account also issues of ageing. The Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged is implementing a Life Course and Generations Project in 2011–2013 that focuses on interaction between generations. The project receives financing from the Finnish Slot Machine Association (RAY) and is linked with the European Year 2012.

The third sector is a key player in the promotion of health and welfare, in the prevention of problems and in the development of new operating practices. The overall aim for authorities and NGOs is to work together to increase social participation. Revenues from RAY are used to support the promotion of health and social welfare by non-profit associations. The status of these NGOs will be secured in the development of the social welfare and health care sector.

The focus of social welfare and health care services will be shifted increasingly to preventive action. The service system must be able to provide early and efficient assistance to people who cannot cope themselves.

Services will be comprehensively reformed so that users will be actively involved in their development. Users must be provided with updated and unbiased information on treatment options and service providers.

¹⁵ Ageing report, 14, 196.

RIS Commitment 2: To ensure full integration and participation of older persons in society

– In general

The Non-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. The Constitution guarantees individual civil rights.

In Finland, the local government answers for the health and care services that are so widely used by the ageing population. The Municipality of Residence Act was revised in 2011 so that persons who are in long-term outside their municipality of residence can change their municipality of residence to the municipality where they are receiving care.

Moreover, persons in need of long-term care have the right to ask other municipalities than their municipality of residence to evaluate their need for services. The aim of these revisions is that ageing persons have a real possibility to choose their municipality of residence even in situations where they are dependent on home services or inpatient care.

The pending reform in local government structures will have a significant impact on the services for the aged. By reorganising service structures, it will be possible to create a service structure where the power and responsibility for organising services is allocated to a single authority equipped with a sufficiently large population and skills base. The criteria and progress of the reform will be determined by the end of 2011.

The Government will also focus on developing social and health services. Resources are targeted at reinforcing services for the aged and primary health care, among others. According to the Government Programme, an increase of EUR 145 million will be introduced in the central government transfers reserved for basic services in municipalities to develop social and health services. This increase will be targeted by degrees from 2013 onwards, and the most significant of the targets probably will be the services for the aged.

– Measures undertaken by your country to recognize, encourage and support the contributions of older people to society (e.g. media campaigns, school curricula)

Projects and media campaigns

The promotion of the cultural participation of the ageing population is linked with measures to improve access to arts and culture and to eradicate barriers to participation. In 2006–2010 the Ministry of Education and Culture implemented a programme on access to arts and culture, after which a working group (2009–2011) prepared proposals for future policies and measures. The promotion of accessibility has focused especially on persons with disabilities and cultural minorities. A goal has been also to promote the participation opportunities of all people, including ageing persons. The barriers to participation include physical and sensory barriers, economic, social and cultural barriers as well as barriers relating to access to and intelligibility of information. By removing these barriers and by taking into account the different groups of people using cultural services, the client-oriented developing of services can create better opportunities also for ageing persons to take part in cultural services.

In 2010 the Ministry of Education and Culture launched the action programme Art and Culture for Well-being to be implemented in 2010–2014. The action programme has three priority areas: 1) culture in promoting social inclusion, capacity building, networking and participation in daily life and living environments, 2) art and culture as part of social welfare and health promotion, and 3) art and culture in support of well-being and health at work.

The action programme is based on the idea that everyone must have the right and equal opportunity to take part in cultural activities and to make art irrespective of their place of residence, age or functional capacity. Among other measures, the programme encourages arts and cultural institutions to increase their cooperation with social and health care units. Those who organise services for the aged are encouraged to integrate

cultural activities and arts-based methods into their activities. The Ministry of Education and Culture has received an earmarked appropriation, which it has used to support cross-sectoral cooperation projects that seek new kinds of operating models to improve ageing persons' access to cultural services.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications has cooperated with different kinds of voluntary organisations and research institutions in order to find out different kinds of ways to use communication to improve the ageing persons' capabilities. An example is a project, funded by the Ministry of Transport and Communications in 2011 that focused on senior citizens as users of information and communication technologies. As a part of the project, the Finnish Information Society Development Centre published a report for the benefit of decision-making and planning. The project has also focused on good practices in peer support activities.

NGOs can receive financial support for media campaigns and projects from, for example, RAY. An example is Life Course and Generations Project (2011–2013) carried out by the Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged, with intergenerational interaction as the main theme. The project is also linked to 2012 European Year for Active Ageing.

Another example of media campaigns is the Day of the Elderly (since 1972 Week of the Elderly) which has been organised since 1954 by the Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged. In 2012 the main topic is linked to the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations in 2012

The year 2012 is the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. In Finland, the aim is to improve the visibility of the existing information on the theme and the good practices promoting the active ageing goals. The functional and work ability of ageing people has been the focus of research and active promotion efforts already for decades in Finland. However, wider awareness and use of the information and good practices is necessary.

During the European Year Finland aims at:

1. Creating citizens, NGOs, workplaces and schools prerequisites to better understand the importance of active ageing and intergenerational cooperation for improving and maintaining people's inclusion and welfare throughout the life-cycle;
2. Promoting the distribution of methods that enable active ageing and intergenerational cooperation at workplaces and in schools, daycare centres and NGOs;
3. Endorsing more profound understanding of issues relating to intergenerational solidarity. During the Year, information on the groups belonging to each generation and on their operational cultures are collected. Correct information is disseminated and the currency of positive attitudes to ageing is promoted in our society.

There are many kinds of activities during the Year. Cooperation is carried out between organisations, expert institutions, municipalities, universities and service providers. Different regions can draw up their own action programmes for the Year. The networks that are created during the Year are meant to be permanent.

Information on the European Year is distributed in national events such as the education fair, age forum, municipal fair and occupational health fair.

Research in active ageing and intergenerational solidarity makes the issues more visible.

Also new types of activities are introduced, for example, in transition support (e.g. from training to work), coping at work and age management.

- ***Mechanisms put in place to take into account the views of older persons on the services provided to them***

Persons who need regular social services are drawn up a care and service plan in cooperation between the client and the service provider. The client has the right to influence the planning and implementation of his or her services. An ongoing legislative project on services for the aged aims at reinforcing the status of these plans.

The current Government will also investigate the application of the Act on Public Contracts in a more restrained manner in situations involving the organisation of long-term or rarely-required services for particularly vulnerable client groups (including persons with disabilities, ageing persons and children). The position of small-scale providers and language-related characteristics will be taken into account when reforming the Act on Public Contracts.

- ***Channels for recognising older persons as a significant consumer group with shared and specific needs, interests, and preferences***

There are several research papers on ageing persons as consumers. In everyday life ageing persons are entitled to get discounts from many service providers, e.g., travel companies and theatres. However, it is important to recognise that not all ageing persons have the same consumer possibilities.

- ***Actions promoting active ageing and encouraging the participation of older persons in society, culture, and economy***

The participation of ageing persons is promoted by various actions, e.g., reduced prices for cultural events and sport centres. In addition, there are a lot of activities (sport, culture, organisational activities, etc.) for ageing persons, some of them also subsidised by the central or local governments.

- ***Mechanisms and organizations that provide a political voice for older persons***

Ageing persons have the right to stand as candidates in all general elections (municipal, parliament, presidential and for the European Parliament). There are also councils for the aged in many municipalities, though the political power of those councils differs. In addition, there are a lot of organisations targeting at ageing persons. However, there is no ombudsman for the aged or national council for the aged in Finland.

