

Outcome of the negotiations
on the Government Programme,
16 June 2023

A strong and committed Finland

Excerpts

The full translation of the Government Programme will be published shortly on the Government website at <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en>

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A strong and committed Finland – the Government's vision

The Government is seeking to make Finland a strong and committed country that can withstand global storms.

In a strong and committed Finland, people will have the opportunity to increase their knowledge and competence, find work, live on their pay or pension, and live in safety. When the foundations of society are strong, people can enjoy the right and freedom to pursue a good life on their own terms. People can feel included in society and can trust one another. The most vulnerable people can trust that they will be taken care of. It is the responsibility of government to provide a framework for freedom and opportunity.

A strong and committed Finland will be able to provide services to people of all ages regardless of their income or where they live. These services extend from early childhood onwards, covering education, health, social services, and care. We will guarantee that future generations will be able to enjoy similar services and opportunities. People will take responsibility for themselves and for each other in families, communities and in society at large. We will support parenthood and families with children and will take care of older people.

Every child and young person will have the opportunity to build a good life and pursue their dreams. We will invest in early childhood education and care and comprehensive school to create an educational path for everyone. We will encourage people of all ages to live a physically active life, which will improve the health and wellbeing of the nation. We will make Finland a global leader through historically large investments in research, development and innovation. Finland will be a technological frontrunner. We will make full use of the opportunities provided by digitalisation and artificial intelligence while making sure people keep pace with technological change.

A sustainable economy is the foundation for prosperity. The most important goal of the Government's economic policy will be to achieve sustainable growth. The Government will close the gap between general government revenue and expenditure and will reverse the trajectory of Finland's debt burden. In a strong and committed Finland, work and entrepreneurship will be rewarding and profitable. Finland will attract both domestic

and foreign investors. In Finland, you can try, fail and try again until you succeed. The Government will safeguard people's purchasing power and make sure that everyday costs remain reasonable.

An economically strong Finland will also be resilient. A strong and committed Finland is an open and international country. Finland will work with other countries and peoples in communities dedicated to European and western values and security. We will be active and take the initiative in NATO, the European Union, the United Nations and in other international contexts. Close Nordic cooperation will be particularly important. Our strong defence capability will contribute to the stability of the entire Nordic region.

The energy transition and clean technologies will offer Finland opportunities to create jobs, exports, economic growth and prosperity. Finland will punch above its weight in climate policy. We value clean nature in Finland. We will combat biodiversity loss. We will make sure that clean and affordable energy is available.

A strong and committed Finland is a stable and reliable country. It is a strong democracy and an independent state governed by the rule of law. Everyone in Finland is valued as an equal member of society. Bilingualism is one of our country's strengths.

A strong and committed Finland will ensure the safety of its people at home, on the streets and at its borders. We will combat social exclusion, make sure the police have sufficient resources and hone the functioning of our justice system. We will safeguard security of supply and the production of clean and safe Finnish food.

Provided we take care of the whole country, we as a nation and people will succeed. In a strong and committed Finland, people can count on things turning out well. That is how we will know that the Finnish welfare state is doing its job. Everyone will be able to live life on their own terms while respecting one another.

We will build a strong and committed Finland through concrete and forthright solutions. Action builds faith in the future. By working together, Finland can rise to meet any challenge.

7 Finland and clean energy

Situation picture

Limiting global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century will require a significant level of carbon negativity. In other words, in addition to reducing emissions, an extensive amount of carbon will have to be removed from the atmosphere towards the end of this century. Investments that reduce emissions are increasing at an accelerating rate globally. In this industrial revolution, we are competing to attract investments to Finland. Projects that reduce emissions are crucially affected by the availability and price of clean electricity, well-functioning infrastructure, the availability of competence in the field, the reliability of public administration and smooth permitting processes. Realising these kinds of investments in Finland will have a significant impact on our country's economic growth, industrial value added and competitiveness, along with tax revenue and jobs.

Finland's climate plans and the climate targets set for Finland at the EU level have been based on the idea that the carbon sink generated by managed forest land would remain high at all times. However, there has been a significant decrease in the net carbon sink from the land use sector. According to the revised calculation methods of the Natural Resources Institute Finland, emissions generated by other land use categories in the Finnish land use sector were almost equivalent to the net sink from forest land in 2022. Despite measures to counter this development, the carbon sink in 2021–2025 is at risk of falling significantly short of the targets set for Finland. Using these calculation methods, Finland will inevitably accrue a significant amount of emission debt in the 2020s. Assessments of emissions from the land use sector and effort-sharing sector do not take into account emissions from industry and energy production in the emissions trading sector, which are expected to decrease faster than forecast. The Government will take sustainable measures to accelerate the uptake of technical solutions in this area.

Achieving global carbon neutrality and then carbon negativity will require several technological breakthroughs and a subsequent industrial transformation. In this respect, Finland is well placed to lead the way. Technological transformation is not a linear process. To achieve market acceptance, new technology must be better and more affordable than older alternatives. The uptake of new technology is slow at first, but once a new development is accepted by the market, the pace of change can be very fast.

Vision

Finland will become a leader in clean energy while maximising its climate handprint. Finland will create clean economic growth at home and replace pollution-generating solutions around the world through technology exports. Finland will increase its share of investments, jobs and value added related to the clean economy. Finland will use its natural resources sustainably to improve its self-sufficiency.

The Government is committed to meeting emission reduction targets and moving towards carbon neutrality followed by carbon negativity. At the same time, the Government will ensure that its decisions or policy measures do not increase everyday costs for citizens or weaken the competitiveness of business and industry.

The Government will promote effective energy policy in a way that is predictable and takes a long-term view. Finland will strengthen its competitiveness and attractiveness as an investment target for renewable industries by doubling its production of clean electricity. The Government will ensure that electricity and products derived from it remain affordable and reliable with respect to security of supply. Smooth, predictable and legally certain permitting processes will be a competitive advantage for Finland.

The Government aims to achieve its targets for annual net emissions by 2030. The Government pledges to draw up a programme by the end of 2024 that will reverse the emissions debt accumulated since the start of the decade.

The Government will advance Finland's position as a frontrunner by developing a new energy and climate strategy aimed at carbon negativity with a key focus on promoting the clean transition and investments in industry. The Government will achieve climate impacts through effective emissions reduction measures, increased carbon sinks and Finnish clean economy solutions. The new energy and climate strategy and technological developments will help generate investments that Finland can use to pay off its emissions debt in the 2030s.

Finland is committed to the objectives of the Climate Change Act. Achieving the emissions targets will require active measures. The Government will focus its climate action on generating cost-effectiveness, technology neutrality and sustainable business while recognising the importance of a long-term approach across parliamentary terms for attracting investments. To support the achievement of the targets, the Government will adopt a sensible and effective climate policy at the national and EU levels and with respect to international agreements.

Finland will create good conditions for sustainable investments in renewable and fossil-free energy production, energy storage and new energy solutions, such as hydrogen. Finland will become a key player in the hydrogen economy and an attractive location for hydrogen refining projects.

In the use of public funds, emphasis will be placed on achieving a competitive advantage through RDI funding, smooth permitting processes and energy transfer infrastructure. The Government will invest in research, development and innovations that increase energy and resource efficiency and reduce the need for energy.

Clean and diverse nature will become even more important as a competitive advantage and source of quality of life in Finland. Finland will halt biodiversity loss as part of a sustainable economic policy. Finland will improve its self-sufficiency and the state of nature, increase value added and advance the sustainable use of natural resources by promoting circular economy solutions.

7.1 Affordable, cheap, clean and reliable electricity for Finns and their workplaces

Finland will become a leader in clean energy in Europe. The Government will prepare a new energy and climate strategy that will focus on promoting the energy transition and investments in industry. Finland will increase its electricity production many times over, and there will be sufficient electricity even during periods of freezing temperatures with no wind. Finland will be self-sufficient at the annual level and ensure security of supply in all situations. Finland will ensure the versatility and regional coverage of electricity production as part of comprehensive security. The structure of electricity production will curb price fluctuations and consumers will be able to benefit from automated demand response. Fair treatment of electricity users will be ensured in the event of electricity scarcity.

Technological development and the adoption of innovations are the most important ways to build an affordable, emissions-free and secure energy system in Finland. It is essential to increase the amount of high-quality research, development and innovation focusing on energy solutions in Finland. The Government will set public RDI funding on a clear growth path so that Finland can raise its level of RDI funding to four per cent of GDP. The Government will promote cooperation between business and industry, higher education institutions, research institutes, central government and municipalities, and growth enterprise environments. A significant portion of Finland's and the EU's RDI funding should

be allocated to projects that accelerate the clean energy transition. As Finnish businesses export solutions for sustainable energy systems to the rest of the world, Finland can increase its climate handprint.

Finland will be a leader in clean energy

A record amount of new electricity generation capacity will be built in Finland over the course of this decade. This is essential in order to significantly accelerate industrial investments and replace fossil fuels with electricity-based solutions in industry, heating and transport. Finland will improve its energy self-sufficiency sustainably by promoting the clean energy transition. Finland will continue its efforts to ensure that it is not dependent on Russian energy.

The share of renewable energy in energy production will be increased, and action will be taken towards phasing out the use of fossil fuels in heat and electricity production by the 2030s at the latest. Businesses will be offered stable and predictable operating conditions in order to promote the green transition and cleantech investments and attract new business to Finland. The sustainable energy sector and reasonably priced electricity will create both a competitive advantage and favourable conditions for sustainable industry in Finland.

Ensuring security of electricity supply and preventing major fluctuations in supply

Action will be taken to ensure that there is sufficient electricity in Finland at an affordable price even during periods of freezing temperatures with no wind. With respect to basic power production, Finland must strive for a level where there is enough electricity to meet the basic needs of households and businesses, including at peak consumption hours, once all the possibilities for regulating consumption have been exhausted. When it comes to investments in electricity production, the Government will promote a good balance between weather-dependent production, regulating power and basic power in terms of security of supply and the total costs of the system. A study will be conducted to create a cost-effective capacity mechanism (e.g. an auction or similar) that will ensure a sufficient amount of available electricity at all times. Incentives will be created for weather-dependent electricity production to participate in the capacity mechanism, or other measures will be taken to secure the necessary regulating power.

The Government will explore and, as far as possible, implement the extension of the scope of the infrastructure derogation in the interest deduction limitation with respect to large-scale energy projects. The Government will explore the need and possibilities for the central government to participate in financing solutions for strategic investments primarily through instruments in the form of guarantees or capital investments.

The Government will coordinate flexible production and consumption and improve system integration through flexibility arrangements and storage solutions. We will improve incentives for seasonal storage of heat and other energy in order to reduce seasonal fluctuations in the need for electricity, for example by eliminating double taxation on all forms of electricity storage. The Government will also promote opportunities to build electricity and heat storage facilities in order to achieve flexibility in short-term demand response.

Security of supply

The Government will clarify the responsibilities of public authorities and special assignment companies to ensure security of supply in the electricity system and other key functions of society. Security of supply will be improved by expanding compulsory stockpiling to wood fuels and by supplementing the network of wood terminals. The Government will assess the need to expand the reserves of Fingrid and the National Emergency Supply Agency.

To ensure security of supply, the availability of fuel peat will be secured during the transition period according to the needs estimated in the memorandum of the National Emergency Supply Agency dated 17 May 2023 (NESA/2023/00450-1).

Reserve and security of supply needs will be coordinated with the capacity mechanism to ensure regionally decentralised production of heat and electricity using diverse and easily stored fuels.

The volumes of fuels to be stored under the storage obligation, including peat, will be developed in accordance with needs. The selection of fuels will be expanded to include wood and other biofuels and electric fuels in accordance with the plant network within the capacity mechanism.

Access to mineral resources that play a strategic role in the energy supply will be secured.

Electricity transmission network

Finland will improve the functioning and adequacy of the electricity transmission network as the basis for the energy transition and as a key competitive advantage. Permitting procedures for electricity network investments will be sped up and resources will be allocated to the processing of permit applications. The Government will formulate a strategic vision for electricity transmission demand throughout Finland in the 2030s and launch the necessary measures to remove bottlenecks that slow down investments.

Measures will be taken to ensure that the demand for electricity transmission in nationally important industrial clusters is met and that electricity transmission costs remain reasonable in order to enable investments.

To reduce the need for further construction of the main grid and to mitigate bottlenecks, efforts will be made to promote the placement of large-scale electricity-consuming and electricity-generating investments close to one another without the need to connect to the main grid. Incentives will be created to locate weather-dependent production in places that are favourable with respect to the existing transmission capacity of the main grid, future construction and overall optimisation of the energy system. The Government will promote the location of data centres in Finland, taking into account the possibility to access electricity grids and the use of waste heat in district heating.

Finland will strengthen and develop Nordic cooperation in the energy sector. To ensure the security of electricity supply, the Government will promote increased transmission connections to the Nordic and Baltic countries. Finland will explore synergies between electricity and hydrogen transmission connections as part of the study on building a fixed connection in the Kvarken region. The Government will look into expanding Fingrid's responsibility in building the transmission networks needed in urban areas due to the energy transition.

Nuclear power

Finland needs more nuclear power. With regard to permit applications for nuclear power plants, the Government pledges to accept all applications for decisions-in-principle that meet the necessary criteria, provided that the applicants' background is acceptable from the point of view of national security. The Government will promote financing solutions for nuclear power projects.

The Government will reform the Nuclear Energy Act and the regulations implementing it by 2026 at the latest. The reform will enable nuclear energy projects to run smoothly and support Finland's competitiveness as a target for investments. The reform will facilitate the construction of small modular reactors (SMRs). The Government will encourage the development and rapid uptake of innovations related to nuclear power in Finland. The Government will promote opportunities to build nuclear power plants near industrial plants so that waste heat and steam can be utilised.

The Government will promote the use of a type-approval procedure, in particular for licensing SMRs. With regard to SMRs, the Government will explore the possibility of abandoning the laborious procedure for obtaining a decision-in-principle. The possibility to ascertain the details of the owner of the project before construction would be

maintained. The Government will ensure that there are adequate resources for nuclear energy regulation and SMR development at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority. The Government will also promote the use of SMRs to produce district heating.

Issues related to regulation of the power limit for scalable failures will be resolved. The aim is for nuclear power plants to be able to run at full capacity without excessive costs.

The Government will advocate for nuclear power at the EU level. Finland will advocate for a technology-neutral approach in the EU's 2040 climate package and will work to improve the favourable classification of nuclear power in EU regulation (including the taxonomy, fuel classifications and the definition of green hydrogen). At the EU level, Finland will play an active role in preparing regulation that promotes the deployment of type-approved SMRs.

Hydropower

The Government will strengthen the conditions for load-following hydropower, which is important for the energy system. The Water Act will be updated in a way that ensures that it is still possible to implement projects that are important for the national economy and the public interest. The load-following capacity of hydropower will be improved within the limits of the Water Framework Directive. The Government will promote pumped-storage hydropower projects, for example by including them in the permit priority procedure, aligning them with the public interest and including them in the capacity mechanism. The Government will explore the possibility of temporarily easing the real estate tax classification of new projects that increase hydropower capacity.

The most important hydropower sites for the electricity system will be identified in order to better reconcile the interests of society. Any construction of additional hydropower will be located at waters that are already used for electricity production. Efforts will be made to improve the capacity of hydropower production with a view to crises.

Wind power

Finland will develop the conditions for wind power. This will be done in a way that takes into account the need to increase electricity production brought on by the starting points of the Government Programme and that reconciles the social acceptability of wind power and the need for a favourable investment environment. The position of landowners will be strengthened.

Obligations will be placed on wind power in order that will improve its social acceptability and secure financing for load-following power. These measures will be implemented in a way that does not prevent the necessary increase in electricity production in Finland.

The Government will streamline permitting procedures by eliminating overlapping appeals. The potential of wind power will be utilised in various parts of Finland.

The Government will take the following measures to ensure fairness in wind power construction: comprehensive implementation of the demolition and restoration obligation (including a fund), participation of wind power operators in managing load-following power through their own production or by participating in the capacity mechanism, lowering the EIA threshold to cover all industrial projects and strengthening landscape assessment, increasing compensation for power corridors, and determining and introducing national distance rules.

Amendments to the Electricity Market Act will enable distribution network companies to aggregate the access lines of wind power plants.

The Government will take measures to speed up the progress of projects in Eastern Finland in line with the recommendations of the report by rapporteur for wind power construction Arto Rätty. These measures will not compromise regional supervision, for example through the Compensation Act, and will ensure legal protection for citizens. To coordinate regional supervision and wind power construction, a high-level cooperation group will be set up with the task of promoting measures that can be implemented quickly and establishing a shared long-term vision of possible locations for wind power, especially for the purpose of investment planning.

The Government will set an ambitious target for offshore wind capacity in 2035 and create a competitive advantage for Finland in relation to other countries in the Baltic Sea region. This will ensure that large offshore wind projects can generate energy for Finnish industry and households. The Government will work to ensure a predictable and encouraging operating environment, along with smooth project development and construction both in the exclusive economic zone and in territorial waters.

The rules for offshore wind power are currently inadequate, and there is no legal basis for the exclusive economic zone. The rules for offshore wind power will be clarified through a legislative project that will define the legislation, permit processes, compensation and tax matters concerning waters belonging to Finland's exclusive economic zone without delay, and these rules will be coordinated with the rules for projects carried out in territorial waters and land areas. Efforts will be made to create incentives for building offshore wind farms in locations that are favourable to other uses of marine areas, such as shipping

and fishing, while minimising the negative impacts on these areas. The Government will ensure that these issues are taken into account in permitting procedures. The Government will clarify the management responsibilities of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in policies concerning the use of marine areas for energy production.

