

## Human Rights Council - 36<sup>th</sup> session

### Item 6 – Adoption of the report on the UPR of Finland

#### Oral statement

Mr. President,

FIDH and its member organization the Finnish League for Human Rights (FLHR) welcome the State's commitment to the UPR and the acceptance of the majority of the 153 recommendations Finland received during the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of UPR.

However, our organisations deeply regret the State's non-acceptance of 27 recommendations. The number of non-accepted recommendations has risen dramatically from previous cycle.

Among the recommendations that the Finnish government refused to accept, we are particularly concerned by the State's stated intention (?) to not implement those requesting the amendment of legislation related to transgender people and those calling for the ratification of human rights conventions.

Our organisations urge the State to fully protect the rights of transgender people in Finland and urgently amend the legislation regarding transgender and intersex persons in accordance with the UPR recommendations, namely remove the sterility requirement as a precondition for legal gender recognition. In its recent judgment (ECtHR 121 (2017)), the European Court of Human Rights has found that the sterilisation requirement in legal gender recognition violates human rights.

The government also refused to accept recommendations that called for ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples No. 169 of the ILO.

We express disappointment at the refusal to accept these recommendations. Ratification of these instruments is particularly important as the Finnish government has been hesitant to promote the rights of the Sami and to solve land-rights issues in Northern Finland. Outside monitoring and pressure are needed in order to ensure free, prior and informed consent of the Sami to projects and plans that may affect them. The same is true for migration issues.

We welcome the acceptance of recommendations relating to human rights education. We are concerned, however, by the lack of resources to systematically train and support teachers. Human rights need to be included as compulsory into teachers' study programmes.

Finland received a number of recommendations to strengthen its efforts to fight discrimination. We feel that the State's response to these recommendations does not take into account the structural nature of discrimination.

The State should set out concretely how, and in what timeframe, recommendations will be

implemented and we look forward to engaging with the State in this regard.

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