Nevertheless, the participation of ageing persons in the local policy-making has grown. There are councils for the aged in almost every municipality. The draft for an act to ensure the right of the aged to services according to their needs includes a statute which obligates every local government to appoint a council for the aged.

- ***Existence of a national advisory body on ageing or a similar institutional mechanism that includes older persons to ensure a dynamic and coordinated contribution of older persons to national policy responses to ageing***

An Advisory Board for Ageing and Pensioners' Affairs works under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The tasks of the Advisory Board include:

- acting as a link between actors working with issues relating to ageing persons and pensions;
- promoting the distribution of information on the living conditions, rights and experiences of the ageing and pensioner population;
- following up and evaluating how the living conditions, income security and services of the ageing and pensioner population develop;
- taking initiative and issuing proposals and statements on matters connected to its tasks; and
- following up the debate on the ageing population and pensioners in the European Union.

The Interest Organisation of the Pensioners' Associations acts as a coordination body for NGOs.

- *Adoption of policies and programmes to improve the housing and living environment of older persons, especially in rural areas (access to and affordability of services, such as housing, utilities, sanitation and, in particular, transport).*

State renovation grants are targeted for repairs and renovations of the homes of older people and people with disabilities (also in rural areas). The guidance for the renovation activities is provided e.g. by the Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged which has 15 regional home repair experts. The Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged gets funds for these activities from the Finnish Slot Machine Association.

The present Government Programme acknowledges the need to improve housing situation and satisfy housing needs of the aged. Ministry of Environment has started widespread preparation of the housing development programme for the aged for years 2012–2015. This programme will cover the improvement of the existing housing stock, new senior housing options and development of service housing and also residential areas from the point of view of senior population.

- *Steps taken to promote age-integrated communities where facilities are made available to people of all ages and where they can meet and interact (e.g. joint community centres for the elderly and the young)*

Some municipalities and other service providers have established service centres that in addition to services for the aged also provide other services, such as child daycare services and library services.

- *Actions to promote volunteer activities enabling younger and older people to interact and help each other*

Projects and campaigns promoting interactions and volunteer activities are organised especially by NGOs. For example, the Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged is carrying out a research and practice development project “Life Course and Generations”, which continues until the end of 2013. The project aims to bring together people of different ages, to promote particularly older people's psychosocial wellbeing and inclusion and to reduce their loneliness and exclusion through increasing intergenerational dialogue. The project is carried out in collaboration with other NGOs, universities and private enterprises and is funded by the Finnish Slot Machine Association. <http://www.ikapolvet.fi/in-english>

- *Steps undertaken by your country to promote a positive image of ageing (e.g. media campaigns, incentives for employers to promote continued employment of older persons, initiatives within local communities and with the participation of other social actors to facilitate dialogue and a better understanding between the generations)*

Please see the answers above.

RIS Commitment 3. To Promote Equitable and Sustainable Economic Growth in Response to Population Ageing

- *Strategies adopted to transform economy with a view of eradicating poverty, especially among older persons*

The economic growth is expected to slow down significantly in Finland in the next decades compared to the growth in the 1900s. In preparing for this change, a central theme has been the promotion of a just and sustainable economic growth. The present Finnish Government aims at significantly reversing the current public debt trend during its term of office. The aim with a downward debt trend is to ensure just society for the next generations. A life expectancy coefficient was introduced into the pension system in 2010 with the aim of providing incentives for employees to continue in working life as their life expectancy increases.

After the 2005 pension reform, Finns have postponed retirement more than was anticipated in 2005. In 2010, this retirement age expectancy was 60.4 years.

The most significant social security reform concerning the ageing population is the so-called guarantee pension introduced in 2011. It secures the subsistence of persons with the smallest pensions. The guarantee pension increases the pension of those who only receive the national pension by around €100 per month and for married or cohabiting persons by nearly €170 per month. The guaranteed pension will raise the income particularly of women on low incomes. Regarding social security, the Government will be investing in improving basic security when it comes to unemployment security and social assistance and in reforming the housing allowance.

– ***Measures taken to review and adjust macroeconomic policies to address the needs of a growing ageing population***

Strengthening the fiscal situation of the country is one of the top priorities of the new Finnish Government. Besides improved competitiveness, a higher employment rate is considered absolutely indispensable for achieving this goal.

Please see also other answers concerning current economic situation and macroeconomic policies.

RIS Commitment 4: To adjust social protection systems in response to demographic changes and their social and economic consequences

– ***Actions to adapt social protection systems in your country to societal and demographic changes***

In recent years, ageing-related developments have been positive in many respects. Nevertheless, the public finances will not be returning to a sustainable basis without new policy measures. The sustainability gap should not be extraordinarily large, but the current economic crisis has greatly increased the probability of a very large gap. In terms of social sustainability, problems include both the low level of the smallest pensions and the varying, partly deficient access to nursing and care services.

The best policy response includes a reduction in the sustainability gap of public finances through measures promoting the rise of the employment rate, enhancing the efficiency of public service provision and improving the health and functional capacity of citizens. Health promotion is the key. The increase in healthy years is a great achievement and offers new opportunities. This is of crucial importance when responding to the demographic challenge, and we should support this positive development through all phases of life. Better health and functional capacity improve the everyday quality of people's lives and support ageing persons' independent living. Furthermore, contented people enjoying good health provide the basis for economic growth. Good health of people of working age creates the foundation for longer working careers, a higher employment rate and a higher level of labour productivity. These can generate a triple dividend: higher output, higher tax revenues and lower pension expenditure.

Finland is facing the demographic challenge already now since the size of the working-age population has already started to diminish in 2010. This is critical since the financial sustainability of the Finnish social protection system is, above all, based on a high employment rate – social protection is financed mainly through taxes and social security contributions.

The greatest potential for raising the employment rate lies in older age groups, although earlier entry into working life and reducing structural unemployment would also, naturally, contribute to such a rise. Promoting longer working careers and reducing early retirement is a key target and has been widely accepted in Finland.

Finland has invested in active ageing for a long time now. Many reforms have been implemented, e.g., programmes reinforcing the work ability of ageing workers, and measures have been taken to increase the attraction of working life. It is important to ensure that working life is developed so that it can better cater for

the needs of ageing employees. Another crucial factor lies in the incentives that encourage ageing people to remain in working life.

The most important reform has been the total reform of the earnings-related pension scheme that took effect in 2005. This reform changed the pension accrual percentages in order to encourage employment later in life; it also supported more flexible retirement and introduced the use of life expectancy index.

One of the peculiarities of the Finnish pension system is its combination of a PAYG system and a funded system. The pre-funding of earnings-related pensions will buffer the pressures to raise pension contributions as the old-age dependency ratio increases. In 2007, a reform on investment activities made greater risk-taking possible in the investment of pension funds. This is one of the major legislative reforms made recently in order to increase the sustainability of the pension system. In 2008, the financial crisis hit the Finnish pension funds, as well, and reduced their value by 16.4%; the following year, most of the losses were, however, recovered. The possible effect of the present Euro-zone crisis is not yet foreseeable.

In the 2009 tripartite agreements, the government, trade unions and employers' organisations agreed on the raise in the employment pension contribution in 2011–2014 and on the increase in the retirement age for part-time pension. As from 2010, the national pensions are solely financed through general taxes. Before, employers contributed to the financing.

