

The Finnish Workday is the Starting Point

**The Finns Party's Platform
Municipal Elections, 2017**



Daring to Speak

Democracy sometimes requires that one is outspoken - thus the Finns Party encourages people to stand up to their principles and speak their mind. The party doesn't hide behind organizations, artificial structures or mere rhetoric - rather, the Finns Party gets straight to work on the issues people care about.

Even though the operation of the municipalities is undergoing reform and development, the future still sees them as being one of the prime actors in people's daily lives. Municipalities will continue to make significant decisions with respect to many areas such as urban planning, industrial development, and educational facilities for adults, young people and children. They are extremely important in the matters of social affairs and health issues - with attention to care, promotion and prevention.

The Finns Party believes that the most important function of the government is to promote the safety and security of its citizens and their well-being.

Safety and security are basic human needs and fundamental rights. The municipality is a key player here as, after all, it is a community of its residents and workers. The Finns Party wants the municipalities to continue to serve citizens with the principles of Finland's welfare society but the party is sincerely anxious about the municipalities' capability to successfully function with these responsibilities.

To have the ability to maintain the Finnish citizen's basic rights and needs - we must scale down the task of improving the world and start to prioritize what we are doing. We have to look at the picture realistically - resources are, indeed, limited.

The departure point for considering the operation of the municipality is its very location and circumstances - the fact that it is specific as to its outlook and objectives - the fact that it is, indeed, "local." People can differ from each other significantly - one person likes the rumble of a tram - to another, it's a horror. This is then, a suitable arena for the municipal democracy - where the community can affect its surroundings. The best consultant for what an individual wants and cares about is the individual themselves. One cannot vote incorrectly - no matter what someone else tells one.

Let's Build - Not Just Explain

There should be more support for rational municipal housing. Zoning must be flexible and allow for varied housing in growth centres and their nearby areas. In more rural parts of the country, construction must be made easier and serve the needs of the region and the inhabitants.

The Greater Helsinki metropolitan region has a serious shortage of affordable housing - and this has a significant effect on the labour market.

Many large construction companies make no attempt to meet the demands of the biggest part of the market - that for reasonably-priced housing. They prefer to go after the larger profits and the subsequent gain in market-value. This situation can be evidenced by the fact that up to 800,000 people are getting housing subsidies - in even over-priced dwellings. The ordinary person finds themselves, too often, in the role of the victim in this political and economic vicious circle.

Additional pressure on the housing shortage and the resulting price development is caused by the recent flood of migrants. We see the consequence in the availability and pricing of free market rental housing. The situation is unsustainable.

At the same time, the concentration of immigration to certain residential areas has been considerable - when comparing Finland with many other countries. The average income consequently falls - and social problems increase. The result is an increased load on educational, health and social services.

Housing accommodations should be aimed at low-income sectors of the population - but it should also be recognized that Finland cannot take more immigrants. We must handle first things first - and with that, there is already plenty to do.

It's been found that there is a serious problem of mould in a number of municipalities - an issue with public health implications. These affected municipalities can independently determine what steps should be taken regarding building permits and supervision - and determine when and how to halt any home construction.

The quality of construction must receive special attention where children are concerned. This continuous problem of mould formation must be stopped - new construction must be properly documented and access to all parts of the building must be available and known. Thereby, if any problems occur in the future, correction will be quicker and simpler. Construction and repair personnel must be competent and comprehensive.

- Forward-looking land-use planning can assure that municipalities endure - and there is not a question of the last one to leave should turn out the lights.

- Local residents must be consulted regarding conservation projects. For example, protection of forests should be based on local people's views - not dictated by third parties.

- Control of mould formation - indoor air improvement

Rational Land-Use and Successful Planning

Land-use planning practices should be reformed so that local residents are closer to the decisions that affect their own environment - and not subject to a faceless bureaucracy that decides behind closed doors. This decision process must be open and transparent so that citizens have a real opportunity to influence their own surroundings.

Municipal planning must respect local conditions and circumstances - such as residents' means of livelihood and recreational possibilities. The different premises for land-use for different municipalities must be more clearly recognized. The effect of zoning on industrial policy and employment creation is to be more thoroughly understood.