Solar power

The Government will promote solar energy investments in sites suitable in terms of land use as one way of balancing the temporal fluctuations in renewable electricity production. Solar power stations will be built in the built environment, areas released from peat production and wastelands, with the aim of avoiding significant use of fields and forest land for solar power production. The Government will ensure that the regulatory and permit processes for solar power parks are uniform, flexible and predictable throughout the country.

Bioenergy

The Government will maintain a stable and predictable operating environment for bioenergy through national decision-making and by being active in influencing EU policies. Bioenergy should primarily be produced using various waste products, residues and by-products. The sustainable use of biofuels will not be restricted through taxation and legislation, for example, as bioenergy plays an important role in phasing out fossil energy use and ensuring security of supply. The Government will promote measures to make Finland the leading developer and producer of bio-based solutions.

The Government will promote the development and launch of biogas production and the diverse use of biogas. The conditions for the use of biogas will be supported within the framework of the distribution obligation and the capacity mechanism, and financing incentives will be ensured. The production of biogas from animal manure and other organic fractions will be increased and the material generated in biogas production will be utilised efficiently, for example in fertilisation.

Small-scale energy production

The Government will ensure a favourable investment environment for small-scale renewable electricity and heat production. Action will be taken to strengthen the ability of households and businesses to build their own electricity grids and connect small-scale electricity production to these, and pilots will be conducted with energy communities.

The Government will incentivise the replacement of oil boilers with sustainable heating methods. To this end, renovations to replace oil heating will be linked to the flexibility mechanism to be created for the distribution obligation. The use of the tax credit for household expenses in energy renovations will be developed and expanded.

The Government will create favourable conditions for increasing the production of biogas and heat produced with wood fuels by individual farms. Households, farms and businesses will be given better opportunities to build their own biogas grids.

Promoting affordable electricity bills

Citizens must be able to pay their electricity bills, both in everyday situations and during crises. At the national, Nordic and EU level, the Government will work to ensure that the electricity pricing mechanism develops in the right direction in terms of everyday costs and fairness.

The Government is prepared to impose temporary regulation on retail electricity prices during the exceptional price crisis facing the electricity market. As a rule, market-based measures are considered important for ensuring the efficiency of the electricity market.

Finland will actively promote the efforts to lower the price ceiling in the wholesale electricity market to EUR 1,000/MWh in the EU electricity market regulation.

The Government will aim to create a joint Nordic-Baltic electricity market strategy that will safeguard the interests of the region's countries, businesses and citizens.

The Government will recognise the role of smart grid solutions, network investments to improve security of supply and electricity grid companies' innovations to promote demand response in advancing the electrification of society.

The Government will improve the opportunities for consumers, businesses and communities to avoid excessive costs brought on by price peaks and will encourage environmentally friendly investments. This will make electricity bills more affordable while also reducing emissions, as emissions from electricity production are the highest when prices are high. Automated solutions for the timing of consumption will be used to remove barriers to offering sufficiently easy ways to save money for the consumers. Transmission network operators will be obliged to offer the possibility for remote control in electrically heated properties and to make it available to consumers and to the providers of savings through demand response authorised by consumers. The Government will encourage energy efficiency and other measures to save energy, as

well as low-emission construction. The Government will promote the use of energy accumulators and demand response technology in households and explore the option of using the tax credit for household expenses in this context.

In connection with the reform of the supervision model for transmission network operators, the Government will assess and ensure the possibilities for promoting affordable transmission prices through regulation that safeguards investments and is sufficiently predictable. The electricity transmission charges applied by transmission network operators will be developed to reflect the costs as required by the EU Regulation when the supervision model is reformed in 2024. Provisions will be laid down to grant authority to the Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority to request for reviews of decisions concerning the Energy Authority's supervision model.

7.2 Increase in electricity production will benefit residents and industry in Finland

The increase in clean energy production and development of the energy system in a balanced way will improve Finland's energy self-sufficiency and lower the consumer price of electricity. This development will bring investments, jobs and economic growth to Finland. This will enable us to utilise our natural resources sustainably while improving our security of supply and self-sufficiency.

The aim is that as much as possible of the increased electricity production will be used in Finland. The Government will prioritise investments in the processing industry and high value added exports, rather than exporting large amounts of electricity or unprocessed hydrogen annually. Instead of attracting investments by increasing direct public support, the Government will emphasise the need to seek a competitive advantage by promoting a favourable general investment environment, RDI funding, streamlined permit procedures and the energy transmission infrastructure.

The hydrogen economy will be a key tool for bringing about the energy transition in industry and in utilising the opportunities offered by the green transition. It can also play an important role in reducing emissions from heating and transport in a way that is sensible in terms of competitiveness and everyday costs. Finland aims to account for 10 per cent of the EU's clean hydrogen production and for at least the same percentage of hydrogen use. Promoting the hydrogen economy will be an important part of the new Climate and Energy Strategy, which will focus on the transformation of industry. The Government will improve Finland's competitiveness in hydrogen economy investments through comprehensive measures in cooperation with business and industry.

Hydrogen-based investments will be promoted especially in applications that improve security of supply and self-sufficiency, such as the manufacture of fertilisers and synthetic fuels.

Because of the forest industry and use of bioenergy, Finland has a natural competitive advantage when it comes to the capture and utilisation of wood-based carbon dioxide. The Government will set a target for the use of technological sinks to a significant extent already during the 2020s. As part of the programme to pay off Finland's emission debt, the Government will explore and introduce policy instruments to ensure that carbon dioxide emissions to atmosphere from large industrial sources are eliminated by the mid-2030s. The Government is preparing to introduce sufficient incentives to advance investments. After conducting a study on the matter, the Government will introduce a reverse auction of negative emissions or a similar mechanism to encourage the capture of carbon dioxide. Where applicable, the carbon sequestration market will be used to fund the mechanism.

At the EU level, Finland will actively participate in the formulation of policies and targets to increase the production of renewable energy and continue reducing emissions in the EU. The Government will be active in influencing EU regulation to promote the sectors of the clean hydrogen economy that are important to Finland. Finland aims to promote the capture of all carbon dioxide and make it easier to recognise the capture and use of wood-based carbon dioxide in EU climate policy. The Government will advocate for the possibility to support carbon-free refining industry solutions, such as hydrogen-based steel, within the EU Net-Zero Industry Act. In connection with the implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive, the Government will ensure that the hydrogen economy and other energy-intensive industries based on electrification develop rapidly in Finland.

The capture and utilisation of carbon dioxide from bio-combustion combined with increased hydrogen production will create a platform for producing fuels, chemicals and materials from a sustainable carbon source and will reduce Finland's dependence on fossil raw materials. The Government will promote wide-ranging innovations in the use of hydrogen in all sectors.

Preparations will be made for investments in the hydrogen transmission network with the aim of encouraging the processing of electricity and hydrogen into high value added goods in Finland. The Government will ensure that Finland maintains the dominant position in and ownership of monopolised transmission infrastructure.

7.3 Streamlined permit procedures a competitive advantage for Finland

Streamlined and predictable investment permit procedures will be a key competitive advantage for Finland. At the same time, biodiversity, environmental considerations, the social acceptability of projects and protection of people's property will be taken into account. Smooth permit procedures are prerequisites for attracting investments and especially for transitioning to a clean economy. With this in mind, the Government will prioritise key reforms in this area and bring them into force no later than during 2024 through strong cross-administrative coordination. The goal for the reform of regional state administration is to have the new system in operation in beginning of 2025, or in the beginning of 2026 at the latest.

Streamlined permit procedures

To promote investments, procedures will move towards a one-stop-shop model, where the use of services and application for permits is centralised and digitalised into one effective and user-friendly permit process. One single authority will be responsible for the progress and coordination of the permit process, including the submissions required. This authority will also have the responsibility for ensuring that the permit applicant has the opportunity to discuss the obligations, submissions and conditions related to the permit procedure in advance. The aim is to reduce the number of unnecessary requests for supplementary information through good cooperation and anticipation. Another aim is for the permit procedure as a whole to be implemented in cooperation between the authorities and project operators, not as isolated processes one after the other.

More diverse use should be made of the special expertise of the authorities processing permits in the permit procedures in different parts of Finland. At present, barriers between government agencies (Regional State Administrative Agencies and Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment) make it difficult for the procedures to work effectively. The processing of environmental permits (including permit, supervision and guidance tasks) will be centralised to a national body that will function as a single judicial authority and will make use of the opportunities for multi-local working. In future, there will continue to be an adequate number of service points that process environmental permits in different parts of Finland, and measures will be taken to ensure that supervision tasks are carried out independently.

Good customer service capability and leadership within permit authorities and administrative courts, well-functioning digital systems and adequate resources will ensure streamlined permit procedures, which in turn will bring about the clean transition and achieve economic growth.

An act on environmental permit procedures will be adopted by combining the Act on the Coordination of Certain Environmental Permit Procedures and other acts that promote the one-stop-shop model. The act will lay down provisions on appropriate and effective procedural rules, including processing principles. The aim is that, as a rule, the combined permit procedure will lead to one single official decision and request for review procedure.

Targeted processing times will be specified for the planning, construction, environmental and water permit processes required for investments and for the processing of requests for reviews concerning these. The EIA procedure and processing of permits will be clarified and coordinated. The Government will promote the possibility to begin processing an environmental permit, as appropriate, based on an approved decision on a plan without waiting for it to become final. Measures to improve the efficiency of permit procedures will include digitalising permit processes and administrative procedures in a user-friendly manner and making use of the opportunities offered by automation as far as possible.

The Government will ensure citizens' participation opportunities and legal protection. Appropriate legal protection includes processing requests for review within a reasonable time. The rights of the authorities to request reviews of each other's decisions will be restricted within a short time frame. Efforts to promote effective permit procedures will involve enacting provisions on landowners' rights to claim compensation and on streamlined processes with respect to energy transmission corridors.

Each year, the Finnish authorities process a vast number of permits for investment projects. For projects that are particularly important for Finland's general interest, security of supply or national security, the Government will consider the need to lay down provisions on the possibility for the ministries to transfer the processing to an extraordinary and accelerated official procedure on a case-by-case basis. This procedure will ensure the appropriate rights to a request for review.

The Government will assess the benefits gained from the temporary priority procedure allowed by law and the processing of requests for review as urgent by administrative courts and make the necessary legislative amendments based on this.

Reducing uncertainties in permit conditions and results of permit procedures

The Government will make legislative amendments that will reduce the amount of uncertainties in the consideration of permits and in interpretation practices.

The national flexibilities allowed by the Water Framework Directive will be utilised and the river basin management plans will be reviewed. The Government will review the precautionary principle and the impacts of its interpretation on permit conditions and

the approval of permits. The possibilities to reintroduce conditions for the review of the permits in the permit regulations will be considered and the necessary legislative amendments will be made.

At present, a situation may arise where a permit for an investment is not granted because the consideration of the permit does not take into account the possibility to reduce impacts on waters, for instance, through additional measures with impacts on the same body of water. The Government will clarify the legislation in such a way that compensatory actions presented by the operator in the application on a voluntary basis can be taken into account to a limited extent in the consideration of environmental permits, and conditions concerning these can be set in the permit. Voluntary compensation to reduce the loading of waters in the manner required by the permit can be used in the consideration of permits.

One way the Government will make it easier to invest in Finland is through industrial parks. An industrial park is an area zoned and planned for activities related to industry and industrial operations and constructed for purposes other than wind power. The Government will take measures to promote the construction of industrial parks, the development of existing industrial parks and the renewal and expansion of industrial operations in the area with a lighter permit procedure, while still taking into account environmental impacts. The Government will also clarify the permit procedures with respect to permit processes for industrial change projects and permit updates. The Government will explore the opportunities to introduce environmental impact quotas specific to industrial parks and to adopt advance permit procedures.

7.4 Finland will use effective and sustainable means to increase its climate handprint and proceed towards carbon neutrality

Finland will make an impact on climate change primarily through effective emissions reduction measures, increased carbon sinks and innovative clean solutions. The use and export of these solutions will replace solutions based on polluting energy sources and raw materials both in Finland and in other countries. Climate measures will be implemented in a manner that is economically, ecologically, socially and regionally sustainable and just. Along with actions to combat climate change and reduce emissions, Finland will promote measures that improve the ability of society to adapt to climate change. Cooperation with other Nordic countries related to climate change mitigation and adaptation will be strengthened.

Finland will meet the emissions reduction targets and move towards achieving the carbon neutrality target and carbon negativity in a way that does not increase everyday costs or weaken competitiveness. Achievement of the climate targets will be promoted by concrete measures and effective climate policy at the national and EU levels and with respect to international agreements.

One of the priorities of the Government's climate policy is even faster development of solutions that reduce emissions and capture carbon in industry and energy production. Forest industry, a high level of expertise in technology and the energy use of biomass are creating opportunities for Finland to lead the way in the capture and utilisation of carbon dioxide.

Accelerating the transition to a clean economy

The government will review the carbon neutrality strategy in connection with drawing up the new climate and energy strategy. One of the priorities of the climate and energy strategy will be for Finland to utilise the opportunities for faster emissions reductions in industry and energy production than anticipated and to take advantage of its potential to capture and further utilise wood-based carbon dioxide, which is among the most significant in Europe. Sector-specific low-carbon roadmaps will be updated. The Government will continuously maintain a situation picture and assessment of actions that are sufficient to meet Finland's emissions reduction targets and obligations.

The Government will encourage the selection of clean solutions. Besides emissions, other environmental impacts, for instance on biodiversity and sustainable development, will also be taken into account.

The Government, together with business and industry, will promote the creation of a model for calculation positive climate handprints. The potential related to this will be explored and targets will be set for increasing the positive climate handprint of Finnish exports. The achievement of these targets will be monitored alongside carbon footprints. Efforts will be made to incorporate the handprint model into EU legislation alongside the footprint method.

Promoting common EU climate targets in a sustainable manner

Finland's climate policy is determined by agreements at the EU level. Within the EU, Finland will work actively and proactively to promote impactful and cost-effective climate and industrial policy that is sensible from the point of view of Finland's citizens and the country's sustainable growth and competitive advantage. Finland is committed to implementing EU decisions and international agreements. In this respect, we call for

the interpretation of common decisions in a way that is just from the Finnish perspective in situations where these could become unreasonable for Finland. The Government emphasises the importance of cost-effective and technology-neutral emissions reduction measures. The impacts of the emissions reduction targets and measures must be carefully assessed and it must be possible to review the targets in the light of new and more accurate information. Action will be taken to develop the pricing and markets of carbon emissions and sinks.

Measures in support of the energy and industrial transition can primarily be seen as emissions reductions in the emissions trading sector, and the development of this will continue. In the emissions trading sector, Finland has reduced its emissions fast. The particular challenges for Finland lie outside the emissions trading system, i.e. in the effort sharing and land use sectors.

Effort sharing sector

In the effort sharing sector, Finland will promote measures in line with emissions reduction plans or other corresponding measures and, where necessary, seek new measures to respond to the EU obligations cost-effectively. The backlog in emissions reductions in the effort sharing sector will be minimised and the emission targets will be met with respect to the level of annual emissions in 2030. The progress of emissions reductions will be monitored and the Medium-term Climate Plan will be updated. The preparation of the climate policy plans will be harmonised and the work on these will be coordinated.

Transport is the greatest emission source in the effort sharing sector, but emissions from vehicles and transport operations can be reduced using technology. The distribution obligation based on the percentage of the renewable fraction in transport fuels is a clear and fast-acting means to reduce the share of oil, traditionally imported from Russia, in the Finnish transport sector. However, it has proved challenging to ensure the supply of raw materials used for the distribution obligation that meet the sustainability criteria at a reasonable price.

The Government's principle is that the costs of the means to reduce emissions and oil dependency will be kept as low as possible. Preconditions for the measures are determined, in particular, by the room for manoeuvre in public finances and the emission targets binding on Finland under the Effort Sharing Regulation. The goal is to reach the emission targets for the effort sharing sector in such a way that emissions reduction obligations will not be transferred to the following years and become even higher.

The Government will develop the distribution obligation and climate actions in the non-emissions trading sectors in a predictable manner and with a long-term perspective. The Government will seek technically and economically sustainable solutions in a way that is technology-neutral. Measures will be taken to ensure a favourable environment for investments in biogas and advanced renewable and synthetic fuels. The development and production of domestic low-emission fuels will be promoted and legislation will be prepared to increase their use in passenger cars and heavy transport. In particular, efforts will be made to promote the manufacture and distribution of domestic biofuel and biogas suitable for the needs of heavy transport. The percentage of advanced renewable and synthetic fuels and biogas in the distribution obligation will be increased from the present, taking into account trends in capacity and costs. This will also improve Finland's self-sufficiency and security of supply with respect to transport fuels.

The legislation will be amended so that the distribution obligation will be the same as at present, 13.5 per cent, in 2024. Between 2025 and 2027, the distribution obligation will be moderately increased so that it will be 16.5 per cent in 2025, 19.5 per cent in 2026 and 22.5 per cent in 2027. The additional obligation related to advanced category will be raised from the present about two per cent to three per cent in 2025 and four per cent in 2026. Efforts will be made to maximise the share of domestic biogas in fulfilling the additional obligation.

The price of transport fuels will not increase due to the Government's measures. The impact of the increase in the distribution obligation between 2025 and 2027 will be compensated for in several ways, including by using the flexibility mechanism in the distribution obligation, by including transport electricity in the distribution obligation and by lowering the taxes on fuels, with a focus on easing the tax on the renewable fraction to the extent possible.