In 2010, for the first time, the life expectancy has been used to adjust pensions (determined for each age cohort at the age of 62). However, the pensions received during the entire retirement equal to the same amount as before as a pensioner is likely to live longer (and thus, receive pension longer). In order to increase the monthly pension, ageing persons are encouraged to continue to work with an accelerated pension accrual. In 2040, the pension benefits are projected to decrease to 85.2% of the pre-reform level due to this adjustment. This decrease can be offset if a person works longer.

Sustainable financing for a sufficient, fair and comprehensive insurance coverage can be ensured with a high employment rate. The tax, social security contributions and social protection system must function so that employment is always the more profitable option.

The previous Government appointed a committee (so-called SATA committee) to prepare a reform of the social protection system. The committee worked from 2007 to 2009. The central goal of the reform was to offer more incentives to work, alleviate poverty and ensure intergenerational fairness. Because of the economic crisis, it was not possible to implement all of the committee's proposals. Nevertheless, some of the proposals have been implemented, e.g., guaranteed minimum basic pension, indexation of some minimum benefits (daily allowances, child allowance, etc.), activation of long-term unemployed persons (increased benefit) as well as measures concerning occupational health services and rehabilitation services.

As a result of many extensive ageing programmes and the pension reform, the employment rate for ageing workers has risen faster than in most other EU countries in recent years. The employment rate for persons aged 55–64 increased from 39% in 1999 to 56% by 2010. In particular, the rise in the employment rate among employees aged 58–63 was significantly higher than that of prime age employees. The average effective retirement age has been postponed by 1.5 years since the pension reform took effect in 2005.

The present Government continues the process of active ageing strategies. The overall aim is to raise the employment rate for the population aged 15–64 from 68% to 72% by 2015. In the long run, raising the employment rate of 20–64 year-olds to 78% by 2020 has been set a national target.

To attain these targets, the attractiveness of working life must be increased further by improving working conditions and wellbeing at work. Health-promotion and preventive measures are emphasised even more than before. A major challenge in Finland, however, is the high number of people on disability pensions. We will change the perspective of this challenge; instead of focusing on working incapacity, we emphasise the remaining working capacity. All people of working age, even those with partial work ability, must have the opportunity to take part in working life according to their abilities. Rehabilitation into working life will be

enhanced by accelerating the assessment of rehabilitation needs and by targeting measures better. In this way, both the continuation in working life of those already in work and transition to working life after disability, illness or other similar cause will be supported.

– *Steps taken to achieve a sufficient income for all older persons*

Universal insurance benefits providing income security in retirement, unemployment, maternity and sickness are characteristic of the Finnish welfare model. There are also earnings-related benefits that cover all wage-earners and entrepreneurs.

There were 1.32 million pensioners in Finland at the end of 2010 (including old-age, disability, unemployment and part-time pensions). 92% of them received earnings-related pensions and almost half of them received the national pension. The average total pension was EUR 1,561 for men and EUR 1,217 for women. Women's earnings-related pension represented 64% of men's pension.

Compared to the rest of the population, the ageing people in Finland face a considerably higher risk of poverty. Moreover, the difference between ageing men and ageing women is significant. This is mainly due to the differences in the length of career especially because many of the oldest female pensioners have had very short working careers. The effect of wage differentials holds still today; on average, women earn 18% less than men (Statistics Finland, 2010). However, these gender differences in pensions are not due to the pension system *per se*. In 2006, the government and the labour market organisations committed themselves to reducing the gender pay gap to 15% by 2015.¹⁶ The introduction of the guarantee pension will improve the living standards of retired women especially (see below). As the importance of earnings-related pension for the income security of the retired has grown, poverty and exclusion can, in the future, be best prevented through successful employment targets.

Table 1. At-the-Risk of Poverty Rate in Finland¹⁷

	2000	2008	2010
0-64 years old	9.0%	11.8%	12.1%
65+ all	19.0%	22.5%	18.3%
65+ men	9.0%	15.5%	12.2%
65+ women	26.0%	27.4%	22.7%
75+ all	22.0%	30.1%	24.4%
75+ men	5.0%	21.5%	16.7%
75+ women	30.0%	34.7%	28.8%

Source: Eurostat.

Despite (and because of) the economic crisis, various improvements have been realised in 2010 in order to improve the basic security of the most disadvantaged groups (especially the levels of basic pension, family allowances and minimum daily allowances) and this will continue with the current Government as well. Since the 1990s, the share of those with low incomes has increased the most among the unemployed and the students, but low incomes are still the most common among the retired.

The national pension scheme provides a pension to all residents above 65 years old with no or low other pension income. There have been three increases in the level of national pensions in the 2000s. In addition, a division into more and less expensive municipalities was abolished leading to a monthly increase of EUR 50 for almost half a million pensioners. In March 2011, the basic pension was supplemented by a guarantee pension (*takuueläke*) that guarantees pensioners a minimum income of EUR 687. Around 10% of all pensioners, or an estimated 116,000 people, will be entitled to this benefit. The pension guarantee will

¹⁶ More narrow gender pay gap will be achieved through a reduction of gender segregation in the labour market, changes in recruiting and payroll, and more support for women's careers.

¹⁷ The annual national at-risk-of poverty threshold is set at 60% of the national median income per equivalent adult.

improve the economic situation of especially women (61% of those receiving the benefit) and immigrants on low incomes. National pension is adjusted annually with the cost-of-living index to maintain purchasing power.

Low-income pensioners, who live in Finland permanently, can also receive a pensioner's housing allowance. The benefit can cover up to 85% of reasonable housing costs. It should also be noted that many ageing persons in Finland are home-owners who have already paid their mortgages. The usual measures of income fail to acknowledge this important factor in the living standards of the aged (especially in comparison to the rest of the population).

Pensioners are also entitled to a care allowance based on a needs-assessment. This benefit supports the person's daily activities, functional capacity and rehabilitation. Pensioner's and his/her family's income and wealth do not affect the level of the benefit that is based on three categories of needs and varies from EUR 58 to EUR 303 per month.

- ***Policies adopted to address in a timely manner the needs of older persons for a variety of social and health services, including sheltered housing and long-term care***

Social and health services

The municipalities organise basic public services, most importantly education and social and health services, for their residents. Social and health services are partly financed by central government transfers to local government.

The demographic change translates into an increase in health care expenditure and a need for more personnel, unless we can increase the productivity of services. The economic crisis has accentuated the importance to reform the provision of social and health services. It is important to modernise the local government and service structures in order to improve the availability, quality and productivity of social and health services. The productivity of social and health services can be improved by reorganising services, introducing new ways of producing them and through the adoption of best practices.

The present Government continues its determined efforts to restructure municipalities and services. Developing the service system requires clear and sustainable long-term policies for organising local social and health services after the ongoing project is completed. Clarifying the financing for health services is important as well.

Within the framework of the Project to restructure municipalities and services, a key trend in enhancing social and health services has been to increase the unit sizes in service provision. This has been achieved by encouraging mergers of municipalities and formation of various cooperation districts.

The focus of social and health services will be shifted increasingly to preventive action. Services will be comprehensively reformed so that users will be actively involved in their development. The electronic data management control system will be strengthened in social welfare and health care. Medical care is an integral part of social and health services and of patient care. The overall aim is to provide high-quality and cost-effective medical care at a reasonable price for everyone who needs it.