The direction of urban development must be in the direction of fulfilling the needs of citizens. The aim is to provide safe, secure, harmonious and pleasurable surroundings. An urban area means people are living in fairly close proximity - but the total environment must be taken into account: most Finns appreciate pure nature to be within reach of their homes.

Natural, green areas are known to be vital to both the physical and mental health of people - research has shown them to have an important effect on reducing the problems of stress. Towns should not 'invade' the forests and reducing green areas in urban areas should be the last alternative.

- *People must be able to find parking near their homes. At the same time, wise planning can reduce parking restrictions so as not to cause increase in housing prices.*
- *Zoning considerations for land bordering water-areas should not be made that are too restrictive.*

Farms and Food

The maintenance of profitable small-scale 'family' farming is necessary throughout the entire country. The restructuring and the increased intensiveness of the food industry has significantly reduced the number of workplaces - but the importance has not diminished as Finns still want clean agricultural products from Finland. The availability of healthy, nutritional food is something that will not be compromised by Finns.

This situation results in having Finnish products come to market at their appropriate price level and not just calculated according to some latest trend of city-dwellers. These should be produced in a sustainable and natural way that results in quality Finnish food.

Consumers must be properly informed of the origin of their food and the 'what and where' aspects of the production methods used.

The 'co-operative model' works well for small-scale producers of local food production. It gives an excellent possibility for small entrepreneurs to network - especially when the production and processing requirements of food processors are considered. Co-operatives allow for the operations to be simplified and also give the opportunity for the rationalisation of employment management. New regulations give significant possibilities for local food product purchasing at local, municipal levels.

Pure and clean Finnish food products - and treasures of the Finnish forest - open important doors for international trade and increased tourism. The municipalities are in the perfect place to help the Finnish countryside - with its vast number of forests and lakes - achieve increasing economic success.

Agriculture - as an economic area and profession - has always been multi-functional and multi-talented. Beyond the original agricultural production, other associated skills, services and products are developed which increase the value of the entire sector. Start-up and small-scale associated activities associated with farming - regardless of their 'operating term' - should be taxed as part of the 'farm business and farm taxing category.'

The basic governmental municipal services should promote employment opportunities for the local citizens. Also the municipalities' own economic activity policies have a key role in creating new employment and narrowing any disadvantageous regional differences.

- *The existence and maintenance of the 'family farm' provides the entire nation with the security of a supply of foodstuffs - a Finnish guarantee of safety.*

- *Food is an indispensable commodity that should not be subject to compromise. It should be Finnish, safe and healthy local food.*

Moving forward

A properly functional transportation system between workplaces and homes is of paramount importance. The road conditions must improve. 'Straight roads' lead to a healthy economy - there is more to a prosperous Finland than a data network.

Provincial boundary lines are causing irrational situations that must be handled. Bidding competitions can go a long way in solving the problems.

Public transport is a viable possibility but must operate in an environmental-friendly way and in an economically rational and balanced manner. We support the municipalities in developing specific transportation plans.

Cycling is an enjoyable - and healthy - activity. But commuter cycling is impractical for many due to the sparse population densities in much of Finland. Finland should not do its transportation planning based on some ideological bases of cycling or other form of ecotourism.

- Highway maintenance programs should begin before it is too late.

- Government funds for road repair should be more balanced among the municipalities.

Health ranks higher than wind energy

The Finns Party is the only party that recognizes the need to study the effect on people's health of generating energy from wind.

The wind power industry has possible public health consequences because of suspected negative health effects from infrasonic waves emanating from the turbines. There is also the problem of possibly including bogus 'green' values as well as some questioning of there being some political/economic connections.

The Finns Party is participating in one of the first research projects concerned with the relationship between wind energy production and health. It's said it's 'better to be safe than sorry' - at this stage, no more building permits should be granted for wind turbines until results of the study are known - the health of citizens has priority.

- The health of the Finnish nation always takes precedence over 'improving the world'

- The public health consequences of wind energy production must be made clear with health considerations given priority.

Good schools "don't grow on trees"

The school situation is not going well in a number of ways. Scoring results for boys have been decreasing - inequality among schools is growing - the elimination of many village and smaller settlements is causing significant problems. The distance to rural schools is lengthening - parents in urban areas are selecting better schools increasing the inequality factor - and some in the teaching profession are having problems due to this increasing burden. Digitalisation and the latest learning devices cannot save the day.