Transport electricity at public charging points will be included in the distribution obligation in the same way as biogas and synthetic electric fuels. This means that the increased use of transport electricity, synthetic electric fuels and biogas will reduce the need for the traditional renewable fraction in fulfilling the distribution obligation. In addition, as new fuels are gradually replacing traditional diesel and petrol, the distribution obligation will be fulfilled by a smaller absolute amount of renewable fuel in tonnes, which will reduce the risk of escalating the supply problems.

An opportunity will be created for fuel sellers subject to the distribution obligation to fulfil the obligation by financing other emissions reductions. Emissions reductions financed with the flexibility mechanisms included in the distribution obligation must be targeted to the non-emissions trading sectors. Measures concerning the effort sharing sector will be prioritised, but efforts will be made to extend the mechanism to a limited extent to

measures in the land use sector as well, based on an analysis to be conducted on the matter. The distribution obligation concerning renewable fuels will also be kept at a reasonable level with respect to fuel oil, and a level of flexibility will be enabled between the distribution obligation for transport fuels and fuel oil in order to minimise costs.

There is a risk that, as the distribution obligations rises, the price of the emission reductions to be achieved will be higher than that of the alternative emission reduction measures. This risk will be restricted by adjusting the level of the penalty fee related to non-compliance with the distribution obligation with respect to the agreed rise in the distribution obligations in the coming years. Revenue to the state will be accumulated from the penalty fees if the distribution obligation is not realised in full. Any revenue from the penalty fees will be directed to cost-effective climate measures in the effort sharing sector in such a way that the emission reductions set as the target will be covered. The Government will take into account the impacts of the decision on the distribution obligation on consumer prices of fuel and provide compensation for these.

In connection with preparing the flexibility mechanism for the distribution obligation, the Government will introduce a register for the measures that will function in a transparent manner and will implement practical pilots that also aim to support the development of a broader carbon sequestration and emissions reduction market. The Government will explore market-driven and cost-effective solutions through which a land or forest owner can receive compensation for ash fertilisation of forest or climate measures related to agricultural land, for instance, in a way that does not compromise food production.

The Government will continue to implement measures to reduce emissions from transport that will not increase everyday costs for citizens. These include developing the charging infrastructure for gas and electric vehicles and facilitating changes in the propulsion system especially in heavy transport, and differentiating the taxation of propulsion systems in passenger vehicles. Measures will be taken to facilitate the installation of charging equipment in housing companies and the conversion of vehicles using fossil fuels in both passenger and heavy transport.

Emissions will be reduced by improving the traffic capacity and condition of the current transport infrastructure and opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

The Government will promote the capture of wood-based carbon dioxide in industry and energy production and its conversion into long-lived high value added products and synthetic fuels.

The Government will explore the possibility to transfer emissions from waste incineration from the effort sharing sector to emissions trading without increasing waste or energy costs for consumers.

Land use sector

Finland's forests, their sustainable use and safeguarding the biodiversity of forest nature are important parts of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Forests that grow well produce renewable raw material that can be used to replace fossil-based materials while also serving as an important carbon sink. It is essential to ensure the management and growth of forests so they can continue to serve as carbon sinks in the future as well. Effective measures are needed to respond to the EU obligations in the land use sector that are economically sensible and will not weaken the operating conditions of Finland's forest sector.

We need industry based on domestic, renewable raw material as we move towards a cleaner society. Profitable bioeconomy and circular economy solutions enabled by sustainable forestry are in high demand globally, and this will bring wellbeing to Finland. Finland will continue to practise forestry that coordinates the different dimensions of sustainability and takes into account people, the economy and the environment. Finland will ensure an operating environment that is competitive and encouraging for forest owners. The use of forests will not be restricted.

According to the revised calculation methods of the Natural Resources Institute Finland, the net carbon sink of the land use sector has decreased significantly. The Government will continue to take actions to strengthen the carbon sinks from the land use sector. Despite these measures, Finland will not reach the carbon sink targets set for 2021–2025, mainly because of the slower growth of forests, changes in calculation methods and the end of wood imports from Russia.

Forest and soil carbon sinks will be strengthened. The current means to reduce soil emissions will be expanded and intensified in a way that is impactful and cost-effective. This will make it possible to narrow the gap shown by the calculations in accordance with the LULUCF Regulation.

The Government will introduce a package of measures to strengthen forest growth and implement the National Forest Strategy. The forest management recommendations will be updated to support the growth of forests and carbon sinks, and the application of the recommendations will be improved. Rotation periods will be moderately extended and action will be taken to prevent excessive thinning operations. The supervision of the Forest Act will be intensified and the pace of forest regeneration will be improved,

including through increased forest planting and the management of seedling stands. Campaigns concerning forest management backlogs and fertilisation and compensations for carbon-rich sites will be introduced using funding from the Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland METSO. An impact assessment will be carried out on the introduction of a charge for changes to land use. The carbon sequestration market will be developed and continuous-cover forestry on peatlands will be increased.

Forest carbon sinks will be safeguarded over the long term, taking into account the time lag before impacts can be seen and the supply of wood for industry. Both carbon stocks and the national economy can be strengthened by raising the added value of the industry without increasing the use of wood. The forest management recommendations will be revised and the limited need to update the Forest Act will be considered together with the relevant stakeholders while safeguarding the interests of forest owners. The changes will be implemented in such a way that, by the 2030s, they will promote the economically, ecologically and socially sustainable management and use of forests and the role of forests as a carbon sink. The quality of forest management will be ensured for the benefit of forest owners and the whole society. Besides forest growth, measures will be taken to safeguard forest health and mitigate the impacts of climate change and forest damages. The knowledge base will be strengthened concerning the variation in soil emissions by soil type or cultivation technique, for example.

The emissions reduction potential of peat fields will be utilised as part of the cost-effective measures without compromising the self-sufficiency of food production and weakening the profitability of agriculture. As far as possible, new, uncleared peatlands will no longer be drained into arable lands when developing agriculture. The Government will prepare for different alternatives and assess the economic impacts if Finland does not fulfil the obligations under the LULUCF Regulation in the short term. The possible transfer of missing emissions reductions, with any additional amounts, to be included as an obligation in the effort sharing sector will be taken into account in the decisions. The Government will work to ensure that Finland's obligations are proportionate to those of the other EU countries.

Influencing EU climate policy

It is important for Finland to influence EU climate policy proactively. It is in the interest of Finland for the EU to speed up the emissions reduction path of the emissions trading sector and take into account the circumstances in different Member States in the effort sharing and land use sectors to a greater extent than at present.

The Government will be active in promoting the extensive introduction and use of technological sinks in Europe and in Finland. Efforts will be made to facilitate the recognition of the capture and utilisation of carbon dioxide from burning wood in EU regulation. It would be logical to count the carbon captured from bio-based sources by means of technical separation as a sink in the LULUCF sector, in the same way as long-lived wood products are at present.

Rapidly advancing technologies will enable the reduction of fossil emissions from Finnish industry to a fraction of the present level. When determining the EU's emissions reduction targets for 2040, the focus should be on making use of advancing technologies to reduce emissions instead of placing too much emphasis on the role of carbon sinks in meeting the target. The renewable energy targets for 2040 should lead towards the use of materials with higher added value than wood biomass.

The functioning of voluntary carbon reduction and carbon sequestration market will be enabled in a way that is encouraging and transparent. The Government will ensure that voluntary measures and their calculation methods in the land use and effort sharing sectors will support Finland's actions to respond to the EU's common commitments. The principle to be applied in regulating the carbon neutrality claims of companies should be that the claim must clearly show the amount of fossil emissions reduced in the company's value chain and the amount that has been offset by purchasing carbon credits.

7.5 Finland will cherish its valuable natural environment

Finland's will respond to its international commitments through nature policy. The Government will support Finland's adaptation capacity and stability by strengthening biodiversity. The Government will ensure the preservation of natural capital as part of a responsible economic policy and will aim to halt the loss of biodiversity. The Government will continue to implement and further develop the METSO Forest Biodiversity Programme for Southern Finland, the Helmi Habitats Programme and the NOUSU Migratory Fish Programme, and will launch a programme on voluntary protection of marine nature. The Government will set its national objectives so that they can be coordinated with the other needs of society.

Strengthening the role of the clean natural environment as a competitive advantage

The functioning of society will become nature positive. The Government will aim to halt the loss of biodiversity through cooperation and will turn positive impacts on the natural environment into an export product. The aim is that, besides the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, Finland will be known around the world for nature positivity

and that others around the world can utilise our expertise related to positive nature handprints in addition to carbon footprints. The Government will develop the Climate Policy Roundtable model led by the Prime Minister and include nature policy in the issues to be discussed at the roundtable. In line with the principles of sustainable development, actions to preserve biodiversity must always take into account the impacts on social and economic activities. In addition, nature policy will take into account the effectiveness, impact and local acceptability of the protection measures. The Government will strengthen the economic policy instruments aimed at safeguarding the conditions for the wellbeing of future generations. The Government will prepare the National Biodiversity Strategy and an action plan in a cross-administrative process.

The Government will prepare a model that measures comprehensive sustainability – which comprises wellbeing, economic profitability and the state of the environment – in addition to GDP. The trends in the state of the environment will be monitored based on the uniqueness of nature and changes in biodiversity in all parts of Finland. These indicators can be used to monitor changes in nature values and to communicate about them. The Government will encourage all sectors to draw up biodiversity roadmaps through which the dependence of economic activities on the natural environment and the added value it offers (ecosystem services) is also understood from the perspective of the national economy. The Government will enable multi-channel financial instruments for piloting the most effective measures. To support companies, a model will be developed to guide measures towards avoiding operations that increase the loss of biodiversity.

The Government will continue to implement the Helmi Habitats Programme. Peatlands and forests will be protected with a focus on quality and impact. Additional protection will be targeted cost-effectively to sites with the highest nature values, taking the societal impacts comprehensively into account. The Government will explore the possibilities to differentiate e.g. the levels of compensation in the METSO Programme according to nature values, taking the international obligations into account. The Government will promote the better ecological status of inland waters and marine areas.

The Government will protect the remaining state-owned old-growth forests that are in their natural state and meet the national criteria. The Government will ensure that independent criteria are drawn up within a short time frame. The protection of valuable forest sites owned by private forest owners will continue on a voluntary basis, i.e. under the METSO Programme. Efforts will be made to improve private forest owners' awareness of the possibilities to protect forests of special value. The impacts of forest drainage on the environment and waters will be reduced.

The Government will develop voluntary ecological compensation, including by clarifying the regulation with common criteria to be approved and by making it possible to apply this as part of the environmental permit procedure. The Government will explore the possibilities to utilise the information from nature inventories to develop the offsetting markets.

Safeguarding the values of Finland's natural environment

The Government will intensify the prevention of invasive alien species and immigrant species that cause damage in order to protect Finland's valuable nature. The Government will enable the hunting and utilisation of species that have strong enough populations and that cause damage to nature and people. The Government will take into account the need to approve the compensation practices for damages also when species are moved from one place to another for hunting purposes. The preconditions for the Saimaa ringed seal population to grow will be ensured.

The Government will promote hiking and tourism in Finland's nature. A key focus will be placed on environmental education and the opportunities for children and young people to enjoy nature. Information on national hiking areas will be compiled under the Nationalparks.fi service of Metsähallitus, which will make it possible to develop them as a brand similar to the national parks. In connection with this, the Outdoor Recreation Act will be updated. At the same time, the Government will explore opportunities to coordinate hunting and other recreational use in nature conservation areas. The Government will enable to strengthen the finances of national parks with voluntary visitors' fees and explore the opportunities to utilise fees collected from partner companies.

Restoring flowing waters

The Government will improve the living conditions of migratory fish by restoring flowing waters, among other measures. The Government will continue to implement and further develop the NOUSU Migratory Fish Programme. Hydropower plants of minor importance will be demolished and watercourses will be restored to their natural state. Modern fisheries obligations will be fulfilled with respect to small dams as well. The Government will update the Water Act so that, in addition to updating old water permits, fisheries obligations can also be set for 'zero obligation' plants. The Government will respond to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive with national legislation. The Government will facilitate the progress of fish passage projects and enable experiments and pilots in watercourses. Together with stakeholders in the area, the Government will promote the restoration of the Palokki rapids in Heinävesi to rehabilitate the threatened

fish populations. At the same time, sustainable tourism in the area will be promoted. The Government will continue to implement the programme to improve the efficiency of water protection.

7.6 Safeguarding Finland's clean environment with a circular economy

Finland will improve its self-sufficiency, increase value added and reduce pollution by improving the recycling and reuse of materials. The goal is for less nutrients and other usable substances to end up in nature. The Government will streamline permit processes related to the environment and dismantle regulatory obstacles to the circular economy. Nutrient load will be reduced in the catchment area of the Archipelago Sea, which is a circular economy pilot site. The role of the clean natural environment as a competitive factor for Finland will become stronger, and Finland's position as a leader in the circular economy will create new work and business. Finland will also promote a circular economy in the single market of the EU and the creation of a European market for secondary raw materials, taking the national interest into account.

Raw materials and self-sufficiency from wastes

The Government will amend the waste legislation to increase the use of recycled materials in a way that is market-driven. Renewable, bio-based and recycled materials will replace fossil economy solutions, reduce the amount of waste produced and the use of non-renewable raw materials, strengthen domestic value chains and the value added of the products, and create growth opportunities for Finland. A circular economy will be enabled by promoting the separate collection and further utilisation of bio-based and biodegradable materials and the reuse of textile waste, machines and equipment and vehicle parts, among others. The Government will explore the possibilities to expand the waste tax base while making sure that the tax burden will not be targeted at primary production and households and that the payment burden on companies will not increase excessively. The Government will improve Finland's self-sufficiency through more efficient circulation of materials and nutrients. The Government will develop well-functioning markets for raw materials for different uses and increase the share of recycled materials used. Finland will move towards a lifecycle way of thinking, where a competitive advantage is sought through a circular economy. The Government will develop regulation so that waste, product and chemicals regulation constitute clear and unambiguous packages, environmental regulation is clear, and there are no overlapping obligations or instruments. The circular economy will be taken into account in public procurement and the possibilities for SMEs to participate in the circular economy will be ensured. The Waste

Act will be amended so that the responsibility of municipalities is limited to household waste. The obligation of municipalities concerning secondary waste management services under the Waste Act will be specified so that a municipality can sell waste management services to businesses only if there is a genuine market gap. The Government will explore and utilise Finland's assets related to critical raw materials by drawing up a Mineral Strategy that will strengthen self-sufficiency and secure the supply of raw materials, including in case of unexpected market disturbances.

Catchment area of the Archipelago Sea a pilot area for nutrient cycling

The Government will protect Finland's waters and especially the vulnerable Archipelago Sea. The Government will continue to implement the Archipelago Sea Programme with a focus on measures that lead to improvements in the nutrient cycle on a significant scale, such as circulation of nutrients of animal origin, improving the retention capacity of soil in relevant sites and removing nutrients from waters. The Government will strengthen the overall coordination of administrative branches and research and improve impact in the targeting of protection measures concerning the Baltic Sea, especially the Archipelago Sea. The impact of knowledge on the Baltic Sea will be enhanced. The Government will seek systemic solutions cost-effectively, with a focus on impact assessment. Nutrient cycles will be promoted in a way that is technology-neutral, with a focus on demand in society. There are opportunities to increase the use of Finnish biogas, especially in heavy transport. The Government will enable the use of the end products of the biogas production process e.g. as forest fertiliser and will ensure a predictable operating environment for biogas investments. Methods such as technological solutions will be developed to move nutrient surpluses to areas where there is a deficit cost-effectively. The Government will promote the recycling of phosphorus in manure to areas where there is a nutrient deficit and develop ways to retain nutrients in arable lands by making use of nature's own ecosystems. Nutrient loading of waters will be reduced by taking care of the structure of arable lands and improving water management in catchment areas. The Government will create incentives for good agroecology and healthy and productive soil with appropriate crop rotations and grazing cycles and by increasing plant cover, for example. The Government will diversify the utilisation of soil improvers, such as gypsum, fibre and structural lime treatments, so that farms have different options and can choose the solution that is best suited for them. The reduction of nutrient emissions will be taken into account in primary production and environmental permit procedures in the catchment area of the Archipelago Sea.

The Government will explore the centralised and efficient treatment of wastewater in sparsely populated areas, especially in the Archipelago Sea and coastal regions. The reliability and high quality of the treatment of municipal stormwater will be ensured so

that the spillages of untreated wastewater into water bodies decrease to a fraction and the level of best practices is reached in the recovery of nutrients. The dredging of river deltas will be promoted to reduce flood damage, thereby mitigating nutrient loading.

The Government will put an end to the dumping of snow in water bodies. The discharge of greywater, food waste, wastewater from sulphur scrubbers and sewage into the sea in Finland's territorial waters will be prohibited. Finland will strengthen the regulatory work in international forums (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission HELCOM, International Maritime Organization IMO) together with other Baltic Sea countries, especially the neighbouring countries. The Government, together with other Baltic Sea countries, will also take action to restrict other harmful activities related to ships, such as the use of unsuitable vessels in ice conditions. The Government will ensure adequate oil spill response preparedness to be able to respond to international commitments and the needs and capacity requirements caused by changes in the operating environment.

8 Foreign and security policy in a new era

Finland's foreign and security policy environment changed significantly when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Europe's security is facing the gravest threat in decades. Russia's brutal war against Ukraine is a violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It weakens security and stability in Finland and across Europe and undermines Russia's credibility as a partner in international agreements. The war has aggravated the food and energy crisis that is affecting billions of people around the world.

The growing global confrontation and tensions between great powers have a major impact on security, the economy, technology, security of supply, industry and trade. The erosion of the rules-based international system, the rise of power politics, barriers to free trade and the challenges caused by protectionism even among like-minded countries, climate change, migration driven by poverty and lack of opportunity, and extremism and terrorism all challenge Finland's foreign and security policy.