A national network TOIMIA, based on a broad collaboration of partners in research and clinical institutions, was formed in 2007. The network aims at improving the quality of the measurement and at harmonising the measures and terminology. (http://www.toimia.fi/index_en.html). TOIMIA network consists of experts from different professions working in social and health care, research and education. Expert groups collect and evaluate indicators used in disability assessment for special groups, such as ageing persons and, persons with severe disabilities, as well as at the population level. Several recommendations on how to measure functioning in these contexts have been prepared. An open database was created to distribute the information on the indicators in order to harmonise the use of indicators in Finland.

Housing

The Housing Finance and Development Centre (ARA) finances service housing/sheltered housing for persons with severe dementia or persons who otherwise have low functional capacity. The centre also supports the development of physical designs of service housing to better satisfy the needs of the target group. A key challenge in housing ageing persons is to develop service housing that better meets the needs of the ageing population, taking into account their physical and functional capacity.

– *Steps taken to establish or further develop a regulatory framework for occupational and private pension provision*

In general, the comprehensive coverage, high replacement rate and the absence of a pension ceiling do not provide a fertile ground for supplementary pensions. Occupational pension schemes do not play a significant role in the Finnish pension protection. Private pensions are also still quite rare, even though they have grown in popularity, and this trend is likely to continue.

– *Changes made to the laws regulating mandatory retirement*

No changes have been made after the last MIPAA/RIS report except for the increase in the part-time retirement age (now 60 years instead of the 58 mentioned in the previous report). However, the previous government and the social partners agreed that additional measures are necessary to raise the effective retirement age by three years by 2025.

– *Policies adopted to ensure the equal treatment of men and women by the social protection system*

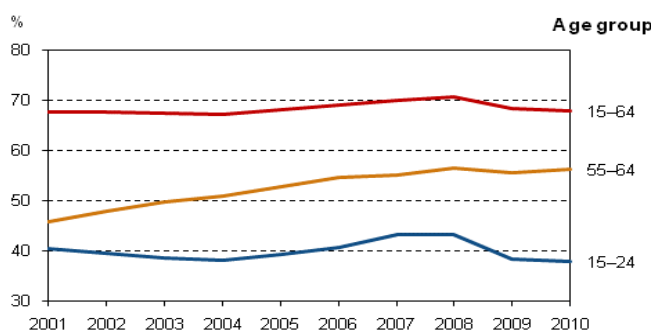
Social insurance benefits are mainly individual. Gender impact assessment has been incorporated into the legislative preparations in the field of social welfare and health care. For further information, please see the answers on RIS Commitments 8 and 9.

RIS Commitment 5. To Enable Labour Markets to Respond to the Economic and Social Consequences of Population Ageing

– *General situation in 2011*

Finland had reached the EU targets for increasing the employment rate of ageing workers already at the time of the previous UNECE MIPAA/RIS report, but the current economic crisis has influenced this development since 2008. While the retirement age reached 60.4 in 2010 and thus, for the first time, exceeded 60 years, the employment rate for the age group 55–64 decreased from 56.5% in 2008 to 56.2% in 2010. However, the female employment rate continued to grow from 55.8% to 56.9% in respective years. The crisis seems to have affected the male-dominated industries first, but the impacts of the fiscal consolidation can materialise in the female-dominated social sector with a few years delay.

Employment rates in 2001–2010 for the age groups 15–64, 55–64 and 15–24



Source: Labour force survey 2010. Statistics Finland

The national aim to raise the employment rate to 60% for the age group of 55–64 in order to achieve an increase of three years in the effective pension age seems to wither away for the time being. However, in the long run, the employment rate has increased considerably indicating that pension reforms have been able to serve their purpose. In general, it should be noted that the entire working career should be considered – and not only the end of it – when we wish to affect people’s retirement decisions. A bulk of research indicates that the reasons for early retirement are to be found in working conditions, lack of flexibility, stress and poor management; factors than can hardly be influenced by the pension policy.

In short, an increase in the retirement age can only be a part of the solution as many Finns enter retirement through disability pensions (most often due to mental illness, such as depression). Therefore, a major challenge would be to reduce the amount of people on disability pension – possibly through improvements throughout their working life. As of 2007, part-time sickness allowance has tried to facilitate the re-entry to labour market instead of disability pension.

– *Active labour market policies*

The new Government Programme targets an additional EUR 60 million per year to guarantee activities, such as job, traineeship, etc., to unemployed young persons aged under 25 years or to recently graduated unemployed persons aged 30 years or less. To reduce long-term unemployment, the new Government allocates an additional EUR 40 million per year for improved activation services. Ageing persons are not the primary target of these policies.

Employment services

The employment services available include employment exchange, vocational guidance and career planning, its training and career information service, labour market training and various support services that promote employment. There are no services focusing especially on ageing persons, but the services are offered on individual basis. Unemployed jobseekers are defined as 17–65 year-old person who are able to work and are at the labour market’s disposal.

Adult education

The demographic change plays an important role in the forecasting of education needs. How the supply of education is targeted will become more important during the current decade since the number of persons exiting working life will exceed the number of persons entering it. At least some sectors will be facing labour force shortages instead of the current workforce surplus.

A challenge will be the promotion of a balanced employment development for example with regard to industry and welfare services. The Finnish labour market will be facing a situation where the number of persons entering the labour market falls short of the expected need for labour force by around 6,3000 per year. Guidelines for developing education are outlined in the development plan for education and research for 2011–2016. The goal is that the Government adopts the plan in December 2011. According to the draft plan, Finland will be facing labour force shortages due to the demographic change and the changes in the competence requirements and industrial and competence structures as well as challenges regarding the sustainability of the national economy.

Access to skilled labour force can be improved and the negative development of the dependency ratio can be compensated by making the education system more efficient and by targeting the supply of education. For education policy this means that:

- the total time spent on education and the average age of graduation is lowered by decreasing the maximum time for graduation, by shortening transition periods, by reducing unnecessary overlapping training and by reinforcing the recognising of competence acquired earlier;
- the completion of studies rates are raised; and
- that a closer match between labour supply and demand must be achieved.

For realising the principle of lifelong learning, it is important that skills and knowledge are visible and competence is given full value irrespective of where, when and how it has been acquired. This is of great significance also for the ageing population. In Finland, there are still a lot of people in the older age groups who do not have any professional qualifications although they have a lot of competence through work and other experience.

The Finnish education legislation allows the identification and recognition of competence acquired outside the education system. There is, however, variation in the practices and outcomes, and development work will be continued.

In recent years, particular attention has been paid to ageing workers possibilities to continue longer in working life. Practices introduced during earlier programmes focusing on ageing workers and increasing the attraction of working life have been established through performance guidance. The labour market organisations have adopted several measures, and for example provisions have introduced into collective agreements stating that the tasks of ageing workers (+50 years of age) should be made easier without any negative impact on the earnings. Also, employer and employee organisations have launched a joint project where good practices in age management and workplace wellbeing are first tested and then distributed within the sector through training and communication.

Management and managerial skills have a significant impact on the quality of working life. With the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health assuming the organisational responsibility, a management development network will be established, discussing and disseminating managerial skills into workplaces. The availability of management training will be improved. Quality criteria for good management will be created for the public sector, and their implementation developed.

