



## COUNTRY REPORT

### THE FINNISH BAR ASSOCIATION

#### 1. CELEBRATION OF THE FINNISH BAR ASSOCIATION'S CENTENARY

During 2019 the Finnish Bar Association reached 100 years since its founding. The centenary was visible in our activities throughout the year, culminating in the celebratory and professional event of August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.

#### 2. SURVEY ON SITUATION OF WOMEN IN LAW FIRMS

Finnish Bar Association conducted survey on situation of women in Finnish Attorney's offices. In the Finland 60 % of new Finnish Attorneys are women. Still, only 34 % of members of Finnish Bar Association are women. Finnish Bar Association wanted to analyze, why there is that kind of gap in the numbers.

According to the study, one quarter of women in Attorney's at law offices have considered to change their career to something else than Attorney's profession. By far the most important reason for leaving the industry is the workload - both men and women. Women's transition ideas are also heavily influenced by the difficulty of reconciling work and family and work and leisure, the values of the sector that are not perceived as one's own, and the problems of equality and equality at work. We have received a lot of positive reactions from lawyers, the public and the media. We will work now with the results. We will try to find some ways how women would stay as attorneys also after they have started a family.

#### 3. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IN FINLAND'S GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

There were parliamentary elections in Finland in April 2019. New government began its work in June 2019. Government is formed by Social Democrats (S&D), Centre Party (RENEW), Green part (GREENS), Left wing party (GUE/NGL) and the Swedish People's Party (RENEW). New minister of justice is lawyer Anna-Maja Henriksson (Swedish People's Party). Finland was president of minister council of EU on second half of 2019. Therefore, government focused mainly on presidency last year.

There are some interesting goals in government's program. First, Government is trying to find ways to make legal proceedings shorter. Government is trying to ensure that everyone could afford to go to court. Ministry of Justice is investigating for example that could there be ways to make legal expenses insurance more effective and could more people get public legal aid.



Mainly all these government's plans are still in the beginning of preparation processes. These plans are in high priority in our agenda.

#### **4. LEGAL ASSISTANCE OF ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Government of Finland will give in the march 2020 law proposal concerning the Legal Assistance and Legal aid of the Asylum Seekers in Finland. Previous government and parliament made several changes to this legislation. Ministry of Justice of Finland ordered a study on impacts of the new legislation. Study proved that new legislation has caused several problems to legal aid of asylum seekers.

The main points of new law proposal will be: 1. Legal aid will begin from the beginning of asylum process (Now legal aid begins from the beginning of administrative court proceeding) 2. Length of appeal times will be extended with 9 days to regular appeal time (30 days). 3. Nowadays attorney can charge predefined compensation of case. According to new law proposal attorney would be allowed to charge state based on actual working hours on case.

The Bar has expressed its deep concerns of the threat to the legal protection and rule of law guarantees of the asylum seekers, when the experienced private attorneys at law were replaced by the unexperienced legal aid counsels and when the appealing process was complicated for those who were in urgent need of legal assistance.

#### **5. SEMINAR WITH SUPREME COURT OF FINLAND**

The Bar organized seminar with Supreme court of Finland. Goal was to give to our members a opportunity to meet members of Supreme Court and discuss issues of the Supreme court. About 10 % of the members of the Bar and most of members of the Supreme court. attended seminar. We will organize similar event with supreme administrative court this year.

Helsinki 31.1.2020

The Finnish Bar Association