The main goals of Finland's foreign and security policy are to safeguard Finland's independence and territorial integrity, to avoid becoming involved in a military conflict and to improve the security and wellbeing of the people of Finland. Finland works to prevent military threats and to reduce tensions.

Finland's foreign and security policy is based on the rule of law, human rights, equality and democracy. Close cooperation with partners, good bilateral relations, and respect for and strengthening of multilateral international law are the cornerstones Finland's international relations. The European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) form the core of Finland's cooperative foreign policy.

By joining NATO, Finland has become a militarily allied country. Finland's NATO membership strengthens security in Finland and stability in Northern Europe. This positions Finland more firmly in the European and transatlantic security community. As a member of NATO, Finland will maintain a credible defence capability in all circumstances and will be prepared to support its NATO allies according to its obligations. Finland wants to see a stronger European Union and stronger European defence within the framework of NATO.

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and trade policy are key determinants of Finland's international relations. Finland will promote a stronger role for the EU in foreign and security policy.

Being an active member in the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe (CoE) is important for Finland. Finland is a Member of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) from 2023 to 2024. Finland is preparing for its OSCE Chairmanship in 2025 and is seeking a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the term from 2029 to 2030.

If protracted crises are to be dealt with effectively, there has to be good coordination between peace mediation, humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and trade policy. Finland's foreign policy promotes the rights of women and girls in a cross-cutting manner. Development cooperation must be efficient, effective and conditional.

Finland will develop its relationship with the United States across the board. The United States is a key strategic partner and ally for Finland. Cooperation in disruptive technologies must be brought into the core of the relationship between Finland and the United States alongside defence and trade. Finland wants to see cooperation between the EU and the United States that is as close and effective as possible. The Government will maintain and deepen Finland's close multi-sectoral links to the United Kingdom. It will promote a strong partnership between the UK and the EU.

The Government will ensure good relations with Sweden, which is Finland's closest partner. Finland is an active member of the Nordic community and will work to deepen Nordic integration and dismantle barriers between the Nordic countries. Finland's and Norway's cooperation will become closer now that both neighbours are NATO member countries. Besides the Nordic countries, Estonia and the other Baltic States are important partners for Finland in the EU, in NATO and bilaterally. The Government will work to strengthen and deepen Nordic-Baltic cooperation in the NB8 format.

Managing risks in times of great power rivalry calls for a new approach to collaboration with like-minded partners, such as Australia, South Korea, Japan and Canada. Finland will strengthen its economic relations with Central Asian countries, as they are potential trading partners in a region of security policy importance. Africa is an important continent for Finland and the EU, as developments in Africa have direct effects on the future of Europe.

Russia's foreign and security policy is irreconcilable with European stability and security. Finland condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine and is implementing European Union sanctions. Finland has suspended parts of its bilateral cooperation with Russia. Finland

has supported Ukraine in many ways, including by sending arms assistance. Finland is committed to continuing its arms assistance to Ukraine. The Government's support for Ukraine and the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity is unwavering. Finland requires that Russia be held accountable for its international crimes and that it be held liable for damage. The Government will promote international efforts to ensure accountability for Russia's crime of aggression and for crimes against international law committed during Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We take a favourable view of the seizure of frozen Russian assets and the repurposing of revenue from those assets to support Ukraine. A legal solution for repurposing frozen assets must be found together with partner countries.

Finland's objective is to get Russia end its war in Ukraine and, together with partners, to repel Russia's destabilising aspirations. Depending on developments in Russia, Finland will reassess its relationship with Russia and reassess the possibilities for cooperating with Russia together with Finland's allies in the EU and NATO. The Government will emphasise action to maintain and develop Finland's knowledge of Russia and Finland's ability to analyse developments in Russia. As far as possible, we will support efforts to expand the room for manoeuvre for civil society in Russia.

China is an important trading partner for Finland, and Finland will maintain functioning relations with China. China's growing global role and its aspirations for a new world order are a challenge for Finland and Europe. Finland's China policy is determined through Finland's membership in the European Union and NATO. The Government aims to reduce strategic dependencies on China. We will promote this both nationally and at the EU level. We will urge China to use its leverage with Russia to secure a peace between Russia and Ukraine that respects Ukraine's territorial integrity and the UN Charter.

The Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy and Government's Defence Report will be drawn up at the beginning of the government term. They will also define the basic guidelines for Finland's membership in NATO. A parliamentary monitoring procedure with representation from all parties in Parliament will be organised in a manner laid down by Parliament to support the preparation of these reports.

If necessary, the Government will draft more detailed legislation on NATO membership, defence cooperation, the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, international assistance, hybrid and cyber influence activities, and terrorism.

Finland will actively participate in military and civilian crisis management missions and in operations of the OSCE, the EU, NATO and the UN. Through its contribution to international missions and operations, Finland will promote social stability in target regions and prevent uncontrolled migration. This will also increase the interoperability

of the Finnish Defence Forces and improve its personnel's ability to work together with the public authorities of other countries. The Government will promote effective peace mediation.

Social cohesion and the Government's leadership in the context of external and internal security will be strengthened. The Government will examine ways to strengthen the performance of the Security Committee and to transfer the Committee to the Prime Minister's Office without changing its powers.

The Prime Minister will lead the reorganisation of the management of comprehensive security and cyber security during the government term. A government resolution on an operating model for incident management and crisis management will be drawn up along the lines of a joint government planning centre.

The Government will implement a reform of the Foreign Service to reflect the new era of foreign and security policy.

8.1 An active and international NATO country

As a member of NATO, Finland is prepared to receive assistance from and give assistance to its allies. Finland will participate fully in all NATO activities, including NATO's collective peacetime missions. Finland is committed to NATO's 360-degree approach to deterrence and collective defence across the Alliance.

Finland will participate in NATO's missions and operations, international exercises, and committees and working groups, including the Nuclear Planning Group. Finland will expand its knowledge of matters concerning nuclear weapons. Finland will take an active role in NATO's crisis management and counterterrorism activities. As a member of NATO, Finland is a security provider and a reliable partner, contributing to NATO's credibility and capability both in our neighbouring areas and globally.

Finalising Sweden's membership is one of Finland's first goals in NATO. The Government will support NATO's open door policy and promote Ukraine's NATO prospects together with our allies.

The Government is committed to spending at least two per cent of Finland's GDP on defence expenditure during the government term in accordance with NATO's guideline. We also want Finland to commit to this level of spending across government terms. The

Government will work to improve the operating conditions for the defence industry and to increase the industry's capacity. We will seek support for these policies through broad-based parliamentary cooperation.

The Government's goal is that NATO's planning and structures, and Finland's positioning in them, will give the best possible support to security in Northern Europe from the Baltic Sea to the Arctic region. Planning will take into account the importance of the Baltic Sea in securing access to vital transport, telecommunications and electricity. Transport links from Norway and Sweden to Finland must be guaranteed, as this benefits security, trade and security of supply. Finland will promote military mobility in Europe and support the EU's military mobility initiatives.

The Government will seek to host a NATO organisation in Finland, for example a centre of excellence. Finland's profile in NATO will focus on security in the Arctic and Baltic Sea regions, comprehensive security, cyber and information security, countering hybrid threats, artificial intelligence and quantum technology, among other areas. The Government will take account of the importance of the space domain and technology for NATO and for national defence. Finland will promote the formation of space situational awareness, the strengthening of NATO's Space Policy and the improvement of national expertise and business opportunities in space-related matters.

The Government will assess the need for legislative amendments related to NATO membership and immediately launch the necessary preparations for them.

8.2 Credible national defence as the basis for Finland's security

Finland will maintain and develop its defence capability, taking into account changes in the security environment. Finland is prepared to respond to military pressure, hybrid warfare and a large-scale military aggression.

Finland's defence is based on a strong national defence capability as part of the Alliance's collective deterrence and defence. Finland will fully participate in the planning of NATO's defence and collective deterrence. The Government will ensure military and administrative integration with NATO. The Government will also ensure that that the Defence Forces have sufficient personnel and that the personnel are able to cope in the changed operating environment. The Government will increase the number of required personnel systematically.

The Government will develop international defence cooperation without advance restrictions. Finland will invest in cooperation with the United States, Sweden, Norway and the United Kingdom in particular. The Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) is an important multilateral framework for defence cooperation. Finland will develop Nordic defence cooperation and the role of NORDEFECO. We will further deepen cooperation with Sweden. Finland's military cooperation with NATO countries in the Baltic Sea region and in the Arctic will be strengthened by membership in NATO. The Government will focus on and further develop the Defence Forces' international cooperation.

The Government will aim to conclude the ongoing defence cooperation agreement negotiations with the United States. A Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) is important for Finland's security. Pursuing a DCA on a broad parliamentary basis will contribute to ensuring a long-term perspective in Finland's international defence cooperation.

The Government's Defence Report will define long-term objectives for Finland's defence as part of NATO. If necessary, a parliamentary working group will be established during the parliamentary term to examine the needs for development of national defence.

The Government will assess the effects of NATO membership on conscription and the participation of voluntary reservists and salaried personnel in NATO's collective defence and activities, and will then make the necessary decisions.

Finland's defence capability will continue to be based on general conscription, defence of the entire country and a strong will to defend the country. In line with the report of the parliamentary working group, the Government will develop the conscription system and extend call-ups to the entire age group. The Government aims to increase the number of women seeking voluntary service to 2,000 by the end of the parliamentary term. With due consideration for the safety of service, the Government will allow diabetics to participate in military service and in reservist training. It will also assess the possibilities of people exempted for health reasons to participate in national defence training. Furthermore, the Government will allow retired officers and reservists to serve in normal and emergency duties in the Defence Forces until the end of the year in which they turn 65.

The Government will utilise the report of the parliamentary working group to develop non-military service and link it more clearly to the comprehensive security model.

During the government term, Finland will keep the number of reservist exercises at a level necessitated by the operating environment. At the same time, the Government will ensure that exercises are of high quality while taking into account the training of conscripts and the increase in the volume of activities related to NATO membership.

The Government will complete the Defence Forces' strategic capability projects. The first decisions on the reform of the Army will be made in the coming government term. Defence materiel projects will focus on the needs of the Army. Finland will continue to support Ukraine with defence materiel and training, and the defence administration will be reimbursed for the capabilities that have been handed over.

The Government will improve the operating conditions for voluntary national defence and, in this connection, examine the role and position of voluntary regional and local troops and of other actors in the comprehensive security model. The Defence Report will also examine the evolving status, tasks, objectives and resources of the National Defence Training Association (MPK). The coordination of third-sector associations and organisations that cooperate with national defence will be strengthened, and a register will be created of the people they have trained so that these people can be contacted, if necessary. The right to deduct taxes on equipment, supplies and weapons suitable for military use will be investigated in so far as they are suitable for use in crises and are compatible with the requirements of national defence training, either organised by the Defence Forces or the National Defence Training Association.

The Government will seek to influence the preparation of the EU's ban on lead in ammunition (as part of the REACH Regulation) so that it does not undermine the conditions for voluntary national defence. One of the Government's objectives is to exclude voluntary national defence and sports shooting that supports readiness for national defence from the scope of application. The Government will actively work to remove shooting ranges from the scope of the restriction, and will not accept extending the EU's ban and restrictions on the use of lead in bullets.

The Government will safeguard the activities of Finland's shooting ranges and promote the establishment of new shooting ranges. These efforts will take regional needs into account and assess the need for legislative amendments. They will take into account the needs of key national defence organisations, reservist associations, sport shooting and hunting associations, and public authorities. The environmental permit processes and legislation concerning shooting ranges will be streamlined. The target for the number of outdoor shooting ranges will be about 1,000 by the end of the decade. The focus will be on establishing a sufficient number of rifle and tactical ranges throughout the country.

Procurement from domestic manufacturers will strengthen military security of supply, and the Government aims to increase domestic ammunition production. All possible coordinated procurement and funding systems will be utilised in the framework of the EU and NATO. The Government will support the Finnish defence industry in maximising the opportunities for cooperation that will become available through membership in the EU and NATO.

The Government will strengthen the operating conditions of the domestic defence industry. At the beginning of its term, the Government will launch a study on the production capacity and production arrangements of key munitions for the Defence Forces. As to the export control of defence materiel, Finland will comply with its international obligations and national legislation. The need to amend the Act on the Export of Defence Materiel will be examined during the government term. Finland will not set stricter criteria for defence materiel exports than key European reference countries. The Government's policy regarding export licence decisions will be consistent. As a rule, maintenance and upgrades of previously approved materiel will be approved. Taking into account the security situation in Europe, the Government will make efforts to develop the EU taxonomy for sustainable financing to facilitate financing for the defence industry. The defence industry will be taken into account in national RDI investments and trade missions.

The Government will bring Finland's support measures for veterans of crisis management operations up to the level of other Nordic countries. Current support measures will be improved by making existing services available from a single location (a national centre for veterans of crisis management operations).

The Act on Compensation for Accidents and Service-Related Illnesses in Crisis Management Duties will be amended to enable access to treatment for post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). The six-month time limit, which often prevents access to treatment, will be removed from the Act.

The work to preserve the heritage of veterans and members of women's voluntary paramilitary service will be organised on the basis of the proposals presented in the working group's report.

8.3 Economic relations as part of a strategic foreign policy

Finland will promote a rules-based world order and work actively to reform the UN so that it can respond to the global challenges of the 2020s. Finland's UN strategy will be updated as part of the Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy. The update of the strategy will provide a framework for Finland's campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council for the 2029–2030 term. Committing the Global South to a rules-based order, democracy and the promotion of human rights will become the focus of Finland's foreign and security policy.

The Government will examine external relations comprehensively, across administrative branches. International economic relations as well as trade, development and technology policies will be part of Finland's strategic foreign and security policy. The most important objective of trade policy will be to promote the exports and investments of Finnish companies. Trade policy must also take into account security of supply, security and environmental impacts.

The Government will prepare a report on Finland's international economic relations and development cooperation no later than in spring 2024. The report will set targets and define the necessary measures and the monitoring of those measures. The report will outline policies on Finland's relations with developing countries.

The Government will invest in promoting exports and investments by supporting Finnish companies in entering growing markets. The goal of the export promotion activities will be to open up new markets for growth-oriented companies, especially small and medium-sized ones. We will reform the operations and management of the Team Finland network in cooperation with business and industry to support Finland's strategic interests. The Government will strengthen the role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in efforts to promote exports and internationalisation and examine whether Business Finland's activities abroad could be incorporated into Finland's network of diplomatic and consular missions. The Government will evaluate the effectiveness of Finland's export promotion activities – including trade missions and the export financing system – in relation to the Swedish and Danish models, for example.

Finland will strengthen free trade through regional and bilateral agreements and support the ability of the WTO operate. In order to strengthen the economic links between Finland and the United States, the Government will make determined efforts to promote negotiations for Finland to join the US Global Entry programme.

The Government will implement a reform of the Foreign Service to support the new era of foreign and security policy, taking into account the additional obligations arising from NATO membership, for example. The objective of the reform is to focus on Finland's foreign and security policy interests, the promotion of economic growth, international economic relations and technological development. In connection with the reform, the Government will evaluate the management of multilateral matters in the Foreign Service. We will concentrate resources and investments on countries that are strategically important to Finland. This will apply to the network of Finnish missions, economic relations, security cooperation and development cooperation. Decisions on the size of the network of missions will be made systematically over the long term. Finland will seek practical common solutions with the missions of other Nordic countries and EU Member States.

8.4 Comprehensive development policy

Development policy will be part of Finland's foreign and security policy and also contribute to Finland's strategic economic relations. Finland will focus on those partner countries it considers essential and build a more strategic relationship with them based on clear priorities. In the future, there will be fewer priority countries. Finland will focus on equal cooperation models in development cooperation. The objective will be to build sustainable partnerships with developing countries based on mutual benefit and respect. Finland's aim will be to reduce the unhealthy political and economic dependence of developing countries on foreign powers.

In its development policy, Finland will focus on its strengths where it has good opportunities to support sustainable development. A well-functioning democracy, the rule of law, human rights and a vibrant civil society are prerequisites for sustainable social development, which the Government will support. Because population growth is faster than economic growth, combating poverty and strengthening wellbeing in a sustainable manner will be very difficult. The priorities of the Government's development policy will include improving the position, right to self-determination, and sexual and reproductive health of women, which are key to curbing population growth. Education and climate measures will also be a priority.

Finland will also pursue its objectives in EU development policy, international development finance institutions and UN organisations. Finland will effectively promote the participation of Finnish companies in investment projects funded within the framework of the EU's Global Gateway initiative.

Historically, Finland has been committed to allocating 0.7 per cent of its GNI to development funding in accordance with the UN recommendation, even though this target has not been reached. However, in the current economic situation, the Government will cut development cooperation during its term. The cuts will be implemented gradually, taking into account commitments that have already been made. As part of its report on international economic and development cooperation, the Government will outline its priorities on development policy and formulate a plan for development cooperation funding extending over several parliamentary terms.

Civil society organisations play an important role in helping Finland achieve its development cooperation objectives. The focus of Finland's development cooperation will shift from bilateral Country Programmes to development cooperation engaged in by Finnish civil society organisations. Opportunities for domestic organisations to acquire international funding (e.g., from the EU, the UN or foundations) and to participate in multi-actor projects will be improved. Finland will promote its foreign policy objectives and

values through key UN organisations. The Government will examine the tax deductibility of donations to development cooperation or voluntary donations in connection with taxation.