Age management will be fostered as part of the development of management, meaning the consideration of age-related factors in daily management that ensures that young, middle-aged and older employees are given the means to achieve their own and the organisation's goals.¹⁸

– *Improvements in the employability of older workers*

The employment rate among people aged 55–64 has risen during the 2000s. (See general situation in 2011, Question 5.)

– *Measures to avoid gender discriminatory situations in relation to pension benefits or personal income*

From 2005 onwards, pension accrues also during the periods of maternity, paternity and parents' allowance and periods of unpaid childcare leave until the child reaches the age of three.

– *Mechanisms put in place to promote smooth and gradual retirement*

Please see the pension reform 2005 (previous MIPAA/RIS report).

RIS Commitment 6: To promote lifelong learning and adapt the educational system in order to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions

– *General in education*

The promotion of lifelong learning is included in all education in Finland. It has also been incorporated into the legislation on education.

¹⁸ Programme of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's Government, 22 June 2011.

Adult education and studies are an important part of life-long learning. According to the 2006 survey on adult education, 52% of 18–64 year-olds take part in adult education in Finland, the total amount of adult students being over 1.7 million. 35–44 year-olds are the most active (61%), but the level of activity is high also among 45–54 year-olds (56%) and 55–64 year-olds (37%). The next adult education survey in 2012 will also examine the participation of 65–69 year-olds.

Liberal adult education offers learning opportunities for all age groups. The draft for the development plan for education and research 2011–2016 states that the growing importance of liberal adult education as a means to promote the health and wellbeing of adults and senior citizens is recognised.

An essential characteristic of liberal adult education is that there are no examinations and no legislation defining its contents. The education goals and contents are defined by actors maintaining the educational institutions and organisations, such as local governments, joint municipal boards, associations, foundations and limited companies. Liberal adult education incorporates both activities based on different kinds of values and more neutral activities. The state finances liberal adult education through central government transfers to local government. Reasonable fees can be collected from the students. In 2009, the gross number of students in liberal adult education was 1.7 million and the net number 1 million (Statistics Finland, statistics on educational institutions 2010).

Since 2007, actors maintaining liberal adult education institutions have been granted, on application, discretionary government transfers in the form of service vouchers. The government transfers have enabled the institutions not to collect fees from students in the target groups defined by the Ministry of Education and Culture in order to promote the interest and access of these groups to education. The target groups include immigrants, persons with low level of school education, unemployed persons, persons with learning difficulties, retired persons and ageing persons as well as in the case of summer universities, university drop-outs.

The universities of the third age are a special type of Open University teaching. The first university of the third age started in Finland in mid-1980s. Universities of the third age offer the possibility to independent university studies by aiming at formal grades or exams. The forms and level of teaching complies with traditional university teaching forms and levels.

Today, the universities of the third age are coordinated by ten universities, and it is possible to take part in teaching in around 70 towns. Annually around 17,000 ageing persons study at the universities of the third age.

The Ministry of Education has prepared a guiding document “Education and research 2011–2016. Development Plan”, which is based on the objectives set for education and science policy in the 2011 Government Programme. The plan was adopted in December 2011. As stated in the Government Programme and the development plan, the Government will look into a reform of public funding with the aim of supporting and meeting the individual training needs of citizens by adopting a system of personal training accounts for citizens. A tripartite investigation will be conducted on the utilisation of such accounts as part of working life agreements.¹⁹

– *Initiatives undertaken in relation to pre-retirement programmes*

Pre-retirement training is organised especially by organisations such as trade unions.

– *Learning methods developed to teach older persons the use of new information technologies*

The new National Digital Agenda, completed in December 2010, guides the development of the Finnish information society. One of the aims is to promote everyone’s possibilities to and skills for using digital services. The Digital Agenda lists measures for safeguarding in particular the position of ageing persons as

¹⁹ Programme of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen’s Government, 22 June 2011.

active citizens, for example, by offering support and advisory services. The agenda also highlights the significance of accessibility, availability and ease-of-use of online services and calls for the accessibility and usability perspectives to be included in all legislation on the information society.²⁰

Various incentives, for example the domestic help credit in taxation, could contribute to a wider uptake of ICT. From the beginning of tax year 2009, work entitling a taxpayer to the domestic help credit has included the installation, maintenance, deployment and instruction related to ICT equipment, software, information security and communication technology, such as a broadband connection.²¹

In addition, NGOs have carried out projects, financed for example by Finland's Slot Machine Association, with aim to teach the use of information technology to ageing persons. There are good experiences from ageing persons' teaching information technology to people of their age.

- ***Adaptation of educational curricula to prepare people for lives of continuous change and to equip them with the necessary skills and attitudes favouring flexibility; promotion of new didactic methods in this regard.***

It has been noted that in certain cases, ageing persons can be better teachers to people of their age than teachers who are younger. Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY) finances NGOs which arrange educational projects for ageing persons.

- ***Development and/or promotion of special programmes to facilitate the reintegration into the labour market of those who left the formal educational system early***

Please see above.

- ***Steps taken to make formal schooling more gender-sensitive, e.g. through the introduction of gender-sensitive curricula, specific programmes for girls and women, and specific programmes for older women to help them re-enter the labour market.***

An equality and gender awareness project was carried out in university teacher education in accordance with the Government Programme. All universities providing teacher education for kindergarten teachers, class teachers, special needs teachers, careers teachers and subject teachers took part in the project. The project was completed in March 2011. The project focused on teacher education curricula, production of teaching material, designing on-line studies for teacher education, organising continuing education for teachers in teacher education and other teachers as well as research and information on issues relating to gender equality and gender awareness. Moreover, a number of national events were organised in cooperation with interest groups.

According to the 2006 adult education survey, women are more active in adult education than men. Ageing persons (55–64 year-olds) are less active than other age groups, but women are more active than men in all age groups. The next adult education survey will be carried out in 2012.

The adult education benefits were revised for unemployed persons and employed person in 2010. Unemployed persons can now pursue independent studies while they receive daily allowance for unemployment if the studies have been included in the job seeker's job seeking plan or employment programme. Life-long learning is supported through life-long guidance, the organisation of which as public service is steered by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Progress of studies and career and study choices are supported through various kinds of steering and support measures. The Ministry of Education and Culture has also established a cooperation group for

²⁰ Towards a barrier-free information society. Action Programme 2011–2015. Ministry of Transport and Communications. Programmes and strategies 3/2011, 13.

²¹ Towards a barrier-free information society. Action Programme 2011–2015, 25.

life-long guidance (2010–2013). The group is to define the strategic goals of life-long guidance. The goal is to make it easier for all citizens to get guidance services.

RIS Commitment 7: To strive to ensure quality of life at all ages and maintain independent living including health and well-being

– *In general*

In order to respond to the new challenges of the operational environment, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has established a new strategy for social protection called “Socially Sustainable Finland 2020”. The vision for Finland is to be a socially sustainable and cohesive society.

Sustainable development involves economic, social and ecological sustainability. The purpose of the strategy for social and health policy is to achieve a socially sustainable society.

A socially sustainable society treats all members of society fairly, reinforces participation and a sense of community, supports health and functional capacity, and provides the security and services required by its members.

Social sustainability requires a functioning social protection system that helps citizens cope with risks in life. Everyone has the right to social wellbeing, participation and the best health possible. Equality, mental and material wellbeing, gender equality, and economic, social and ecological sustainability contribute to the balanced development of society.

