





FINLAND – A CONTRIBUTOR AT INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

Finland is a constructive, pragmatic and valued actor
and contributor in international cooperation.



AT INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, FINLAND PROMOTES THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIC PRIOTITIES:

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1. Maintaining security in the neighbouring areas and Europe as a whole
2. Strengthening the EU's external relations (internal coherence and operational capacity)
3. Management of globalisation and strengthening of the multilateral system
4. Promotion of external economic relations, free trade and poverty reduction
5. Promotion of sustainable development, human rights and comprehensive security



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A HISTORY OF PROMOTING HARMONY



Continuity and consensus have been the strengths of Finnish foreign policy. From the perspective of Finland's current international position, membership of the European Union (1995) has been the country's key decision so far. Finland promotes the development of the European Union as a financial, political and security organisation, and advocates an EU that speaks with one voice on all key global political issues. Finland has been a strong supporter of EU enlargement.

Finland is a proponent of an international system based on multilateralism, particularly the development of the United Nations' capacity. Finland became a member of the UN in 1955 and has been an active contributor since then: participating in peacekeeping, in the development of public international law, in multilateral disarmament negotiations and in multilateral development cooperation, among other issues. Finland has twice been a member of the Security Council of the United Nations (1969–1970 and 1989–1990).



Other important forums for Finland have been and are the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Within this framework, Finland operates in order to sustain and strengthen its international principles and standards.

Development policy is an integral part of Finland's foreign and security policy. Finland's development policy is human rights-based and its primary objective is to eradicate extreme poverty and ensure a decent life for all. Its cross-cutting objectives are: gender equality, climate sustainability and the reduction of inequality. Finland also supports trading capacity and the development of the private sector in developing countries. Many prominent Finnish non-governmental organisations, such as President Martti Ahtisaari's Crisis Management Initiative, make major contributions at international level.



Because Finland's relatively small domestic market offers limited possibilities for economic success, Finland has long been in favour of and embraced free trade. Support for both business life and trade unions is widespread in this consensus-based, stable environment. Membership of EFTA (the European Free Trade Association) was a key step, which was succeeded by a free trade agreement with the EEC (European Economic Community) in 1973.

Finland's trade policy interests are attended to as part of the EU's Common Commercial Policy. The Commission plays a high-profile role in speaking on behalf of the EU in arenas such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Commission must consult the Member States regularly, allowing Finland and other Member States to proactively influence the content of trade policy.



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Finally and most importantly, Finland has engaged in **Nordic cooperation** for more than 60 years, within the framework of the Nordic Council which was established in 1952. Such cooperation has developed, gone through structural changes and intensified over the years. Before becoming an autonomous part of Russia between 1808–1917, Finland was an integral part of Sweden for over 600 years – Nordic cooperation is therefore a natural and self-evident component of Finland’s approach.



STRENGHT IN TOGETHERNESS



Finland's internationally recognised welfare system is based on conscious decisions intended to promote knowledge, equality and innovation. Finland actively promotes these same values in international forums. It is a strong advocate of democracy, good governance, human rights and stability and security.

Finland's agenda for sustainable development after 2015 is broad in scope. Finland emphasises poverty reduction as the core of sustainable development and sets great store by *all three of the related dimensions* (the economic, social and environmental).

When contributing at international level, Finland draws great strength from its internal cohesion. It has an exceptionally well-oiled machinery for discussion and decision-making related to important issues.



FINLAND SERVING THE WORLD

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- More than 40,000 Finns have served in UN peacekeeping operations in over 30 countries.
- The foundations of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) were laid in a series of meetings in Helsinki, resulting in the Helsinki Final Act in 1975.
- Even in recent years, Finland has often served as a neutral and secret meeting place during efforts to resolve global or regional conflicts.
- The Finnish passport is among those that provide the most global access (to 173 countries, many without a visa, according to sources such as movehub.com).



EXAMPLE OF FINLAND'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

The Nobel Peace Prize for 2008 was awarded to **Martti Ahtisaari**, former President of Finland, for his major efforts, on several continents and over more than three decades, to resolve international conflicts.



MORE ABOUT FINLAND

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<http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?culture=en-US&contentlan=2>

(Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland)

<http://www.cmi.fi/en/>

(Crisis Management Initiative, the office of President Ahtisaari)

<http://finlandun.org/public/default.aspx?culture=en-US&contentlan=2>

(Finland's Permanent Mission in the UN)

http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/finland/index_en.htm#goto_0

(Finland in the EU)

<http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-of-ministers>

(The Nordic Council of Ministers)



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