The school system needs rehabilitation - and in many cases, it's necessary for the actual school buildings. The Finns Party supports the preservation of local schools - a goal that can be promoted and acted on by the municipal government. This desire is in accord with the support of other local services for the community.

Having schools that are nearby assures continuity, security and vitality of the locality - as well as having suitable class sizes for quality teaching. A school is at the heart of

community life - and traditionally offers all kinds of services such as adult education courses, afternoon clubs for young people, extra-curricular sports opportunities.

A school attracts as a magnet as well as radiating outward - a wise investment. At the same time, if a school is overflowing with immigrants, it creates a situation that will encourage parents, who have the means, to move away. These situations, with specially distributed pupils, are not corrected with flowery phrases such as 'multiculturalism.'

The highest level of responsibility for the welfare and upbringing of children remains with the parents. Everything begins in the home.

The Finns Party believes that the schools should promote and preserve Finnish culture and values and emphasize that these are importantly Finnish. The traditional Finnish hymn 'Summer Song' will continue to be sung!

Language teaching and 'school readiness' teaching should be separately arranged for migrant children and not integrated into the regular school agenda - this will assure that the education of the other children will not be affected.

Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking schools could be using the same buildings. The Finns Party supports the idea for municipalities to participate in the trial period of discontinuing the mandatory teaching of Swedish.

The formation of small, intensive learning groups as well as the possibility of having groups with different levels of achievement should again be instituted

An immediate effort must be made to prevent bullying in the schools - the Finns Party supports the changing of schools but it should be the bully that changes schools and not those who have been bullied. A requirement for improving effective investigation of bullying incidents is the improved flow of information among the officials - this flow should be seamless. The grade school principals should have the right to order periods of detention.

Toilets should continue to be for 'boys' and 'girls' - it's a human right. Boys are boys and girls are girls. The Finns Party is critical of some ideological and feminist ideas. The initial intention may be good but there is the danger of the 'baby being thrown out with the bathwater.'

- A properly functional school attracts as a magnet as well as radiating outwards

- We must have both village schools and those that are 'nearby' - meaning that the idea of community is maintained.

- Small, intensive learning groups as well as different learning achievement groups should again be formed.

Children born in a happy municipality

A functionally operating day-care system should not only offer care and proper pedagogy but also consider some aspects of the parents' work. Nevertheless, day-care cannot replace parents - it is they who are mainly responsible for the children's welfare and development. The possibility for parents to handle day-care in the home environment and have independent authority should not be forgotten.

There should be possibilities for municipalities to offer benefits to young families to attract them to move to those municipalities and thereby grow the population and economy.

These 'little people' are the future workers, policy makers, and consumers. The most sensible way to influence the future demography and dependence ratio is to encourage a higher birth rate in Finland. It is the children that will be the future engine keeping the wheels of the welfare society turning.

The basic conditions and values of life are created in early childhood - if not earlier. 'Good' gives birth to 'good' - all along the way. A wise municipal policy can be a very important factor in bringing about healthy families that have a secure and predictable foundation.

- Patriotism, community, security - respected values.

Age is not only a number

The elderly have an important place in Finnish society. The aged are not economic burdens which are just passed on - but rather deserving of respect and valued as human beings. Needed care must be sufficient and humane - and these people should not just be dismissed as somehow 'disabled.' Care centres are to be where needed and with the proper number of attendants - municipalities are to decide on a case-by-case basis with regard to different institutions together with provision of sufficient number of nurses and care staff.

The rights of the elderly are to be raised to a political decision level and considered from social, economic and mental health standpoints.

The Finns Party, as with other issues, believes in local attention for matters regarding the aged. The role of family caregivers can be improved - as the Finns Party has shown in its role in the government. The municipal decision-makers have the responsibility and obligation to ensure that the matter of caregivers is properly handled.

Finland has over 22,000 war veterans from the years 1939-45 - their average age is a rather amazing 92 years of age. These veterans and their spouses from the Finnish women's auxiliary, Lotta, are to be provided with individual and flexible care and service needs. The municipalities are to provide advisers who are to be knowledgeable about veteran affairs. The Finns Party also encourages municipalities to make cultural and sporting activities and events available without charge to the veterans.