Three strategic lines to reform the social protection system are:

A strong foundation for welfare

- Health and welfare in all policies
- Longer working careers through wellbeing at work
- Balancing the various areas of life
- Sustainable social protection financing

Access to welfare for all

- Reduce differentials in welfare and health
- Customer-oriented services
- New service structures and operating practices
- Strong sense of social inclusion

A healthy and safe living environment

- Strengthen the viability of the environment
- Ensure that society can continue to function under exceptional circumstances

In Finland everyone is entitled to basic income support and sufficient social welfare and health care services. A life of human dignity must be ensured under all conditions. These rights and the equality principle are written into the Constitution of Finland.

Along with the demographic change and the number of ageing persons is increasing, dementia and other chronic illnesses are becoming more common, and the number of patients with multiple complaints is increasing. This translates into an increase in expenditure on social and health care services and a need for more personnel, unless we can increase the productivity of services. Social welfare and health care services will remain labour-intensive in the future too, but productivity can be improved by reorganising services and introducing new ways of producing them.

The focus of social welfare and health care services will be shifted increasingly to preventive action. The service system must be able to provide early and efficient assistance to people who cannot cope themselves. Expertise in prevention must be increased among all professional groups in the social welfare and health care services, and the availability of preventive services must be improved. Services will be comprehensively reformed so that users will be actively involved in their development.

Robust basic services are capable of early intervention in problems and illnesses and of supporting customers to cope independently. Minority groups and those living in difficult conditions also need targeted services. Independent living, functional capacity and participation of older people will be primarily supported in their own living environment, with the assistance of new technology. The starting point here is available, equitable, effective and customer-oriented services.

Social sustainability requires to reduce the welfare and health differentials between citizens and to improve the status of the most vulnerable members of society. The opportunities afforded by an increase in the number of healthy years in life must be embraced. Policies must be reformed so as to improve the potential of the aged to use their resources to contribute to their own wellbeing and that of their community and society at large.

Health-promotion and preventive measures have been emphasised in Finland even more than before. According to the strategy for social and health policy we must invest in health, functional capacity and the prevention of social problems. The focus will be shifted from treating the sick to actively promoting wellbeing. This will improve the quality of life and improve the sustainability of public finances.

Finland has considerable health differences between population groups and genders, and these cannot be narrowed by social welfare and health care measures alone. The most efficient way to do this is through close cooperation between administrative sectors. Public health is best improved by targeting measures towards improving the relative status of the most vulnerable members of society. In addition to services intended for all, measures will be targeted at vulnerable population groups such as low-income ageing people.

– *Actions taken to integrate ageing issues into sectoral policies*

Please see the answer on the RIS 1.

– *Targeted measures to reduce inequalities in access to health and social services, including for people in rural and remote areas*

The National Development Programme for Social Welfare and Health Care (Kaste Programme) is a strategic steering tool that is used to manage and reform social and health policy. It aims at increasing participation, health and wellbeing as well as improving service quality and effectiveness and reducing regional differences.

A new Kaste Programme (2012–2015) is currently being prepared. The programme defines the key social and health policy targets, priority action areas for development activities and monitoring as well as essential reform and legislation projects, guidelines and recommendations that enhance the realisation of the programme. The Kaste Programme is an umbrella programme for social welfare and health with clearly defined targets and a limited set of strategically significant sub-programmes. The new programme continues to some extent the work carried out under the programme for 2008–2011. One of the goals is to improve older peoples' welfare and services. The Government renews the programme every four years. The new programme will be adopted by the end of 2011.

See more: http://www.stm.fi/en/strategies_and_programmes/kaste

As an instrument of guidance of municipalities, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and STAKES (now THL, National Institute for Health and Welfare)

have issued the National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People in 2008²² where they promote the health and welfare of the aged and the need to raise the quality and effectiveness of the services provided.

The national targets to be reached by 2012 are that, of all people over 75:

- 92% to 92% live at home independently or using appropriate health and welfare services granted by assessing their overall needs.
- 13% to 14% receive regular home care,
- 5% to 6% receive informal care support,
- 5% to 6% live in sheltered housing with 24-hour assistance,
- 3% live in old people's homes or are in long-term care in health centre hospitals.

In 2009 the legislation of ageing persons' right to receive a non-urgent care needs assessment within seven work days of contacting a local authority was extended to those older people aged 75 years or more (the previous age limit was 80 years). Urgent cases must be assessed right away.

The new Health Care Act took effect on 1 May 2011. The objective is to make seamless cooperation between social and health services more effective especially when the services concern ageing persons and mental health clients. The provider of health services must cooperate with the organiser of social services if the client's situation so demands. According to the act, the local government must draw up a welfare plan that includes measures to promote health.

In 2011 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health prepared a draft for an act to ensure ageing persons access to care according to their needs, once their needs have been assessed from various aspects. The proposed act aims to strengthen the National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People issued in 2008 and the latest proposals by expert working groups. The guiding idea is to organise services so that ageing persons can live a dignified life. The services must be based on information on the client's needs, and the service provision should be client-centred, of a high quality and secure. Furthermore, in the draft act are compiled provisions regarding services for ageing persons included in various acts.

The right of an ageing person to social services is to depend more strongly than before on the assessment of the need for social services and the service plan made based on it. Ageing persons should be entitled to the care and rehabilitation defined in the service plan within the framework of social services. Provisions on access to health care and medical care are included in the Health Care Act even in the future.

The drafting of the legislation on services for the aged was started in autumn 2009, and the aim is to complete the draft act in spring 2012. The goal is that the act takes effect in 2013. The draft was sent for comments to a great number of stakeholders in spring 2011.

- ***Initiatives to improve long-term care services for older persons, in particular community-based services that are needed to overcome the mismatch between the homebased services that are usually desired and the residential care services that are in fact supplied***

National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People underlines the primacy of promoting health and welfare, of giving priority to prevention and support for home living, and of comprehensive assessment of individual needs. The range of available services must be diversified with the addition of advisory and other preventive services, and health, functional capacity and rehabilitation must be supported throughout.

Care of older people - working group set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in 2009 - proposed that during next four years (2011–2015) the aim is to modify the structures of 24-hour care by changing over

²² National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Publications 2008:5. http://www.stm.fi/julkaisut/nayta/_julkaisu/1063089

from the present three-tier 24-hour care system (service housing, homes for older people, municipal health centre wards) towards a one-tier system of 24-hour care. The change can be implemented so that institutional care is not replaced by institutional like solutions. The reasons to the change are older people's right not having to move from one's present residence in order to secure necessary support services in response to changing need.

– ***Actions to improve the coordination and integration of services provided to older persons (e.g. through case management systems)***

According to National Framework for High-Quality Services for Older People the quality and effectiveness of services should be ensured by appointing a responsible person or persons as home care coordinators and assuring them consultation opportunities drawing on adequate expertise in gerontological nursing and social work, and in geriatrics.

According to the statistics older persons are the most frequent users of the health centers. In the biggest cities there are also special geriatric clinics. In the national ongoing development project of health centers a Finnish version of the Chronic Care Model (CCM) has been drawn up. CCM is a framework for comprehensive development of the care for persons with chronic conditions. Therefore it very much concerns older persons.