Public money can be used to build an operating environment, but achieving permanent change requires private entities, investments and capital. The Government will promote the operating conditions of Finnish companies in developing countries as well as their opportunities to apply for funding from the UN, the EU and development finance institutions. The Government will increasingly utilise Finnish companies in development cooperation and development policy investments. The Government will prioritise development policy investments that promote the allocation of capital to business activities. Different forms of development funding will complement each other. In order to build a successful development policy, both grant-based assistance and funding in the form of loans and investments will be needed. In developing countries, the Government will promote sustainable forestry and afforestation projects utilising Finnish expertise as well as other projects that improve local living conditions and increase the global carbon sink.

Finland will continue to provide humanitarian assistance with a focus on helping the most vulnerable people.

The Government aims to promote and increase Finnish peace mediation expertise. The Government will promote ways to expand Finnish mediation activities in cooperation with the private and third sectors.

Finland will continue to support Ukraine by means of development cooperation, defence materiel assistance, civilian crisis management and humanitarian aid as well as through civil society organisations, the European Union, the Council of Europe and NATO funds. Finland will prepare for an increase in the amount of this aid due to growing arms assistance and support for reconstruction. Ukraine will be the largest beneficiary of Finland's development cooperation during the government term. Strengthening structures supporting the rule of law and combating corruption will be taken into consideration in all forms of support. The Government will prepare a national reconstruction plan for Ukraine in cooperation with business and industry and the Team Finland network.

The Government will make the readmission of nationals and support for the international rules-based order conditions for Finland's development cooperation. Finland will not give development aid to governments or entities that support Russia's war of aggression. Finland will support the EU's efforts to encourage third countries to readmit their nationals by means of development cooperation instruments and visa policy, for example.

The Government will effectively monitor the use of development cooperation funds. If any misuse is detected, funding will be reduced or terminated and, if possible, be recovered.

8.5 Cyber security, information security and countering hybrid threats

Hybrid threats refer to extensive interference and influence efforts aimed at weakening the functioning and decision-making of societies. Hybrid influence activities are carried out by both state and non-state actors. A significant rise in hybrid threats is part of the changed international political situation that is characterised by increasing tensions between great powers and social systems. Cyber attacks and information influence activities are key elements of hybrid threats.

Finland will prepare for hybrid threats proactively. The Government will revise Finland's Cyber Security Strategy to respond to the changed operating environment. National security will be taken into account when reassessing the open sharing of critical infrastructure data. We will update legislation on intelligence and emergency powers to enable hybrid threats to be countered effectively.

The Government will ensure Finnish competence in cyber security and information security by investing in training in these fields. The approval process for cryptographic products will be accelerated so that domestic cyber technology can be placed on the market more quickly. Finland will acquire the status of a country that can grant international information security approvals in the EU. Cyber security will be strengthened in close cooperation with business and industry and the third sector, taking into account that a large part of the critical infrastructure is privately owned.

The Government will reorganise the management of comprehensive security and cyber security during the government term. This reorganisation will ensure a clear division of responsibilities and powers of public authorities and the efficient exchange of information and will implement the legislative amendments required to achieve these objectives. The Government will prepare a cyber defence doctrine and clarify and specify the role of the Defence Forces in cyber defence.

In order to prevent social harm caused by disinformation, the Government will update its strategic communications model and will strengthen information defence and include it in the new cyber security strategy. In the fight against disinformation, the Government will

take into account both of Finland's national languages as well as communications in other languages. We will improve the capabilities of teachers to boost students' critical media literacy and awareness of cyber risks in order to reinforce broad social resilience.

9 European Union: towards strategic competitiveness

The European Union is Finland's most important political and economic frame of reference and community of values. Finland wants to see a globally strong and well-functioning European Union that promotes the security, wellbeing and economic interests of its Member States and citizens. Finland is an active, reliable and solution-oriented Member State that works constructively and proactively and takes initiative to advance its objectives. Finland promotes the rule of law and the fight against corruption in the EU.

Finland wants the EU to play big on big issues and small on small issues. Finland expects the Union to respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, meaning that decisions must be made as close to citizens as possible. Finland advocates for a clear division of competences between the Union and the Member States, which should not be expanded with a new interpretation of the Treaties.

Finland highlights the importance of Member States' responsibility for the sustainability of their public finances. The priorities of Finland's EU policy include promoting competitiveness, strengthening the EU's global role, deepening the EU's defence cooperation, developing the single market, boosting economic growth, promoting clean energy investments, utilising natural resources sustainably, advocating for national-level decision-making in forest policy, safeguarding self-sufficiency in food production, stabilising neighbouring areas and strengthening the Union's external borders. With respect to the EU's asylum and migration policy, including any internal burden-sharing mechanisms and border security, the Government will follow the policies laid out in the immigration section of this programme.

It is in Finland's interest to develop the EU into a better and more effective Union. Finland is prepared to advocate for additional investments in areas it considers important, primarily within the budget. Finland's national interests must be identified and safeguarded in decision-making: The Government aims to increase the amount of funding Finland receives while preventing solutions that would be harmful to Finland. The EU budget must be kept at a reasonable level, avoiding an increase in Finland's net contribution. The EU's own resources system must not be developed in a way that would result in a relative additional cost for Finland.

The Government will ensure that Finland formulates its positions and exerts influence effectively and appropriately and that Finland cooperates with like-minded countries to advance its objectives. Influencing the Union's strategic policy to be formulated in 2024 after the European Parliament elections, along with the programme for the next European Commission, will be a major priority right from the start of the government term.

9.1 Member States are responsible for the sustainability of their public finances

The European Union must move from a recovery policy that increases the debt burden to a sustainable growth policy based on a stable and resilient economic and monetary union. Only an EU with strong public finances can succeed in global competition sustainably and increase the wellbeing of its citizens. Every Member State must continue to be responsible for its own public finances.

The Government will advocate for returning to the no bailout principle of market discipline as enshrined in the EU Treaty and for introducing a debt restructuring mechanism. The debt restructuring mechanism would be built on the basis of the European Stability Mechanism and would enable debt restructuring while maintaining the seniority of sovereign claims and guarantees. The mechanism would be linked to compliance with sovereign debt rules.

Finland is open to increasing flexibility in the agreed deficit and debt criteria in a tailored manner, provided that credible efforts are made at the same time to promote market discipline and debt sustainability in the economy and that sovereign debt restructuring is possible. Finland will not accept reforms that would weaken Member States' incentives to rehabilitate their public finances and that would increase financial and macro-prudential risks in Europe. Finland expects each Member State to be liable for its own debts so that the risk premium determined in the credit market is able to reduce risks and maintain discipline in public expenditure. Finland will not commit to measures that would shape the European Union into an asymmetric income transfer union. The recovery instrument was an exceptional one-off solution that should not serve as a precedent. Finland will not accept repeating a similar arrangement or making it permanent.

Finland will defend the conditional use of funds and, as a rule, the principle of unanimity in the operation of the European Stability Mechanism and other crisis instruments. Finland is in favour of including risk weights for government loans in banks' solvency calculations in order to weaken the unhealthy link between the fates of Member States and banks. The Government will monitor and aim to manage the financing risks incurred by the central

government through the European Central Bank and the Bank of Finland. Finland will also pursue the implementation of the no bailout rule at the level of the European Central Bank. Finland will promote measures to limit the systemic risk related to the Eurosystem. Finland will advance the capital markets union and the completion of the banking union in a way that does not increase the joint responsibility of Finland and the Finnish banking system.

The Government will not accept actions that would weaken Member States' incentives to rehabilitate their public finances and that would increase financial and macro-prudential risks in Europe. It is very important to dismantle the link between national banking systems and public debt incurred by national governments in order to ensure balance and stability in the financial markets.

The Government will seek to strengthen the rule of law by linking EU budget funding to respect for the rule of law, measures to prevent the misuse of funds and prevention of corruption. At the same time, the Government will work to ensure that funding is linked to measures promoting the competitiveness and economic growth of the Member States. Member States must be encouraged to carry out structural reforms. Finland wants to see the resources in the EU's multiannual financial framework be redirected and increasingly targeted to support competence, the energy transition, security, digitalisation, research and new innovations. The EU must step up its monitoring of the use of funds.

9.2 Strengthening the single market and boosting economic growth

A well-functioning single market that guarantees the free movement of goods, services, capital and people is a key element of European integration and future growth. Free trade creates growth and jobs for Finns and Europeans. The EU plays an important global role through regulatory power and trade agreements. European solutions and innovations can become global solutions if the EU draws on the size of its single market and the content of its trade agreements. In particular, the Government will promote the development of the single market for services, fair competition and the dismantling of regulatory barriers.

The Government will promote the EU's strategic competitiveness. With this goal in mind, Finland will promote a single market based on free movement and trust between the Member States. Finland will also advance measures to reduce harmful dependencies, decentralise supply chains and increase the use of market-based solutions. When implementing EU regulation nationally, the Government will not add to the regulatory burden in a way that would hamper competitiveness and will work to reduce regulatory

overlap. Improvements will be made to the national impact assessment of EU regulation and EU decision-making. The Government will seek to reduce the administrative burden of EU regulation on businesses.

In its policy on the EU single market and its trade and industrial policy, the Government will take determined action to safeguard a competitive environment for Finnish businesses and to boost European economic growth. The loosening of competition policy, in particular state aid rules, threatens to undermine the functioning of the single market. The EU state aid rules must return to the state they were in before the crisis as soon as possible. EU industrial policy must safeguard the competitiveness of businesses and industry.

In the current situation, the Government will not support introducing additional funding or entirely new EU-level funding instruments. Any new needs for funding to support competitiveness and promote the green transition should mainly be covered by prioritising and reallocating existing EU funds, for example by utilising unused recovery funds. The Government will assess the need for a European Sovereignty Fund in relation to the EU's state aid policy and the direction in which the Commission's future proposal would steer the use of the fund. In the Government's view, the potential fund must be used to achieve a level playing field in which the best businesses and innovations succeed, and it must only be used to support the most critical projects, for example those that would accelerate energy investments.

At the EU level, the Government will advocate for new and comprehensive trade agreements with non-EU countries and groups of countries. The Union must promote an open and fair trade policy. The Union must promote its general objectives, such as strengthening environmentally friendly production, by removing barriers to trade and increasing incentives, rather than by restricting trade. The Government will advocate for market-based solutions, such as developing labelling and certification systems and reducing tariffs on environmentally friendly production. Finland will promote the EU's efforts to agree on digital trade rules with the Union's key partner countries.

The Government will promote the development of the Digital Single Market and advance measures to improve the operating conditions for businesses providing digital services. The EU must play a key role in creating global standards for the digital economy. The Government aims to ensure that EU regulation is technology-neutral. The EU must assume a stronger role in cyber security within the limits of its existing powers and must create a favourable operating environment for the development and uptake of artificial intelligence.

The Government will advance the conditions for Finnish food production as part of European food production. By strengthening the single market, the Government will promote food security in the European Union and improve the EU's self-sufficiency in critical areas. One critical area is technological security of supply. The Government will actively apply for EU funding for infrastructure projects and influence EU programmes so that the needs and special features of the region are taken into account in planning these programmes. The Government will promote efforts to strengthen the vitality of the EU's external border regions in Finland.

The Government will support measures to strengthen the EU's preparedness for crises while ensuring that EU regulations do not undermine the functioning of Finland's security of supply system. The Government will promote resilience and preparedness cooperation between the EU and NATO, especially to protect critical infrastructure.

9.3 The European Union must take on a stronger role as a geopolitical player

Over the past few years, the European Union has become an increasingly important geopolitical player. Intensifying competition between great powers means the EU must adopt a stronger global approach to safeguard the interests of its Member States. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has made the roles of NATO and the EU more clear and concrete with respect to European foreign and security policy. NATO is responsible for European military defence through its command structure and collective defence planning, in which Finland, as a full member of NATO, takes part. The EU is enacting an active sanctions policy and providing effective political, economic and material support to Ukraine. The Government will advance cooperation between the EU and NATO and will promote the EU's foreign policy role and the measures to develop European security outlined in the Strategic Compass.

The Government is strongly committed to supporting Ukraine and its reconstruction and is open to various funding solutions to achieve this goal. Finland supports Ukraine's European path. Finland is open to the accession of countries that meet the criteria for EU membership. With regard to all candidates for membership, Finland considers it important that the EU is a reliable and credible negotiating partner. Finland also emphasises the importance of meeting the membership criteria.

Finland supports using the European Peace Facility to support Ukraine and contributing additional capital to the fund for that purpose. The Peace Facility is an off-budget instrument aimed at enhancing the EU's ability to prevent conflicts, build peace and strengthen international security. The fund may take on a larger role as the reconstruction of Ukraine begins.

The Government will promote the implementation and intensification of the EU's sanctions against Russia. Finland is determined to promote unity and effectiveness in the EU's policy on Russia.

Europe's common military defence is built on NATO. Finland supports deepening European defence cooperation as part of the European Pillar of NATO, including through the objectives of the Strategic Compass. Important areas where closer cooperation is needed in Europe include the defence industry and its product development, military mobility, hybrid and cyber capabilities, and common rapid reaction forces. It is essential that the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) meets the EU's performance targets and strengthens the EU's defence as a whole.

In its EU policy, the Government will pay close attention to the impacts of various initiatives and instruments on Finland's defence industry and technological base and will safeguard Finland's military security of supply. Finland will ensure that European initiatives on joint defence procurement (EDIRPA) and the development of ammunition production (ASAP) do not cause market disturbances, interfere with freedom to engage in commercial activity, undermine Finland's security of supply and its security of supply model, or disproportionately favour the largest Member States.

The Government's objective is to create a single market for defence materiel in the Union. Finland will promote the EU's common European policy on arms exports, the EU's common defence procurement, and increased funding for research and development related to future defence technologies. The Government supports the inclusion of the EU defence industry in the taxonomy of sustainable financing. The Government will promote the use of defence materiel produced using the circular economy and renewable energy sources. Finland will make full use of CEF funding for EU military mobility projects.

The Government aims to strengthen the EU's decision-making ability. Increasing the use of qualified majority voting is possible only in limited areas of foreign and security policy, such as sanctions policy.

The Government aims to foster a strong transatlantic relationship between the EU and the United States. Finland will promote the common positions of the EU and United States in WTO negotiations. The Government will also promote cooperation between the EU

and other strategic democratic allies. The Government aims to reduce the EU's economic, technological and industrial dependence on China. The Government will strengthen the equal, comprehensive partnership between the EU and Africa.

9.4 Making Finland's voice heard in the European Union

The Government is committed to enhancing Finland's ability to exercise influence within the EU, including in advance. We will speed up the formulation of Finland's positions. Finland will define its core objectives for the next EU parliamentary term in 2023. The Government will switch from submitting a report on EU policy once per electoral term to setting priorities, influencing and monitoring EU policy continuously. The Government will prepare a resolution on organising efforts to exert influence in advance and on formulating Finland's positions proactively. The Government will draw up an annual, concrete strategy for exercising influence in the EU on issues of key importance for Finland's interests. Finland will prepare its positions and present clear models for its solutions before the Commission publishes its proposals. Defining strategic priorities also means deciding which issues are most important. Parliament will be given better opportunities to participate in formulating Finland's positions on EU affairs and will have the opportunity to do so at an earlier stage.

The Government will ensure that promoting and defending Finland's national interests in the European Union is a key priority for each ministry. Permanent Secretaries are responsible for coordinating their ministries' efforts to exert influence in the EU. These efforts will not succeed without effective data collection on initiatives at the planning stage and dialogue with the European Commission and the European Parliament, in addition to participation in the work of the Council of the European Union. To safeguard Finland's overall interests, the Prime Minister will be given room for manoeuvre in European policy, with due regard for the competence and participation of Parliament, in order to account for unexpected situations and changes in negotiating positions.

The Government will take on a more active role in the Council of the European Union in order to strengthen cooperation between like-minded Member States. Finland will intensify its cooperation on specific matters with different Member States while maintaining its traditional partnerships. This includes strengthening Nordic cooperation. Cooperation with the Member States and the forms of that cooperation must be agreed upon with the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for formulating Finland's positions for the European Council and for coordinating the positions of different ministries. It also coordinates the ministries' efforts to influence EU matters in advance together with

Finland's Permanent Representation to the EU. The Government will integrate Finland's Permanent Representation to the European Union more closely into the Government's activities and will clarify the steering system. The preparation of EU litigation matters will be transferred to the Prime Minister's Office. The Government will launch a programme aimed at increasing the number of Finnish public officials working in EU positions and improving their ability to advance within EU institutions. The programme will include supporting the EU competence of officials in the central government.

10 A safe, secure and resilient state governed by the rule of law

Situation picture

Finland is a safe and stable state governed by the rule of law. However, the challenges facing our society and our citizens are becoming increasingly complex. These phenomena affect many sectors of society, and we need more cooperation and new practices to identify and address them. Changes in the operating environment also require an increase in the powers and resources of actors in the field of internal security and administration of justice. The rule of law rests on people's trust in a fair society and justice system.

Long-term objectives for 2031

Finland is a society built on trust where security and justice are realised. The rule of law is the backbone of society. Public authorities lay the foundation for a good life. The chain of administration of justice functions efficiently. Finland promotes the principles of democracy, civil society, fundamental and human rights and the rule of law in all its activities.

Government measures and policies

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the pandemic and tensions in world politics highlight the importance of society's resilience. The Government will bolster comprehensive security, resilience and security of supply. Finland will prepare for external and internal security threats realistically and decisively. In doing so, Finland will make use of new forms of international cooperation.

The Government will ensure services in the field of internal security and administration of justice as well as the operational capacity and sufficient powers of public authorities. The Government will also take into account the needs arising from NATO membership. The Government will prepare reports on internal security and the state of the administration of justice during the parliamentary term.