Finland has a huge debt to these veterans. In this 100th anniversary year of Finnish independence, there is a particular need for Finns to stop and think about what Finland's well-being and security is based on and to promote and support veterans' issues whenever possible.

- Children are to have safe journeys from home to school - whether they live in urban or rural areas.

- Grade school education quality at alarmingly low level in need of rapid improvement

- Girls and boys toilets not to undergo ideological changes

- Offers for municipal purchases of goods or services to be bid for competitively

- Contracts are to be awarded with a focus on sourcing in Finland and locally, where possible

- A good citizen has responsibility for themselves, their loved ones and their community

- Municipalities that have significant decision-making power

- *Good municipal policy does not require rocket science*
- *If a politician does not speak properly to their constituents, they can be replaced*
- *Finland can be a habitable country, if so desired*
- *Energy efficient lighting solutions - not dark streets.*
- *Voluntary municipal mergers are possible, but they must be confirmed by local referendums*

The importance of preventing social exclusion

There are many reasons for some persons to be pushed out of society because of being thought less of. Some of these reasons would be lack of education, unemployment, financial difficulties, homelessness, mental health problems and substance abuse. These situations affect and concern all people but for those that are marginalized, it is a real tragedy. To reduce the matter to economic terms, the societal cost of just one life in these circumstances is over one million euros.

To combat this problem requires a strong political will and setting appropriate priorities. If Finland was able to organize, in one night, reception and care for the refugees, it should be possible to get some speedy help for the homeless, long unemployed and troubled youth. The well-being of the Finnish society comes before everything else.

The present problem of boys having difficulties with their learning experiences in school and the oft-found social exclusion among young men must get attention. As it stands now, military service is often the last resort to get these young men back into the society and economy. There could be some kind of co-operation involving the municipalities, opportunities for youth employment and the military conscription.

The attempt to help these people with hardships should not be making things worse by bouncing them around - bureaucratically - from one agency or authority to another. There are many good ways to approach these problems of social exclusion but they need to be improved and strengthened at the operational level.

Studies show that as many as twenty percent of Finns - across all age groups - perceive of themselves as being lonely. Municipalities need to pay particular attention to this situation and institute preventive and corrective measures - as well as increasing participation themselves. Outside help from other public and private sectors should also be engaged when suitable.

All people are interested and concerned for their loved ones - and, often, their neighbours - they can do much to affect the problem of loneliness and add to the vitality of the community. Everyone likes to be met with a smile - and it costs nothing.

- *The Finns Party recognizes the importance of strengthening the work of youth councils, village and town councils and committees, and councils for the elderly and disabled.*
- *The support of well-being vouchers for the municipalities*
- *The confirmation that neglect of the elderly at home is prohibited. The Finnish society collapses without carers.*

Holding on to what's good and secure

Finland's internal security is based on the 'feelings of community,' the acceptance of its political system, democratic decision-making and appropriate consideration for minorities.

Crime in public places in Finland is on the rise. For example, sexual offences have increased significantly - and the share of these involving the recent flow of immigrants is indisputable. These developments deeply concern the Finns Party.

An increase of available resources and reform at the government level are needed but the citizens themselves must accept the responsibility to support and promote a safe community in their own surroundings. Parents must also take more responsibility for their children.

The world has indeed changed but not much that the normal rules and principles of human behaviour and interaction are not in effect. It is not a question of nostalgia or being backward but rather that certain values and behaviour are good and should be maintained.

Immigrants and new citizens must accept the core values of Finnish and Western society and live their lives in accordance with them. "Integration," first and foremost, is an accommodation and adjustment to - and acceptance of - the Finnish society. It should not be emphasizing or intensifying the differences. In the last analysis, the immigrant is ultimately responsible for their adaptation to the Finnish society.

Resources allocated at the municipal level will support these objectives. Improper immigration policies can have far-reaching, deleterious effects and we can see this elsewhere - as in Sweden, for example.

The Finns Party desires a safe and secure Finland - now and in the future. Finland should not relinquish what we have that is good. Finns should be proud of their country, their culture and what being Finnish means!