Case management is a part of the CCM. In the Finnish model, a case manager is a nurse, who has additional education. CM works with people who have several chronic conditions and who are in need for several kinds of services. CM tries actively to recognise those who mostly benefit from case management. The main task of the CM is to support health centre customers in self-care. CM is also responsible for implementation and co-ordination of the care and services according to the care plan, which is drawn up together with the customer and the doctor.

By case management it is possible to offer continuity of care and safe services for those ageing persons who need help in self-care and co-ordination of their care and services. It is also a possibility to manage the long-term diseases well in primary health care and to decrease the need for emergency services and hospital care.

– ***Initiatives concerning special needs in case of dementia and Alzheimer's disease***

The National Institute for Health Welfare (THL) has published guidelines for high quality dementia care in 2008. The Finnish Medical Society, Duodecim produces guidelines on evidence-based treatment (the so-called Current Care guidelines), including, for example, the guideline "Memory diseases: diagnosis and drug therapy 2010". Finland is preparing a national programme to combat memory disorders, too.

Memory clinics are specialised geriatrics units within primary health care, which usually focus on diagnosing cognitive disorders in the ageing population. Memory clinics employ geriatricians and nurses who specialise in testing, assessing and advising patients with memory impairment and in supporting and informing the relatives and families of the patients. Home-visits for assessing and testing the patient in her familiar surroundings are a part of the nurse's assignment.

Patients requiring assistance in their daily living are referred to home care. The home care team assesses the need for home services and provides them accordingly. The home care varies from a weekly medication administration to several home care visits a day. In some municipalities, the primary health care also employs nurses who specialise in working as a link between the patient with memory disorder and the service system, also known as memory coordinators.

– ***Efforts to improve the training of care providers: professionals, volunteers and family members***

Finland is introducing a new training programme for auxiliary care staff within the project "A flexible pathway to employment and training for auxiliary staff in services for older people and people with disabilities". Care assistants are needed due to a rising demand in care for the aged. In future, care assistants

from the new training programme could perform auxiliary duties related to meals-on-wheels, clothes care, washing and bathing, cleaning services, transportation and certain services that promote social interaction.

The Central Union for the Welfare of the Aged has developed a training programme for group activities for the aged that aims at reinforcing the ageing persons' own resources. Both organisations and municipal authorities organise a lot of group activities for the aged. Moreover, many organisations and municipal authorities as well as parishes organise training for volunteers who want to help the aged. Many retired persons are volunteering.

The Association of Care Giving Relatives and Friends has developed a training model for informal caregivers as part of a national project in 2010–2012. The 16-hour training package for informal caregivers consists of different themes that focus on the characteristics of care giving situations, assistance, basic care work, social security and services, facing changes, informal caregivers' own resources, peer support and active participation. The training programme has been piloted and education for trainers is now available.

– *Efforts to improve the skills of older persons in terms of self-care, health promotion, prevention of disease and disability.*

The Health Care Act that entered into force on 1 May 2011 has reinforced the ageing persons' right to guidance services. The Act provides that guidance services that promote welfare, health and functional capacity are organised by the local authorities for persons receiving old-age pension. The advice services include:

- 1) advice aiming to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent illness and accident injuries;
- 2) identification of health problems caused by reduced health and functional capacity and related early support; and
- 3) guidance regarding medical care and safe pharmacotherapy.

Local authorities can also organise health-promoting health checks for their older residents as well as home visits promoting their wellbeing in the manner agreed separately in each municipality. When organising these services the municipal primary health care must cooperate with the social services.

The goal is to improve the ageing persons' possibilities to maintain and preserve their functional capacity as long as possible, to support living in the own home and to create opportunities to active living and inclusion in society as well as to reduce the need for 24-hour services. Another goal is to bridge the welfare and health gaps of the ageing population and find those ageing persons that have a higher than average risk to be excluded from support and services. The guidance services should ensure that ageing municipal residents receive the information, guidance and timely support they need and, if necessary, the guidance to seek other social and health services or service needs assessment.

In 2011 National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities launched a new online guiding tool “Advisory services for older people and home visits that promote welfare”. The guide helps municipalities to organise guidance services for ageing persons. The service can include advice on the adoption of healthy life-styles and good eating habits or advice on housing problems or information to prevent of sickness. The aim is to increase information to ageing persons to promote their wellbeing and health.

Less than two out of three municipalities organised house calls to promote the welfare of aged persons in 2010. Around every fifth municipality was planning to establish such a service. House calls to promote the welfare of aged persons were organised both in big and small municipalities in terms of number of residents. The share of municipalities organising house calls has risen from 2007.

40% of the municipalities had a guidance centre for the aged. Around every fifth municipality was planning to establish such a centre. Both big and small municipalities have guidance centres for the aged or other similar activities, but the municipalities that organise activities were on average bigger than the

municipalities that do not have a guidance centre. The number of guidance centres for the aged was higher in 2010 than in 2007.

Finland takes part in WeDO – European Partnership for the wellbeing and dignity of older people. National co-operation network consists of members from universities, ministries, parishes and voluntary organisations.

The aim of the WeDO-project is to promote the wellbeing and dignity of ageing persons in need of care and assistance and to prevent elder abuse.

- *Steps taken to ensure efficient, equitable and sustainable financing of health and social services for persons of all ages.*

Concerning the general framework, please see the answer on RIS 4.

- *Measures undertaken to facilitate the adoption of healthy lifestyles (e.g. information campaigns).*

Please see answers above.

RIS Sitoumus 8: To mainstream a gender approach in an ageing society

- *Measures taken to mainstream gender, to remove all obstacles for achieving gender equality, to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, and to promote individual development of women throughout their entire life cycle*

The Government Programme states that gender equality is a significant social goal and it must be taken into account in all aspects of public decision-making and activities. The Government puts special emphasis on the gender perspective in legislative drafting, budget preparation and other activities with major implications for gender equality.

Such major reforms include the restructuring of municipalities and services, the lengthening of work careers and reforms in working life more generally, the wellbeing and income of families, the status of minorities and the enhancing of growth and competitiveness.

The Government is currently preparing an Action Plan for Gender Equality 2011–2015, which will set the basic outline also for the gender mainstreaming measures. The Action Plan will include also measures to promote gender equality and gender perspective in working life, education and training, political and economic decision-making as well as different measures related to health, security and welfare (including reconciling work and family life, etc.).

The Government promotes mainstreaming by, for example, providing training on gender impact assessment to officials taking part in legislation drafting. In addition, training in mainstreaming assessment and gender impact assessment is arranged for other officials working in the central government administration. Ministries promote mainstreaming within their own administrative sectors. Projects and data provision promoting gender equality are included in performance agreements made with agencies and institutions under different ministries.

The Ministry of Finance states in its regulation for the drafting of the budget for 2007 that a summarised review must be included in the justifications for the main title of expenditure regarding such activities linked with the budget proposal that are significant in terms of their gender impact. The actual gender impact assessment will be done while preparing legislation or projects.

In recent years mainstreaming has been a basic principle in all the activities of MSAH. MSAH is also the ministry responsible for gender issues and has launched specific projects concerning the issue. As a result,

gender perspective has been included partly to the State budget and to a larger extent to the most important yearly reports. Also all legislative bills have to be analysed from the gender perspective if it is relevant. One main part of this project is the demand to produce and publish all statistics and data with aggregation by sex. Also most of the data is disaggregated by age.

Other measures to facilitate equal sharing of family and care responsibilities are described in the answer on RIS Commitment 9.