Finland will promote the implementation of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. A society built on trust and good relations between population groups arises from the fact that everyone in Finland can trust that their rights and the principles of gender equality, equality before the law and non-discrimination will be respected and that they will be able to improve their own lives. Everyone has the right to be happy and safe in Finland.

The judicial system, civil society, participatory democracy and the use of public power lay the foundation for a society built on trust and a safe everyday life. The fight against crime and other societal problems will focus on prevention, identification of root causes and enforcement of criminal liability. Finland will contribute to the promotion of human security and prevent the growth of inequality in security. In addition to rights, the Government will emphasise the obligations and responsibilities of individuals.

10.1 Strengthening national security and society's resilience

The Government will assess the current state of how national security is managed at the Government level and make the necessary changes to structures, administration and forms of political guidance.

The Government will ensure that public authorities have sufficient powers and resources to counter threats identified in the national risk assessment and to manage crises.

The Government will carry out an overall review of the regulation of incidents and crisis situations in all administrative branches. Sector-specific legislation will be updated in parallel with the reform of emergency powers legislation, i.e. by autumn 2025.

The overhaul of the Emergency Powers Act will create the necessary powers for managing crises and for preparedness so that society can continue to function in emergency conditions.

The Government will draw up a national security strategy. The vulnerabilities of society to wide-ranging influence activities carried out by foreign states will be identified and shortcomings rectified.

The Security Strategy for Society will be reformed to respond to the demands of the new security environment.

The Government will improve the protection of infrastructure critical to the functioning of society. We will look into extending the use of security clearances to cover, in particular, work on critical infrastructure and technology.

The Government will reform the Act on the Screening of Foreign Corporate Acquisitions so that risks relating to national security, security of supply and wide-ranging influence activities are taken into account more effectively than at present.

The Government will examine possibilities to engage in more effective ex post facto intervention and control in respect of assets central to the security of society and security of supply.

The Government will examine the adequacy of the regulation of the acquisition and possession of real estate by parties outside the EU and EEA.

We will investigate the possibility of adding safety investigations of serious cyber security incidents to the mandate of the Safety Investigation Authority. If necessary, the Government will prepare legislative amendments to the Safety Investigation Act and make other necessary amendments to it.

The Prime Minister's Office will carry out an extensive external research project on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis. At minimum, the research project will address the management of the crisis, preparedness and restrictions of fundamental rights.

The Government will carry out an external research project on Russia's extensive efforts to exert influence in Finland in the 2000s.

Ensuring security of supply

Security of supply is the foundation of society's comprehensive security. Security of supply will be taken into account in all decision-making in all administrative branches.

The Government will ensure an adequate level of security of supply so that the production, services and infrastructure necessary for the subsistence of the population, the economy and national defence can be secured in the event of serious incidents under normal conditions and in emergency conditions.

The Government will make a decision on the objectives for security supply to ensure that the level of security of supply meets the demands of the changed security environment.

The Government will examine the effects that geopolitical risks and dependencies have on security of supply. Security of supply will be strengthened by developing international cooperation through the EU and NATO and bilaterally with other states. We will improve Nordic cooperation in preparedness and security of supply.

The Government will pay particular attention to the conditions for domestic food production and Finland's security of energy supply due to the clean energy transition. We will improve the security of energy supply by ensuring that domestic fuels, such as wood-based fuels and peat, are available and have strong supply chains. In addition, we will assess the need for a security of supply reserve and for increasing fuel stockpiles.

The Government will carry out an overall review of security of supply legislation during the next parliamentary term to ensure that regulation is up to date.

The Government will examine the need and opportunities to reform general public procurement regulation within the framework of EU regulation so that security of supply can be adequately taken into account.

Increasing the number of police officers

Changes in the security environment require that operational police work be strengthened. The Government will increase the number of police officers to 8,000 person-years by the end of the parliamentary term. The increase will be made to strengthen operational police work. We will ensure that the police have the capacity to recruit the necessary number of specialists to support police work, such as cyber and financial experts and investigation secretaries.

The Government will secure the resources of the police in a way that is predictable, takes a long-term view and improves the ability of the police to plan long-term operations. We will increase the core funding of the police and develop the police funding model in accordance with this objective.

The Government will ensure that the police have access to the equipment they need in their work and to healthy and safe facilities. Police presence will be secured throughout the country. The availability of police services in both national languages will be ensured.

The Government will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the combating of crime by easing the criminal investigation obligation of the police, for example, in extensive mass crime cases. This will also be achieved by expanding the scope of conditions for restricting investigations and making them easier to apply.

The Government will review administrative procedures and other police bureaucracy and reduce them without compromising legal safeguards. We will ensure that criminal procedures are used as an option of last resort. We will identify and relieve the police of duties or areas of responsibility that do not need to be handled by the police.

The Government will strengthen policing and the protection of internal security by preparing and introducing legislation enabling the gathering of criminal intelligence. We will boost digitalisation in both criminal investigations and the combating of crime.

The Government will introduce a police reserve to complement the activities of the police in the event of serious incidents under normal conditions and in emergency conditions. The police reserve will include persons who have received police, border guard or military police training, for example.

The Government will examine if there is a need to reform police training. A set of measures will be implemented across administrative branches to ensure that a sufficient number of applicants who meet the application requirements will be available for police training in the coming years. However, the requirements for admission to police training will not be lowered. The availability of Swedish-language police training will be secured.

Work on equality and non-discrimination in the police will continue systematically.

Stepping up the combating of crime

The Government will step up the combating of crime to improve people's safety and security and trust in the authorities.

The Government will ensure that the Police Act, the Coercive Measures Act and the Criminal Investigation Act provide sufficient support for the combating of crime. The Act on Crime Prevention by the Border Guard will be updated to improve the efficiency of criminal investigations. We will also develop an administrative approach to crime prevention.

The Government considers organised crime a serious threat to Finland's security and lawful social order. The Government will vigorously combat organised crime. The Government will update the strategy for combating organised crime and prepare the necessary legislative proposals.

The Government will enact a special act to combat organised crime. This will enable more efficient exchange of information and an administrative approach. We will further develop cooperation between the Police, Customs and the Border Guard and will ensure that they have the necessary capabilities and powers. We will look into enacting legislation on house searches that can be reported after the fact.

The Government will assess and improve the conditions for the use of biometrics for the purposes of law enforcement and the combating of crime.

In order to protect internal security, a new system of criminal intelligence regulation will be introduced. Among other things, this new regulation will enable more effective and threat-based intervention in serious gang crime and organised crime. The Government will assess the need to specify the Constitution to enable the effective gathering of criminal intelligence.

The Government will remove obstacles to the exchange of information in the combating of crime. Sector-specific legislation will be updated to oblige healthcare and social welfare authorities and education authorities to provide the police with essential information that is otherwise non-disclosable, at least for the purpose of assessing threats to life or health and preventing threatening acts. We will also increase the possibilities for the police to disclose non-disclosable information to various public authorities to prevent crime and to guarantee security.

Legislation on an administrative approach to combating crime will be developed to meet the requirements of the full and effective implementation of official activities.

The Government will take legislative measures to prevent money laundering and intensify the recovery of proceeds of crime, especially in relation to money laundering.

The requirement for comprehensive security clearances will be extended to employees working in ports and other critical security environments to the extent to be assessed in drafting.

The use of technical, i.e. automated, monitoring will be enabled with respect to open sources on information networks. We will assess the development of the regulation of information gathering from open sources in the online environment so that oversight can be carried out by a civilian official.

The Government will assess the need to amend the legislation governing the private security sector due to the growth of the sector and changes in the internal security situation.

Combating the rise in youth and gang crime

The Government recognises that the rise in youth and gang crime is a serious problem. The Government is committed to taking the necessary measures to resolutely combat and reduce youth and gang crime.

To solve the problem, the Government will take a wide range of hard and soft measures. Intervening in this phenomenon requires a multiprofessional approach. We will involve all of society in the response. This will involve support for homes and parents in their child raising responsibilities, work against social exclusion and discrimination, and integration and immigration policy.

By the end of 2023, the Government will draw up an extensive action plan to halt the rise in youth and gang crime in Finland. The Government will adopt a resolution on drawing up a cross-administrative action plan for the prevention and combating of gang crime.

The current preventive Anchor work or similar actions will be developed to be more comprehensive and effective. The approach developed by the Ministry of Justice will be used as support provided after Anchor activities.

The Government will increase the punishments for offences related to street gang crime by making a link to the activities of street gangs one of the grounds for increasing the punishment for an offence.

The minimum punishment for an aggravated firearms offence will be increased from four months to two years of imprisonment to ensure that the prison sentences imposed for these offences will, as a rule, be unconditional. The statutory definition of an aggravated firearms offence will be amended so that carrying or transporting an unauthorised firearm in a public place or in a vehicle will be punishable as an aggravated firearms offence. The punishments for possession of a dangerous object and an object suitable for injuring another person will be increased.

Exit activities carried out by the National Bureau of Investigation will be expanded to cover not only organised crime and violent extremism but also members of street gangs. The exchange of information between public authorities will be facilitated and the best practices of the inter-authority cooperation group focusing on gang crime in Sweden will be adopted in Finland.

Cooperation with the third sector will continue in prevention and exit activities. An updated national action plan for the prevention and combating of violent radicalisation and extremism will be drawn up.

The Government will enable the use of more extensive covert coercive measures for persons active in criminal gangs.

The confiscation of proceeds of crime will be facilitated by, for example, easing the standard of evidence and by introducing a procedure for the confiscation of proceeds outside criminal proceedings. The Government will examine possibilities for using fines as a sanction supplementing imprisonment, especially in offences that have sought considerable economic benefit.

The Government will examine the practices, measures and effectiveness of the Danish approach to combating gang and organised crime.

The regulation of juvenile punishment will be developed so that the seriousness of an act is more emphasised than at present. This will be done, for example, by increasing the use of juvenile punishment and incorporating elements of community service into it.

The Government will work with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to enact legislative amendments to the Child Welfare Act that will safeguard children and that are necessary to break the cycle of crime among children under the age of criminal liability. The need for further measures to break young people's path towards serious crime and to combat aggravated crime will also be investigated in other respects.

The Government will strengthen the doctrine of the commission of an offence through an agent so that a person inciting a child under the age of criminal liability to commit a criminal act will more often be considered a perpetrator. An assessment will be carried out to determine whether such activity should be added to the grounds for increasing the punishment or whether it should be criminalised separately.

Securing the operational capacity of the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service

The Government will guarantee national security in all situations.

The Government will ensure that the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service is able to operate and has sufficient funding.

The Government will develop intelligence legislation to safeguard the operational capacity of public authorities due to experiences gained from intelligence activities, technological advances and Finland's NATO membership. The necessary amendments related to intelligence activities harmful to Finland will be made to the Criminal Code.

Intelligence legislation will be revised with respect to intelligence powers and the right of access to information and disclosure to meet the demands of the changed security and cyber environment.

The Government will reform the provisions in intelligence legislation on firewalls. The reform will enable the targeting of police activities and the sufficient disclosure of information to the police and other public authorities that have the power to intervene concretely in activities that pose a serious threat to national security detected by the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service.

The Government will ensure that intelligence powers keep pace with technological advances. Among other things, we will enable intelligence gathering targeted at device and system chains and enable intelligence activities to make use of search criteria targeted at message content. We will assess extending intelligence powers to cover premises used for permanent residence.

The detection and prevention of cyber threats will be improved. Provisions will be laid down on powers to interfere with a device or software that is located abroad and is being used for cyber espionage or cyber interference that seriously endangers Finland's national security. We will assess extending the obligation to assist the authorities to cover service providers located in Finland, such as data centre companies.

The necessary amendments will be made to ensure that the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service receives the information necessary for its duties from the police, tax authorities, enforcement authorities and other public authorities.

The Government will explore the possibility of laying down provisions on powers to process and utilise large data resources available from open sources.

Refugee espionage will be criminalised as an offence subject to public prosecution under the Criminal Code.

We will criminalise activities in which a perpetrator, for the purpose of benefiting the intelligence activities of a foreign state or causing harm to Finland, provides an intelligence service with premises, equipment or information needed by that service. Systematic efforts to influence decision-making in Finnish society with malicious intent on behalf of a foreign state and dissemination of false information on Finland's decision-making or social conditions will be criminalised.

Combating terrorism effectively

The Government recognises terrorism as a crime that seriously endangers the basic functions of society, the legal order and the safety and security of the population. The threat of terrorism remains at an elevated level. We will combat terrorism effectively.

The Government will remove obstacles to the exchange of information in order to protect national security and organised society. In the EU, Finland will work to increase the exchange of information between the public authorities of different EU Member States in order to improve the effectiveness of the fight against terrorism and other crime.

The Government will overhaul counter-terrorism legislation to respond to current threats and to remove the ambiguity of current regulation. Any gaps in what activities are currently criminalised will be assessed. Penal scales will be revised to increase the punishments for terrorist offences.

Ensuring border security

Russia's aggression against Ukraine and other changes in the security environment require that border security be further strengthened. The Government will ensure Finland's border security.

Sufficient resources, equipment and technology will be provided to the Border Guard. The number of border guards will be secured. In addition, legislation, including that on powers, will be updated to meet the needs of border security.

The Border Guard's presence in sparsely populated areas of the archipelago will be secured. The Government will prepare for the replacement of all-weather vessels. We will secure maritime search and rescue capabilities and the capacity to prevent environmental damage. We will launch a study on the replacement of maritime search and rescue helicopters that are at the end of their life cycle. We will seek a solution for the equipment needed for voluntary maritime search and rescue.

The powers of the Border Guard will be developed in accordance with the requirements of the security environment. The Government will lay down provisions allowing the Border Guard to use technology more extensively when maintaining border security and will develop the regulation of technical surveillance. The Act on Crime Prevention by the Border Guard will be reviewed.

The Government will lay down provisions on the right of the Border Guard to use its capabilities to support intelligence authorities and on the right to disclose information to intelligence authorities.

We will examine the need to increase the powers of the Border Guard at internal borders in accordance with the practices of other EU Member States and we will increase those powers as appropriate.

The Government will ensure that public authorities have sufficient resources to combat hybrid influence activities. If necessary, the Government is prepared to exercise all its legislative powers in situations that seriously endanger border security.

The experiences of the pilot phase will be taken into account in the construction of the fence on the eastern border. The fence will be built as quickly as appropriate.

Securing services provided by the rescue services and the Emergency Response Centre Agency

Changes in Finland's security environment, changes in the structure of society, technological advances and adaptation to climate change and extreme weather phenomena require developing and strengthening the rescue service and emergency response centre system.

The Government will ensure that emergency assistance is available in Finland. The Government sees rescue services and emergency response centres as key internal security services, which also play an important role in serious incidents under normal conditions and in emergency conditions.

The Government will ensure that high-quality rescue services are available throughout the country. The Government will examine and take the necessary measures to tackle the shortage of rescue workers. The Government will ensure that the rescue services are able to attract and retain employees.

The number of people in rescue worker training will be increased. The rescue worker training provided by Emergency Services Academy Finland in Kuopio will be strengthened. The Emergency Services Academy will monitor the need for rescue workers in Finland as a whole and, where necessary, will also organise regional rescue worker courses. The operations of the Helsinki Rescue School will be developed, especially for the needs of Uusimaa and the rest of Southern Finland. The amount of rescue worker training provided by the Helsinki Rescue School in Swedish will be increased.

Rescue worker training will be developed, without making it tertiary education during this government term.

The Government will ensure that the rescue services are capable of participating in international operations. The effects of NATO membership will also be taken into account in the development and capabilities of rescue services.

Cooperation and synergies between rescue services and prehospital emergency medical services will be ensured.

The status and capacity of contract fire brigades will be secured.

The Government will bolster civil defence by reforming the regulation of preparedness for civil defence and by developing the organisation of civil defence work. The Government will enable the use of conscripts performing non-military service for civil defence tasks. We will investigate possibilities to improve the capacity of civil defence shelters in areas where there are not enough shelters.

Individual emergency planning competence will be strengthened in all population groups, for example, through guidance, counselling and supervision.

Accidents and incidents will be effectively prevented. The Government's objective is to halve the number of fires by 2030.

Uniform command and situation centres of the rescue authorities will be launched. National guidance and supervision of the rescue services will be developed.

The Government will implement the second phase of the reform of the Rescue Act. The instructions for operational capability planning will be updated. Questions concerning the working time system used by the rescue services and the interpretation of the Working Hours Act will be examined. The Government will explore the possibilities for rescue personnel to deviate from the provisions of the Working Hours Act and, for example, to work additional shifts in case of serious incidents under normal conditions.

The Government will launch a national project to improve occupational safety in rescue services. The Criminal Code will be amended so that the punishment for violence or threatening to use violence against emergency medical care personnel corresponds to the punishment for violent resistance to a public official.

The Government will place particular focus on well-being at work in the rescue services. The Government will ensure that post-trauma workshops are continued in the rescue services.

The Government will ensure that the Emergency Response Centre Agency has sufficient resources and will develop its operations. The Government will assess the need to increase the training of emergency response centre operators. The Government will assess the measures necessary to improve the Emergency Response Centre Agency's ability to attract and retain employees.

The emergency warning system will be reformed. The Emergency Response Centre Agency's ability to maintain and develop the Erica information system will be secured. Sign language services will be taken into account and their accessibility will be improved.

As part of the development of the Helsinki Rescue School, the Government will examine the organisation of a regular bilingual regional emergency response centre operator course.

10.2 Strengthening the rule of law and democracy in Finland

Securing funding for the judicial system

The Government will secure funding for the actors in the judicial system.

The Government Report on the Administration of Justice (Government Report 13/2022 vp) states that an increase of approximately 1,200 person-years will be required by 2030 in order to secure the operating conditions for the administration of justice and reach the reasonable objectives set for it.