- *Removal of extra municipal 'bonuses' to immigrants*
- *Area disparities with regard to immigration to be addressed*
- *Reception of immigrants should be made voluntarily by municipalities*

Municipal contracts: Domestic and local

The value of public procurement in Finland comes to over 35 billion Euros annually. Small and medium sized companies should have an equal opportunity to make offers to the municipalities - but the new procurement legislation does not take this into account. The only deciding factor is price - no consideration should be given to the effect on quality, the impact on employment, the country of origin or if the service or product can be sourced locally.

The Finns Party believes these projects and investments - prior to decisions - should be subject to a comprehensive analysis so as to determine their total effect. The analysis should look at the long-term economic, social and environmental effects as well as effects on neighbouring areas. The question of Finnish origin - be they products or services - is always significant in the eyes of the Finns Party.

Furtherance of employment can be used as a direct criterion as the project may provide opportunities for the long-term unemployed, the elderly, youth and/or those mentally or

physically disabled. For businesses, this approach can also be thought of in terms of brand-image as the business is fulfilling a portion of social responsibility. The new legislation does obligate large public projects to be possibly dissected into smaller ones.

It may well be that several criteria result in higher costs but when looked as a whole - and all benefits and savings considered - the total may show the alternative to be the best decision.

The Finns Party calls for the creation of a comprehensive procurement strategy for all municipalities. It should be documented what issues are particularly important and how tax money will be spent for various projects and products.

Municipalities serve more than two million meals a day. If a municipality puts the emphasis on local food production and local products - as well as sustainable methods, the consequences are significant considering employment, food safety, assurance of supply, as well as the important factor of attitude. The provision of local food can become an important part of the municipal economic picture.

For a chicken to travel 9,000 kilometres to reach the mouths of children in Finland hardly makes sense to any point of view. People can and should travel to see what the world is all about - but let the chicken stay in its own country.

- The Finns Party supports citizens' access to sufficient and quality services throughout Finland

- The taxpayer's perspective must be taken into account more strongly to municipal construction of buildings, administration of real estate and maintenance of physical property

- Municipal infrastructure (and its physical condition) must be subject to more thinking in terms of 'life-cycle' and potential co-operation

"Quality of life" services

Municipalities support many daily physical activities. They are involved with the construction and maintenance of pedestrian and bicycle paths, play and family parks, etc. The municipalities are instrumental in co-operating with 'low-threshold' sports - and other recreational clubs.

Encouragement must be given to a variety of small-scale organizations, recreational activities, hobby clubs, etc. Libraries and adult education centres need investments - they serve as multi-purpose gathering places for many worthwhile groups and leisure and cultural activities.

Tax funds spent for leisure activities and cultural services help to ease regional disparities and lessen the existence of inequality - they also promote the idea of self-responsibility as well as self-help and self-initiative attitudes. Middle-income taxpayers can also feel they are getting their money's worth.

The involvement of municipalities with leisure-time activities has the effect also of increasing a community spirit - decreases feelings of loneliness and lets the different ages and types of residents meet each other. These various services have a humane basis and are a very cost-effective 'medicine' against many unfortunate situations.

- "Quality of life" services for local citizens

- *Swimming pool entrance for seniors without charge*

The first responsibility is to Finns

The Finns Party does not accept that people can reside in Finland illegally - never mind that these people are getting health and social care as well as extra and wider services. The asylum seekers are also getting support for transport and leisure activities - this situation should be reviewed.

The Finnish welfare-state should not be acting as a magnet for immigration - the system should be prioritising Finns for receiving education and medical care and treatment services. The repercussion of the immigration flow on the welfare-system and its effect on the Finnish population must be brought under control.

In 2015, Finland received the fourth largest number of asylum seekers of all the European Union countries. Incoming amounts are still beyond sustainable levels. World crises and their subsequent deprivations do not solve anything. The explosive migration and continuing growth of costs are known at all political levels.

Prior to the placement of asylum seekers or establishing new reception centres, the consent of the municipality must be sought. There can be municipal referendums on this issue. In any case, any influx of refugees should be voluntary and the total cost must be looked at carefully. Transferring funds from one pocket to another is not any successful immigration policy - not even when some funds go to temporarily support a municipality's employment statistic.