– ***Actions to give particular attention to collection and analysis of gender- and age disaggregated data***

Please see the answer above.

– ***Measures to promote the economic rights of women (such as legislation to ensure equal pay for equal work, to protect women's rights in the workplace, to reconcile family life with work life, etc.)***

During this Government term the tripartite equal pay programme will be continued, with the objective of narrowing the pay gap between women and men to a maximum of 15% by 2015. Two extensive research projects will be initiated in order to specify the required measures. The first of these will investigate the impact of the structural changes in employment and changing needs in the labour market on both genders' employment, position in the labour market, engagement with the labour market, career development, remaining at work and sharing of care responsibilities. The second project will look into the influence gender bias and expectations have on educational and career choices.

The promotion of women's entrepreneurship is included in both the Government Programme and the Government report on gender equality. The share of women as entrepreneurs is high in EU comparison (around a third). Women's enterprises are often in the service sector and retail sale. According to female entrepreneurs, family leaves create problems. Women's entrepreneurship has been promoted by for example loaning money to entrepreneurs and start-up grants. The new Government Programme aims to continue the efforts to develop the social security for entrepreneurs. The objectives are to eliminate unfounded disparities in the social security for entrepreneurs and wage and salary earners, support entrepreneurship, and help entrepreneurs to reconcile work and family life.

– ***Social protection policies reviewed to ensure full and equal participation of men and women in social protection systems***

Please see the answer on the RIS 9.

– ***Measures to encourage and facilitate equal sharing of family and care responsibilities between women and men.***

Please see the answer on the RIS 9.

RIS Sitoumus 9: To support families that provide care for older persons and promote intergenerational and intra-generational solidarity among their members

– ***In general***

The overall aim is to support the equal distribution of family responsibilities between the parents. This enhances also the equal participation of both sexes at the labour market.

The Government Programme states that measures are taken to promote operating models through which the parents of small children and those providing care for an older or sick person close to them can work shorter days or take unpaid leave more flexibly by determining the specifics with their employers. Employers will be

encouraged to adopt operating models that lower the threshold of returning to work after childcare leave or other similar disruption to an individual's working life.

The Government is currently preparing an Action Plan for Gender Equality 2011–2015, which is described in the answer on RIS Commitment 8.

– *Awareness-raising measures on the contribution of older persons to family, community and society at large*

In the report “A chain of generations. Baby boomers and cross-generational interaction in Finland” by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland²³, three family generations were analysed on the basis of survey and qualitative data: baby boomers, their children and their parents. They were asked about the amounts and frequencies of the mental support, practical help and financial assistance that the respondent provided and received. Results show that Finns help a wide range of relatives. Differences between generations are related to age and phase of life cycle. Despite the fact that help between relatives is generous, few respondents perceive assisting aged relatives to be a duty for family members.

– *Support to care-giving families, family friendly policies and services*

In 2011, a legislative amendment was introduced enabling improved opportunities to take temporary unpaid leave of absence in order to care for a family member. The arrangement is based on mutual agreement between the employer and the employee. The Act on Support for Informal Care came into effect in 2006. A new provision, added to the act on 1 August 2011, concerns substitute care during the informal carer's leave or other absence. Accordingly, the municipality can organise necessary substitute care during the informal carer's leave or other temporary absence by concluding with a person fulfilling the requirements laid down in the act a commission agreement by which the person agrees to manage the substitute care. Substitute care can be organised as said above if the informal carer consents to it. A further condition is that the arrangement is implemented by taking into account the opinion of the person cared for and that the arrangement is considered to be in the best interests of the person cared for.

Organisations provide peer support and guidance for informal caregivers. So called coordination services for informal care are in place for example in Helsinki. The service entails that a person is appointed to find out the informal caregiver's need for services, social security and assistance and to help him or her with, for example, different kinds of applications.

– *Adaptation of the infrastructure of towns to the needs of families, and in particular the needs of young and older persons, to ensure that generations can live together; improvements in planning of services.*

The existing housing stock in Finland is problematic in terms of accessibility and barriers. There are about 20,000 blocks of flats of three storeys or higher which do not have a lift. Additionally, detached houses pose functional problems for ageing persons.

In terms of the housing of ageing persons, the question concerns the use and improvement of the existing housing stock. This imposes challenges on the upgrading of buildings and especially on improving their accessibility and functionality. The construction of lifts is one of the key actions as well as the refurbishment of dwellings of ageing persons and persons with disabilities. Accessibility is often seen as an issue related only to people who are old or who have a disability. However, this issue is a part of the concept of good quality housing and serves all population groups.

Besides increasing the accessibility of dwellings and buildings, but it is also important to promote the functionality, cosiness and safety of the built environment and of the places for social activities and

²³ A chain of generations. Baby boomers and cross-generational interaction in Finland. Helsinki: The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, Studies in social security and health 107, 2009.
<https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/14965/Tutkimuksia107.pdf?sequence=3> (in Finnish)

neighbourhood services. Many cities have these kinds of activities. The Programme of Suburb Development 2009–2011 (*Lähiöohjelma*), implemented by the Ministry of the Environment, encouraged various kind of activities by providing funding, for example, through development and research projects.

Senior centres, which provide activities and services, and other solutions in residential areas are examples of how to promote a feeling of security and social belonging. In Finland some local governments have actively developed these. Additionally, the central government supports the further development of new housing solutions that fall between the ordinary home and institutional care.

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Finland participates regularly in the meetings of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing and exchanges information with other Member States and the Secretariat.

4. Conclusions and Priorities for the Future

Finland aims to achieve a socially sustainable society in which people are treated equally, everyone has the opportunity to participate, and everyone's health and functional capacity is supported. A sustainable base in society requires economic, social and ecological sustainability. All three are crucial in order for people to do well in Finland in the future.

Finland is at the top in several international studies on welfare. Work and participation will serve to lay a strong foundation for our future welfare too. A condition for social sustainability is to have a functioning system of social protection, which includes income security, social and health services, preventive work, occupational health and safety and equality.

The Finnish social and health policy contains three main policy lines: the strong foundation of welfare, access to wellbeing for all and an environment supporting health and security. The cake of wellbeing must grow and must be shared fairly. Furthermore, everyone must be able to live, reside and work in healthy and safe environments.

The emphases of the first policy are the importance of health and wellbeing in all areas of decision-making, the importance of work, the balance between the different areas of life and the sustainability of the financing of social protection. The second policy line emphasises fairness, the wellbeing of citizens and narrowing of health differences, reforming the client-centred character of services and social inclusion. The third policy line brings to the centre the issue of the viability of the environment and the functionality of society in special situations. Each generation must pass on an environment to the next that is at least in the same state as they received it in their own day.

Future welfare cannot be built as a system-oriented effort, and we cannot aim at just improving the average level of welfare. It is a strength in the Finnish society that we look after each other. Everyone is entitled to basic income support and sufficient social welfare and health care services. Social sustainability requires us to reduce the welfare and health differences between citizens and to improve the status of the most vulnerable members of society.

The stated aim of the current Government Programme is to continue to develop Finland as a Nordic welfare state and as a society that bears responsibility for its own citizens and its international obligations regionally and globally. The programme stresses that the Nordic welfare model is necessarily based on high employment, a competitive economy and equal services and care for all. This, it states, has proven to be the best social system, combining social cohesion with competitiveness.