The Government will examine the funding of the criminal procedure chain as a whole with a view to avoiding bottlenecks.

The Government will ensure funding for premises and information system projects so that their implementation does not detract from the funds available for core activities.

Strengthening the rule of law in Finland

The Government will strengthen the independence of courts by increasing the number of permanent positions of judges.

Court training will be developed into a stage of the legal career that serves the entire judicial administration and promotes recruitments in the administrative branch. The number of trainee judges will be increased and the training of junior judges will be expanded.

The Government will ensure the availability of services in Swedish in bilingual areas.

The Government will prevent the misleading use of legal titles by providing by law that titles such as 'juristi' and 'lakimies' (lawyer in English) may only be used by a person who has completed a Master of Laws degree (OTM/OTK in Finnish). This will also apply to a person who has completed a Licentiate of Laws (OTL) degree or a Doctor of Laws (OTT) degree without first completing the above-mentioned Master's degree.

The Government will seek alternatives to the current selection procedure for lay judges at district courts so that political parties will have no role in the selection procedure.

The Government will support the rights of the Sami people to maintain and develop their languages and culture. The Government will promote constructive dialogue and cooperation with the Sami. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Concerning the Sami People will continue until the end of 2025. A government proposal on the Act on the Sami Parliament, based on the work carried out by the committee chaired by Permanent Secretary Timonen in cooperation with the Sami Parliament, will be submitted to Parliament by the end of 2023.

The Government will develop and foster the autonomy of Åland in good cooperation and dialogue with Åland. The work to reform the autonomy of Åland will continue.

The procedures for dealing with Åland-related issues will be harmonised and further developed. The Government will ensure that communications in Swedish between the central government and the authorities of Åland continue to function well. The Government will secure the necessary resources for translations and ensure that the Government of Åland will always be consulted on issues and legislative motions affecting Åland in accordance with the Act on the Autonomy of Åland. The implementation of the Government Strategy on Åland will continue.

The Government will secure the possibilities for Åland to exert influence in EU affairs in accordance with the Autonomy Act and Protocol No. 2 on the Åland Islands attached to the Act of Accession of Finland to the EU.

The Government will reform the grounds for compensation under the Act on the Redemption of Immovable Property and Special Rights to strengthen the protection of property in accordance with the proposal presented by the working group of experts and public officials (OM 2019:12) appointed for a project conducted on the matter at the Ministry of Justice (OM022:00/2016). The protection of property will be strengthened by raising the compensation payable for the redemption of property for the purpose of building power transmission lines.

The Government will take measures to protect the public authorities against violence and the threat of violence. The use of protection mechanisms enabled by the current legislation and operating models, such as the operating model for combating threats against public authorities, will be strengthened. Action will be taken to prevent and combat the rise in hostility towards security authorities. The Government will assess and implement the criminalisation of blue light sabotage, in a similar manner to the Swedish model, in order to protect the internal security authorities and emergency medical service personnel.

Streamlining judicial procedures

The Government will reform the civil procedure, the criminal procedure and the procedure for considering petitionary matters. The aim is to speed up and streamline judicial proceedings while securing the legal protection and fundamental rights of parties. The means to achieve this include increasing the number of written procedures, easing the requirement to appear in court, increasing the use of electronic practices, remote connections and video recordings, assessing the appropriateness of court compositions and expanding the scope of application of plea bargaining. The Government will also assess the possibilities to transfer certain suitable matters, such as applications for debt adjustment and summary debt collection cases, from district courts to other authorities.

The obligation to state reasons will be relaxed in situations where a criminal investigation is not initiated or charges are not brought.

The Government will examine the possibilities of extending the obligation of parties to present evidence within a given time limit.

The Government will create conditions for the prompt resolution of appeals concerning international protection.

Court mediation will be developed and the use of alternative dispute resolution methods will be increased. The responsibility for mediation in criminal and civil matters will be transferred from the administrative branch of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the administrative branch of the Ministry of Justice.

The Government will examine the need to reform the Arbitration Act and prepare the legislative amendments needed to promote the competitiveness of Finnish arbitration activities.

The Government will carry out an overall review and reform of the out-of-court procedure for imposing fines. The aim is to simplify the procedure and assess whether the use of the conversion sentence for unpaid fines could be increased in situations where a fine cannot be collected.

Provisions on the limitation of the right to request a distribution of matrimonial assets referred to in the Marriage Act will be laid down by law.

Improving access to legal services

The Government will improve the conditions for providing more consistent and high-quality legal aid, public guardianship and financial and debt counselling services by establishing a national legal services authority.

Access to legal aid will be improved and the use of legal aid in mediation will be promoted.

The Government will assess ways to develop legal expenses insurance in cooperation with insurance companies.

The Government will assess the need to develop the activities of the Consumer Disputes Board in order to shorten processing times and improve the legal protection of consumers.

The Government will update the legislation on guardianship and the continuing power of attorney and enable the use of electronic services in these activities.

Improving prison safety and security and preventing recidivism

The Government will launch a reform of the prison network to ensure the safe and cost-effective enforcement of sentences. The Government will ensure that the prison network is sufficiently extensive, that the units are as appropriate as possible in terms of location, supervision and the availability of personnel, and that the number of prisoner places and high-security wards corresponds to the need.

The Government will explore ways to improve the attractiveness of the Prison and Probation Service as an employer.

The conditions for placing a prisoner in an open prison will be reviewed so that more attention is paid to the dangerousness of the prisoner and the nature of the offence underlying the sentence when making a placement decision.

The Government will examine whether the conditions for granting prison leave should be tightened and whether unauthorised leave from the grounds of an open prison and not returning to prison at the agreed time should be criminalised.

The Government will enable more extensive use of remote connections in the hearing of prisoners.

Legislation on high-security wards will be developed so that prisons can effectively combat crime. The Government will enable the placement of remand prisoners in high-security wards.

The powers of prison staff in wards with intensified supervision will be clarified and expanded.

The Government will make the necessary legislative amendments to enable the exchange of information between different authorities concerning persons involved in serious and organised crime and other persons who may have an impact on prison safety and security.

A stricter obligation for prisoners to participate in work and other activities organised or approved by prison will be introduced.

The Government will take measures to prevent the smuggling and use of intoxicating substances in prison. The current resources will be targeted at substance abuse treatment aimed at recovery from substance addiction. The provision of out-of-prison substance abuse treatment aimed at recovery from substance addiction will be increased among short-term prisoners and prisoners serving a conversion sentence for unpaid fines. The Government will develop the services for preventing violent and sexual crime and breaking the cycle of such crime, along with the multi-professional rehabilitation of perpetrators to be provided during the enforcement of imprisonment. The Government will allocate more resources for these services. The needs of different client groups, such as women and young people, will be taken into account in prison activities. The Government will ensure the continuity of services after the term of sentence.

The Government will monitor the effectiveness of the treatment and rehabilitation programmes.

The Government will promote the transfer of foreign prisoners to prisons in their home countries.

Combating over-indebtedness

The Government will take measures to prevent over-indebtedness and help people who are already over-indebted.

Managing personal finances is a set of basic skills that everyone can learn. The Government will focus particularly on promoting of young people's financial literacy. Efforts will be made to prevent indebtedness resulting from gambling addiction.

The Government will carry out an overall review of indebtedness as a phenomenon and of the functioning of insolvency proceedings, and will assess the need to amend the legislation in this respect. In the review, the Government will take into account the reforms carried out during the previous government term and their impacts. The sufficiency of income remaining at the disposal of debtors will be ensured by maintaining the protected portion in debt enforcement at the current level until decisions on further measures have been made.

The Government will examine the possibilities to develop the procedure for recovering undisputed debts.

Cooperation between the enforcement authorities and debt counselling services will be developed so that the enforcement authorities have an accurate situation picture of the debtor's financial position. The Government will examine the possibilities to create a digital system for referring debtors in enforcement to financial and debt counselling services.

The Government will simplify the procedure for the attachment of income and examine the allocation of funds and any needs for changes to enforcement proceedings. The Government will step up the fight against the grey economy and economic crime in enforcement proceedings. The Government will explore ways to intervene more effectively in situations where enforcement proceedings are being evaded.

Efforts will be made to raise awareness of debt adjustment for private individuals and the related opportunities. The Government will examine whether the debt adjustment procedure could be eased and clarified by strengthening the role of the enforcement authorities in the procedure.

Better support will be provided to companies facing difficulties. The Government will take measures to promote the realisation of criminal liability and liability for damages in bankruptcy cases. The Government will explore the possibilities to establish a register for estate administrators. The Government will diversify the range of means available for the restructuring of companies by introducing debt conversion.

Strengthening democracy, participation and trust in society

Our society is based on democracy. The Government will strengthen democracy, participation and trust in society. We will examine new ways to foster these fundamental values with an open mind.

The Government will work for an inclusive and just society and combat segregation.

The Government will prepare and implement a national programme to promote democracy and participation. A particular objective is to improve voter turnout and to strengthen the participation of children and young people.

The Government will promote the development of good practices in democracy education and human rights education. A culture of good discussion and exchange of opinions will be strengthened in society, starting at an early age, while safeguarding the constitutional freedom of expression and opinion.

Open and interactive governance bolsters citizens' trust in public authorities.

Efforts will be made to further improve the clarity and comprehensibility of communications by authorities.

The Government will promote linguistic rights by continuing to implement the measures defined in the Strategy for the National Languages of Finland and in the Language Policy Programme.

An active and vibrant civil society is a key element in a well-functioning democracy. The Government will prepare a strategy on civil society organisations and an implementation plan for it. Within the framework of the strategy, the aim is to lighten the excess regulation concerning organisational and voluntary activities, explore possibilities to develop the fundraising activities of civil society organisations, and improve the interaction between the public authorities and the civil society. In particular, the EU funding opportunities of civil society organisations engaged in the prevention of violence and crime will be expanded.

Promoting equality and non-discrimination

The Government will take determined measures to promote equality, gender equality and non-discrimination in society. Everyone has the right to be happy and safe in Finland.

Everyone is equal before the law. No one may be discriminated against based on their gender, age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion or belief, opinion, disability, state of health, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristics.

The Government will draw up a cross-administrative action plan for gender equality. Based on the policies to be outlined in the action plan, the Government will update and promote the joint objectives determined in the Government Report on Gender Equality Policy to eliminate gender-based discrimination and promote equality between women and men. The Government will take the promotion of equality into consideration in the budget process and in key reforms and projects.

More attention will be paid to gender equality issues affecting boys and men, especially in order to prevent the social exclusion of young men.

The Government will strengthen the basic structures of the rule of law by preparing and implementing Finland's fourth National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human Rights.

The Government will promote knowledge-based decision-making by continuing the official reporting on and monitoring of fundamental and human rights.

The division of tasks between the national human rights institutions (the Human Rights Centre, the Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Human Rights Delegation) will be clarified in order to eliminate overlaps.

The Government will strengthen the realisation of the rights of persons with disabilities and older people and support their opportunities to participate in the digitalising society.

The Government will take various measures to help persons who have been forced into so-called religious or cultural marriages not provided for in the Marriage Act. It is particularly important to try to influence attitudes within the religious and cultural communities in question. Other significant measures include raising awareness and helping victims to receive support and assistance.

The Government will promote the realisation of the rights of the child in all sectors of society. The Government will explore the possibilities to improve the position of children in difficult divorce situations and judicial proceedings. The right of the child to both parents will be promoted by strengthening the obligation of the resident parent to contribute to the realisation of the non-resident parent's right of access and by preventing parental alienation.

The Government will examine the duties of the specialised ombudsmen to identify possible overlaps and any potential for savings in this respect.

The Government will monitor the functioning and impacts of the provisions on the annulment of forced marriages and, if necessary, take measures to revise the legislation.

Combating different forms of violence

The Government will take a number of measures to combat different forms of violence:

Violence against women will be combated by strengthening the ability of public authorities, municipal actors and wellbeing services counties to prevent and identify it.

The prerequisites for identifying and intervening in violence against boys and men will be improved.

The ability of public authorities, municipal actors and wellbeing services counties to prevent and identify domestic and intimate partner violence will be strengthened. Victims' awareness of their opportunities to receive protection will be raised.

The Government will work to improve access to services provided by shelters and rape crisis centres. Measures will be taken to identify and combat honour-based violence.

As a rule, mediation in cases involving domestic or intimate partner violence will be discontinued.

The work to ensure non-violent childhoods will continue. The Government will take measures to ensure that in cases of sexual violence against a child, the criminal investigation is in the best interests of the child and that multi-professional support is provided through cooperation between different authorities.

The Government will assess the need to enact legislation that would oblige municipalities and wellbeing services counties to strengthen their structures for the work to prevent and combat violence.

Developing criminal policy

The objective of criminal policy is to prevent crime, bring perpetrators to justice, and help and support victims.

By its mid-term policy review, the Government will draw up a criminal policy programme and make decisions concerning it within the financial boundaries.

The Government will draw up an action plan for victim policy aimed at securing the funding of support services for crime victims and improving the position of victims in criminal proceedings. The possibilities to raise victim surcharges will be examined. The Government will assess the need to reform the Act on Compensation for Crime Damage in order to strengthen the position of victims and their family members.

The Government will revise the provisions of chapter 1 of the Criminal Code on the territorial scope of application of the criminal law of Finland.

In international contexts, the Government will contribute to ensuring that war crimes, crimes against humanity and other most serious international offences are increasingly considered in international criminal court proceedings.

The Government will examine the possibilities and take the necessary measures to extend the limitation period for the right to bring charges for intentional homicides and sexual offences against children or to abolish the limitation period for the right to bring charges for such offences.

The Government will tighten the legislation concerning child abuse material (CAM) in order to protect children who are victims of serious offences. Possession of a depiction of violence will be criminalised and provisions on an aggravated form of possession of an image depicting a child in a sexual manner will be added to the Criminal Code. In addition, the Government will ensure that possession of other material depicting brutal violence is criminalised in order to protect people and animals.

Chapter 21, section 4 of the Criminal Code (infanticide) will be repealed as unnecessary.

The Government will examine the possibilities of adding humiliation as one of the grounds for aggravation in aggravated assault or as one of the grounds for increasing the punishment for the offence, and will make the necessary legislative amendments. This would include, for example, filming or photographing the act and disseminating the material or using some other particularly humiliating method.

The Government will immediately seek solutions to ensure that prisoners who are the most dangerous to society and to the safety of other people are not released. Preventive detention will be introduced. The assessment of the risk of violence will be developed and its significance as part of the consideration of the release of a prisoner will be substantially increased.

The provisions on conditional release will be amended so that a person can only be considered a first-time offender once.

The Government will examine the punishments for animal welfare offences and take the necessary measures. It will also assess the possibilities to extend the duration of the ban on keeping animals and to intensify the monitoring of the ban.

The Government will examine the need to criminalise coercive control.

Female genital mutilation will be more explicitly criminalised in the Criminal Code. Taking a minor girl abroad to undergo female genital mutilation will also be criminalised.

The Government will take the necessary measures to clarify the punishability of coercion into marriage in the Criminal Code.

The Government will assess the possibilities to develop electronic monitoring and expand its scope of use in monitoring compliance with restraining orders with a view to improving the effectiveness of restraining orders and preventing violations.

The Government will enable applying for a restraining order against a person who repeatedly makes threats or causes disturbance to a company (a so-called corporate restraining order).

Measures will be taken to promote the safety and security of spectators at events.

10.3 Migration and integration policy

An asylum policy that will allocate assistance to the most vulnerable people and prevent abuses

In migration policy, Finland will comply with human rights and other international treaties, its obligations under EU legislation and the rule of law. Finland will participate in multilateral international cooperation.

The Government's asylum policy will be based on helping the most vulnerable people, on international cooperation, on guaranteeing security and on defending Western values, such as democracy and equality. Particular attention will be paid to the rights of children, women and persons with disabilities.

Finland will provide full assistance to people who have fled the war in Ukraine and will continue to protect them in cooperation with other EU Member States. Special attention will be paid to vulnerable people, such as unaccompanied children who have fled the war in Ukraine.

An action plan will be drawn up to help people who have fled Ukraine, to support their participation in Finnish society and to help them enter the labour market. As part of the action plan, the employment of Ukrainians will be promoted by increasing workplace education and training, the identification and recognition of qualifications, continuing education, license card training as well as by increasing career coaching and online job search training in Ukrainian.

People fleeing war, persecution and other human rights violations have the right to apply for asylum. The Government's objective at both the national and EU level is that the assistance we provide will be allocated to the most vulnerable people and that abuses of the system will be prevented.

Assistance will be primarily provided to the most vulnerable people in their regions of origin. The use of the asylum mechanism based on crossing European borders and applying for asylum in Finland will be minimised. The Government will bring Finland's key asylum policy statutes up to the general level of Nordic countries.

The Government will conduct a comprehensive study on the processing of asylum applications and asylum recognition rates in different EU Member States. To support the Government's objectives to tighten asylum policy, we will introduce the more stringent provisions and best practices made possible by the Qualification Directive, Asylum Procedures Directive and Return Directive.

Finland's asylum system will be made more efficient and its quality improved. Rejected asylum applicants will return or will be returned to their countries of origin as soon as possible. The principle of non-refoulement will be complied with. The Government will ensure that the asylum process will not become a channel for job seeking and labour immigration.

The system of representatives for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers will be reformed. The role of the representative as the guardian of the child will be clarified.

Finland's annual refugee quota will be 500 persons. The Government will assess the allocation of the quota, including for cultural and ethnic groups persecuted in their country and for persons in a particularly vulnerable position in camps.