Besides monetary issues, one should be allowed to speak about other immigration issues that are related to different cultures and some people's concern on other matters - without those bringing up these things as racists and idiots.

People first - then reform

Social and health care reform is necessary. It's clear that any future system must be cost-effective as the population is aging and the proportion of payers to receivers is decreasing.

The Finns Party warmly supports the Finnish basic health care, specialized hospitals and social care integration into a functional unified operation. However, these reforms will not come without organizational and geopolitical costs - regardless of any political phraseology.

A primary requisite is that local residents must have these health and social services available and accessible no matter where they live in Finland. No one should be compelled to move because services are no longer available.

Freedom of choice is the keystone of the future system but the Finns Party does not think it is the 'be-all and end-all' of the system. 'Freedom of choice' should be operational for the individual - not with the wish of the enterprise - be it public or private. For example, a system of vouchers can be used to support unique and lasting solutions that help to facilitate the daily lives of people. The system must be built on a sustainable basis so that social justice is also realized - for example, customer payments for institutional services.

The chain of service must specifically function in practice - an individual must get service and care in the right place and sufficiently quickly. Health and social services must be developed to be able to work in a comprehensive manner with multi-professionals. There exist good business models where there are a number of different professions but the boundaries do not hinder inter-professional interaction.

The Finns Party does not accept centralisation if it prevents necessary access to a service. For example, if a trip for delivery of a baby causes an extended delay it can have a tragic result - this kind of situation cannot be accepted.

The Finns Party is opposed to opening up health care services to large 'for profit' corporations. Instead, the Finns Party consider it important for small and medium-sized enterprises to participate as well as the 'third sector' (voluntary groups and organizations) to have an increasingly stronger role. This should result in a robust public sector - supported by private enterprise and organizations.

The municipalities can support its citizens with the promotion and maintenance of health and well-being regardless of who is organizing the social and health services. The new municipal system supports this specifically. The Finns Party believes in preventive measures and early intervention - and not to wait so long that sickness and social problems require more serious treatment and care.

Of course, pro-active care and focusing on health promotion will be more humane and less expensive. This model also encourages the individual to take responsibility for their own well-being. It also gives a strong role to the municipalities to be an actor in this effort to involve the person themselves in their own 'care.'

It's estimated that specific health services affect only one-tenth of a person's actual well-being whereas the importance of the way one lives counts for four times as much. Preventing these 'way of living' diseases can provide a better and happier life - and, of course, save a lot of expenses.

Taking responsibility for one's own life also lessens the exposure to a pervasive bureaucracy - which is also telling one how and when to do something.

The Finns Party encourages local authorities to set up 'welfare boards' that would act in an advisory basis for citizens as well as serving as intermediaries with other services and authorities.

Each municipality needs to have sufficient personnel to provide the needed services. The system must have a status as well as co-ordination responsibility and competence. The well-being of the citizens of the municipality must be realized at all levels and in all aspects of the reform.

- When the social and health service reform is operational - the municipality becomes the community's centre point of finding out how to manage

- Customer payments - more justice

- The Finns Party has tamed the reform. The municipality is a partner in the reform. The municipality is closest to the citizens

- A move to action. That is the Finnish way!

The Finnish nature is unique

Finns appreciate the environment and the clean nature. The Finns Party support rational consideration of environmental concerns in all policy making. Local communities, local services, local food - and other themes in the party platform - all, in one way or another, contribute to a sustainable environment and a good life.

The Finns Party is opposed to situations where people and their well-being ignore their relationship with the environment and its requirements. Nevertheless, excessive financial burdens, 'green-washing,' and other apparent environmental aspects must be more carefully scrutinized. The Finns Party supports the dismantling the overbearing paternalism's excessive bureaucracy.

The Finns Party successfully mitigated the government's proposed wastewater regulation which, in its original form, would have made significant demands on many rural residences. Municipal officials are also obligated to follow new guidelines and can release property owners from linking to sewers if the costs are unreasonable.

An overwhelming number of Finns - 90 percent - have the hope that farm animals will be treated better in the future. The Finns Party strongly supports the stricter regulation of what has become known as 'religious slaughtering' of animals with the aim of preventing torture. Animal rights should be going forward - not backward.