The Government will reform the Aliens Act to make it a clear package. The aim is to create a balanced whole: entry, stay or residence in the country, follow-up monitoring of permits and removal from the country. The overhaul will be carried out in phases. During the government term, the residence permit system of the Aliens Act, including conditions for permanent residence permits and family reunification, will be reformed and clarified. During the government term, the provisions on international protection and entry bans will be reformed in the same first phase of the overhaul.

However, during the 2024 spring session at the latest, the Government will submit to Parliament at least the following proposals for amending the Aliens Act:

- The Government will make international protection temporary in nature, and the length of international protection permits will be shortened to the minimum allowed by EU law, i.e. three years for a permit based on granted asylum and one year for a permit based on subsidiary protection. The extension of permits will require an assessment of the need to continue international protection.
- If a person commits a serious offence in Finland that endangers public order and security or if the person endangers national security, their international protection status will be withdrawn, their residence permit based on that status will be withdrawn and an entry ban will be imposed on them. The principle of non-refoulement will not be violated. It will be made possible to withdraw a residence permit from an alien staying outside Finland and to impose an entry ban due to a person being a danger to public order and security or national security without hearing the person in Finland.
- The Government will reform the regulation of the evasion of provisions on entry. The aim is to more effectively prevent the evasion of provisions on entry more effectively.
- The provisions of the Aliens Act on the verification of identity will be clarified. The aim is to make the verification of identity more binding and reliable.
- The Government will introduce a national border procedure with an approach that fully exploits the scope of the Qualification Directive as required by the situation. An accelerated asylum procedure will be introduced in situations permitted by the Asylum Procedures Directive.

In addition, the partial reform will implement at least the following changes with regard to international protection:

- Protection status will be withdrawn once the need for protection ends or if a person, when travelling on holiday to their country of origin, avails themselves of the protection of that country. Obstacles to the exchange of information between the authorities will be removed and an efficient supervision model will be created.
- The conditions for submitting subsequent applications will be tightened and unfounded subsequent applications will be prevented.
- The processing of asylum applications will be made more efficient, which will save resources in reception activities and requests for review. The practice of going over the asylum interview record with the asylum seeker will be abolished in a way that ensures legal protection and that pays special attention to special groups. This will save resources for the asylum interview.

The target for processing times of applications will be shortened to no more than six months. The quality of the procedure and legal protection will be ensured. The focus of the asylum process will be shifted to the asylum interview. The grounds presented during the asylum interview will be given more weight in the procedure. The consideration of the admissibility criteria for applications will be specified and made more efficient.

At the same time, the partial reform of the Aliens Act will amend the provisions on entry bans.

The Government will reform the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings. Reception services will be made more efficient by utilising the scope of the Reception Conditions Directive and the best practices of other EU Member States.

Rejected asylum applicants will be prevented from switching to a work-related immigration procedure. It will be possible to remove a person who has been refused asylum from the country even if they have obtained a job during the asylum process.

The Government will implement a set of measures related to voluntary return and departure including at least the following:

- The Government will introduce effective return counselling, starting at the asylum interview. The amount of the assistance for voluntary return will be raised to the same level as in reference countries. The assistance will be staggered so that it will encourage people to leave the country as quickly as possible and refrain from requesting a review of their asylum decision.
- To enforce returns, the Government will enhance cooperation between the police, the Finnish Immigration Service and other relevant authorities and remove obstacles to the exchange of information.
- The Government will expand the use of the obligation to report and the residence obligation to secure the enforcement of decisions to remove a person from the country.
- The Government will examine and introduce efficient and appropriate precautionary measures within the limits of the EU asylum directives.
- The Government will ensure, with respect for the principle of non-refoulement, that persons who no longer have a residence permit or right of residence will no longer be eligible for a municipality of residence in Finland.
- The Government will examine the possibilities to impose a prison sentence as a punishment for illegal stays in the country, taking into account the impacts of this on general government finances.
- The Government will explore the most effective means to prevent illegal stays in the country and undocumented migration.
- The Government will examine the possibilities to restrict the right to request a review of decisions on denial of admittance or stay and of decisions on deportation so that review may only be requested from one appellate authority.
- Deportations and denials of admittance or stay that are permitted by law will be efficiently taken into use at the appeal stage in situations where their enforcement has not been prohibited by a court decision.
- The amount of the reception allowance will be reduced to the minimum amount permitted by the Constitution and the Reception Directive.
- Reception services during the processing of a subsequent application will be limited to the minimum permitted under the Reception Directive.
- The detention of aliens on grounds of public order and security and the continuation of detention for 12 months will be enabled in place of the current six months. The possibilities to detain aliens guilty of serious offences will be expanded.

- The right of those staying or residing in the country illegally to other than urgent health and social services and to social security will be withdrawn. In other words, the legal situation prevailing before the previous parliamentary term will be restored in this respect.
- The Government will examine the possibilities to allow educational institutions to expel a student on the grounds that a final decision on denial of admittance or stay or on deportation has been issued against the student.
- The Government will examine the possibilities to return people staying or residing in Finland illegally to third countries in situations where they cannot be returned to their home countries.

Bilateral financial assistance to be provided to third countries will be made conditional upon the country readmitting their citizens who are to be returned.

The Government will amend the conditions for family reunification as follows:

- The Government will investigate the possibilities of restricting the definition of family applicable in connection with family reunification so that in all situations it would only cover the spouse and children.
- The Government will introduce an age limit of 21 years required of a sponsor in connection with spousal family reunification, while ensuring the rights of any minor children.
- With regard to minor sponsors, the Government will restore the legal situation that prevailed before the previous parliamentary term, taking into account the rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union.
- In a family reunification process initiated by a sponsor who has been granted international protection, a requirement of a two-year period of residence will be introduced to ensure the sponsor's integration, while safeguarding the effective realisation of the rights of the child.
- The Government will examine the possibilities to introduce a pre-entry language test. In the test, the spouse of a sponsor who has been granted international protection, seeking to enter the country on the basis of family ties, would have to demonstrate a certain level of language proficiency in the country of origin.
- The Government will review the income limits applicable in connection with family reunification, taking into account their impacts on the availability of labour and general government finances. The income limits will not be lowered. In future, the income limits will be determined by government decree.
- The Government will explore means to use the family reunification system to prevent marriages of convenience and forced marriages.

To promote integration, the Government will differentiate the social security system and social benefits of immigrants and permanent residents of Finland from each other, taking into account the constitutional requirements. The Government will explore the possibilities to tighten the provisions of the Act on Residence-Based Social Security in Cross-Border Situations (16/2019) to extend the required period of residence and raise the required income level.

In EU migration policy, the Government will, in a constructive manner, promote the following issues:

- Highlighting the significance of strong external borders and developing the Schengen acquis to manage migration.
- Strengthening the operating conditions for the EU's external borders and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency Frontex.
- Reducing the opportunities of external actors to instrumentalise migrants with the aim of exerting influence against the Union.
- Utilising the EU's development and trade policy and external relations to promote the conclusion of agreements on the return of third-country nationals.
- Introducing a mechanism within the EU that would, in the event of a mass influx of irregular migrants, allow temporarily suspending the processing of individual asylum applications in a situation where the sovereignty of a state is endangered by, for example, hostile measures taken by a foreign state.
- Voluntary burden-sharing at EU level. Finland also has a reserved attitude towards temporary burden-sharing operations.

Amending the conditions for permanent residence and naturalisation

The Government will tighten the requirements for permanent residence. The aim is to encourage integration and provide a view of a future in Finnish society. Finnish citizenship is not something that will be granted automatically. It will require successful integration.

The Government will amend the requirements for obtaining a permanent residence permit as follows:

- In future, it will be possible to obtain a permanent residence permit based on a six-year period of residence subject to certain requirements in addition to the current requirements. These additional requirements are sufficient language skills demonstrated in a language test, a two-year work history without recourse to unemployment security or social assistance other than for a very short period of time, and a stricter integrity requirement.

- However, a person of working age may obtain a permanent residence permit based on a four-year period of residence, if the person:
 - has a minimum annual income of EUR 40,000; or
 - has completed a Master’s degree recognised in Finland and has a two-year work history without recourse to unemployment security or social assistance other than for a very short period of time during their residence in Finland; or
 - has particularly good skills in the Finnish or Swedish language demonstrated in a language test and a three-year work history without recourse to unemployment security or social assistance other than for a very short period of time during their residence in Finland.
- A permanent residence permit cannot be granted if the person concerned does not actively help in establishing their identity. The integrity requirement will be tightened.

With respect to residence permits for long-term residents, the Government will introduce the additional requirements for integration, i.e. language skills, employment and financial resources, permitted by the relevant EU Directive in a similar manner to how these requirements are applied to national permanent residence permits.

The Government will reform the Nationality Act by tightening the requirements for naturalisation. A government proposal for amending the Act will be submitted to Parliament by the end of 2023. The Government will take the following measures:

- The required period of residence in Finland will be extended to eight years. Only residence under a residence permit will be taken into account when calculating the approved period of residence. The number of days spent abroad that are approved as part of the period of residence will be decreased.
- Passing a citizenship test and a language test will be made a requirement for naturalisation.
- The integrity requirement will be tightened. The Government will investigate the possibility of including a procedure for a national security assessment in the naturalisation process.
- An actual requirement for sufficient financial resources will be reintroduced as a requirement for naturalisation.
- Citizenship will not be granted if the person concerned does not actively help in establishing their identity.
- The Government will enable revocation of citizenship in a situation where a person has acquired citizenship by acting fraudulently, by providing false information or by concealing a relevant circumstance.

- The derogation pertaining to the period of residence of people who have been granted international protection will be removed. The Government will examine the removal of derogations applicable to stateless persons.
- The Government will shorten the required length of a sentence imposed on a person with dual citizenship for a terrorist, treason or high treason offence based on which the person will lose Finnish citizenship.
- The Government will look into the Danish approach to revoking the citizenship of a person with dual citizenship who participates in the activities of an armed terrorist group or other similar activities abroad.
- The Government will examine the possibilities of introducing the principle of reciprocity in respect of the dual citizenship system, taking into account the rights of the child and family law issues.

Streamlining and controlling labour immigration and preventing abuses

Labour immigration is very important for Finland's economic growth and the securing of services. In Finland, work-based residence permits are based on the right and obligation to work. Supervision will be increased and abuses will be prevented. Labour immigration must improve general government finances.

The Government will maintain the current system of labour market tests and strive to ensure as a matter of priority that unemployed jobseekers already in Finland become employed. In addition, the Government will supplement the labour force primarily from the EU and the EEA. Labour immigration from third countries will focus on people with higher education as well as employees in sectors that can be genuinely identified as suffering from a labour shortage.

Labour immigration is one of the measures to achieve the Government's employment target and it will complement other employment measures.

Work-based residence permits will be tied more strongly to work. This means that a holder of such permit must leave Finland if the holder's employment relationship ends and the holder has not entered into a new employment relationship within three months. The Government will enact provisions to obligate employers to notify the Finnish Immigration Service of the termination of the employment relationship of a person with a work-based residence permit. Failure to meet this obligation will be subject to sanctions. The Government will investigate and implement a more effective system for supervising permit conditions.

In order to prevent the exploitation of employees, the punishments for abuse will be made significantly more severe and supervision will be improved. The Government will implement at least the following reforms:

- We will increase the punishment for exploitation of labour by replacing the current section on extortionate work discrimination by provisions on usury in employment and aggravated usury in employment. The minimum punishment for the aggravated act will be imprisonment. Legislation will be amended so that, in addition to the punishment, the offender in the above-mentioned offences may be prohibited from pursuing a business. Corporate criminal liability will be extended to usury and aggravated usury in employment.
- We will enhance supervision by the public authorities by ensuring that the police have sufficient resources throughout the country in terms of police departments and the anti-trafficking unit and ensuring that the police have the powers to investigate and detect abuses in work-based immigration.
- We will use risk analyses to target occupational safety and health inspections at sectors where the need for protection is greatest. Adequate interpreting services or tools will be guaranteed for inspectors.
- The Government will improve opportunities for cooperation between the public authorities, for example, by ensuring that the public authorities have the right to obtain and provide information on their own initiative. Necessary legislative and other measures will be launched to improve the exchange of information between the public authorities in order to enhance the prevention of exploitation and to inform the competent authorities of abuses.
- The Government will crack down on opportunities to disguise employment relationships as business activities. This will be done by creating a registration obligation for invoicing service companies as well as an obligation for them to identify their customers using strong identification technology when the customers register for the service.
- We will step up measures to combat human trafficking and ensure the exchange of information between public authorities. Human trafficking will be prevented in a cross-administrative and comprehensive way. Labour exploitation related to immigration will be combated and support services for the victims of crime will be secured.

The income limit for a residence permit for an employed person will be raised to the sector-specific minimum of the collective agreement, however, to no less than EUR 1,600 per month. The Government will commission a study within a short time frame to examine the raising of income limits for residence permits, taking into account the effects on the availability of labour and general government finances.

Legislation will be amended so that the income limits will be decided by government decree in future.

Identification at embassies will be monitored and, if necessary, measures will be taken to prevent misuse.

The Finnish Immigration Service will increase its use of semi-automation. The Government will explore enacting a law on automation in immigration to enable automated decision-making in cases where the permit does not require individual consideration.

We will allow people with a work-based residence permit to work in in other jobs in the same sector and in sectors that can be genuinely identified as suffering from a labour shortage.

The Government will strive to process work-based residence permits within a maximum of one month. The Government will strive to process such permits for professionals earning more than EUR 4,000 per month within a maximum of one week.

The Government will introduce a target country model for labour migration. The aim is to focus recruitment efforts on specific groups of experts in the target countries. The target countries are India, the Philippines, Brazil and Vietnam. The effects of the target country model on general government finances will be monitored.

The Government will ensure that education-based immigration is controlled. With respect to education-based residence permits, a practice will be adopted in which a person's permit will be revoked if they resort to Finnish social assistance. Kela will be obligated, upon request and on its own initiative, to provide information on such matters to the Finnish Immigration Service, taking into account data protection legislation. The possibilities of utilising register data of other public authorities in ex-post monitoring will be investigated.

Upon application, a permanent residence permit will be issued to those who have completed a master's degree in Finland and who have sufficient knowledge of Finnish or Swedish. The applicant must also meet the general conditions for the issuance of a residence permit under the Aliens Act.

Based on an assessment by the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service, residence permits for students and researchers will be examined and restricted in sectors critical to security, such as dual-use technologies.

Integration in Finland through work

Integration policy will be based on language learning, work, familiarisation with Finnish society and compliance with its rules. Finland is an open society that provides help and encouragement for getting started in a new society.

The Government will ensure that there are opportunities for integration by increasing immigrants' own responsibility for integration and by introducing obligations into the system. The conditions for obtaining a permanent residence permit will be changed to encourage integration.

Finland is determined to combat the emergence of parallel societies.

The Government will reform the integration system to encourage integration. Amendments will be made to the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (hereinafter, the Integration Act) and the integration system to shift the focus of the system from an emphasis on the rights of immigrants to an emphasis on their own obligations and responsibilities. The Government will implement at least the following reforms:

- The Government will implement the replacement of social assistance and labour market support with integration support for immigrants, which will include an incentive and an obligation to integrate.
- We will promote the flexible availability of language training included in integration services, including at workplaces.
- The Government will raise the participation rate of children with an immigrant background in early childhood education and care, as this will support the integration and language learning of the entire family. We will ensure that the parents who have children under school age and who receive social assistance are directed to the labour market.
- The Government will step up the use of reductions of social assistance and labour market support as a sanction if an immigrant fails to comply with their integration plan, participate in language training or pass the final test within the prescribed time limit.
- The exchange of information on support granted by Kela to prevent misuse will be improved. The supervision carried out by Kela will be made more robust to detect misuse.
- The Government will ensure that obligations concerning jobseeking and acceptance of work enter into force immediately after a person receives a residence permit and that these obligations are not suspended for the duration of services provided during the integration period.

- The Government will ensure that integration is possible in both national languages. The aim is for about 5–10 per cent of people to integrate in Swedish. The public authorities must provide clearer information on the possibility to integrate in Swedish. Immigrants must be able to choose the language in which they will integrate. Efforts to seek the placement of quota refugees in Swedish-speaking municipalities will be improved.
- We will examine limiting the long-term right to interpretation services to three years, except in special cases, such as for persons with disabilities.
- The Government will shorten the payment period for compensation paid to municipalities and wellbeing services counties for promoting integration of different types of integration clients from three to two years and from four to three years.
- In the new Integration Act, we will cancel additional tasks to be assigned to municipalities, such as assistance with shopping.
- The Government will explore ways to amend the Integration Act so that only one integration plan will be drawn up. For example, the practice of carrying out a separate initial assessment will be discontinued.
- The Government will implement a reform of integration services, which will make the system more efficient and will bring funding under a single umbrella.
- Shorten the duration of integration support. The funding granted to organisers of integration training will be made partly performance-based.
- The Government will formulate clear objectives and testing for preparatory education for primary and lower secondary education, the completion of which will be a prerequisite for transitioning into general teaching. The funding for preparatory education will be extended to a maximum of two years.
- We will implement the introduction of the Norwegian model so that the right to child home care allowance will begin after several years of residence.
- We will lower the Integration Act's age limit for receiving after-care in adulthood to the same level as in child welfare after-care.
- Employment, level of education and the use of social benefits will be used as indicators of integration.
- The Government will recognise and acknowledge the key role of the third sector in the diverse field of integration measures.

Honour-based violence will be identified and combated. Awareness of honour-based violence will be raised and the penalties related to honour-based violence will be increased.

The capability of the public authorities to identify female genital mutilation as a phenomenon and exchange information will be improved. The Government will step up measures to prevent female genital mutilation.