



ULKOSUOMALAISPARLAMENTTI
UTLANDSFINLÄNDARPARLAMENTET – FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT

**RESOLUTIONS OF
THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT'S
NINTH SESSION
16–17 JUNE 2017**

FEP 20 years

INTRODUCTION

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament (FEP) was established on August 5, 1997. The year 2017 is an anniversary in many respects: Finland celebrates the country's 100th anniversary, while it is the 90th anniversary of Finland Society, the advisory and service organization for expatriate Finns that also functions as the Secretariat of the FEP. The 20th anniversary session of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament was held in the main building of the University of Helsinki on June 16–17, 2017. A total of 260 expatriate Finns from different parts of the world, representing 193 Finnish expatriate communities from 21 countries, participated in this 9th session, making the session the 3rd largest in the history of the FEP.

The session discussed initiatives put forward by Finnish expatriate communities. There was a total of 74 original initiatives, of which the Secretariat put together those that were similar in content, so that 55 initiatives were finally brought to the session for discussion. The plenary session gave one additional initiative to a committee for discussion, so that in the end, the 2017 session adopted a total of 56 resolutions. The staff of the Finland Society, in cooperation with those behind the initiatives, prepared the background information for the resolutions.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament provides a channel for lobbying, bringing together expatriate Finns, and furthering their interests. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament is a forum for cooperation and advocacy for expatriate Finns. Finnish expatriate communities may join its activities by ratifying its By-laws. So far, as many as 531 Finnish expatriate communities from 39 countries have thus joined the effort of giving their views to support decision making in government.

The list of past achievements is long and diverse. Examples include the introduction of dual citizenship (2003), an amendment of taxation on employment pension (2011), rehabilitation of war veterans in their home country, the possibility to lead a safe life abroad in old age in Finnish, and support for the activities of Finnish language schools (Suomi-koulu). In September 2017, the Finnish government brought to the Finnish Parliament a Bill for amending the Election Act to make postal voting possible for expatriate Finns. In this way, Finland is going to join the group of countries that effectively promote real possibilities of voting for their expatriate citizens.

Finns are more internationally oriented now than ever before. For an increasing number of Finns, being expatriate is part of their everyday lives: there are at least 1.6 million expatriate Finns in the world. Approximately 300,000 of them are Finnish citizens, and over 242,000 have the right to vote. There is a permanent trend of increasing mobility, emigration, and repatriation/immigration.

The specific main aims of the Speaker's Council of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament for the parliamentary term 2017–2020 are the following:

- to have postal voting in national elections quickly put into practice, together with a related information campaign;
- to promote the *Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns 2017–2021*, which was updated under coordination by the Ministry of the Interior, in all sectors of government;
- to secure the preconditions for the work of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament by having its status enshrined in law;
- to focus on accessibility of the services that Finland offers to its expatriate citizens;
- to secure the operations of Finnish language schools (Suomi-koulu) and Finnish schools abroad, and to support the education, native language, and culture of expatriate Finnish children and young people (by effecting a permanent increase in the sum allocated to Finnish language schools in the budget, by having a separate budget heading for them established in the state budget, and by extending the state subsidy to cover the teaching of children under 3 years of age in Finnish language schools);
- to promote the offering of Finnish communication services and information to expatriate Finns as well as global access to the programs of Yle (the Finnish Broadcasting Company);
- to support the activities of Finnish expatriate organizations and promote networking in order to maintain close ties to Finland, while the Ministry of Education and Culture continues to secure the operating conditions of the Finland Society.

The minutes of the session, the resolutions and lists of participants, the opening address by the Speaker of the Finnish Parliament, the keynote speech by the Minister of Education, as well as other information about the session are available on the website of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament at www.usp.fi – Session 2017.

Speakers' Council of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament 2017–2020

RESOLUTIONS OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT'S NINTH SESSION

I	Resolutions on Political and Official Issues	5
II	Resolutions on Citizenship Issues	7
III	Resolutions on Senior Issues	10
IV	Resolutions on Social Issues	16
V	Resolutions on Study and Training Issues I	18
VI	Resolutions on Study and Training Issues II	20
VII	Resolutions on Cultural Issues	23
VIII	Resolutions on Information Issues	25
IX	Resolutions on Financial and Statutory Issues.....	28

I RESOLUTIONS ON POLITICAL AND OFFICIAL ISSUES

1. The impact of Brexit on Finns

On June 23, 2016, a referendum was organized in the United Kingdom on the country's membership in the EU. Britons voted on whether the UK should remain a member of the European Union or withdraw from it. Of the voters, 52% voted for withdrawing from the European Union, while 48% were for remaining. The UK submitted its official withdrawal notification on March 29, 2017. This launched a withdrawal process in line with Article 50, which has never been done before. After that, the other 27 member states adopted guidelines at an extraordinary European Council meeting in Brussels.

The guidelines adopted by the European Council, or the meeting of Heads of State of the EU, lay down the principles and general standpoints for the negotiations. They are constantly being updated, which means that the situation will evolve as the talks go on. (Freely quoted from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' site eurooppatiedotus.fi: Kysymyksiä ja vastauksia Ison-Britannian EU-erosta [Questions and answers about Brexit].) The negotiations will take two years but if necessary, they can be extended with the consent of all member states. The withdrawal agreement must receive consent from both the European Parliament and the UK Parliament.

Finland's opinions will be prepared by the Ministerial Committee on European Union Affairs and the Parliament will participate in forming the opinions.

Brexit will have an impact on the future of the EU, but there are several alternative scenarios. The UK is Finland's seventh largest trade partner. The UK itself aims to be able to decide who is allowed to live, work, or, for example, study in the UK in the future. The negotiations are a slow process. For the time being, everything continues as before. According to estimates by Brexit experts, there will be no change in the lives of Finnish citizens for two years. There is increasing uncertainty about whether citizens' fundamental rights are included in the trump cards that the EU holds in the negotiations, especially because it seems clear that the UK also wants to discuss the status of EU citizens residing in the country.

Those behind the initiative are concerned about if and how Brexit will impact the situation of Finns living in the UK. Finnish families living in the country fear that families will be broken apart if family members are treated differently. The Central Europe region of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament wishes to know how the Finnish government is committed to promoting the matter.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages the Finnish authorities and government to advocate for the Finns living in the UK and their families and to regularly disseminate information about the situation as the Brexit process progresses. The Secretariat and the Speakers' Council shall promote the views of Finns living in the UK in discussions with the authorities in Finland.

2. Postal voting

For almost 20 years, expatriate Finns have been striving for the right to vote by post in national elections. The Bill on postal voting will be discussed in Parliament in the autumn of 2017, and the law is intended to take force in the spring of 2018. In this way, according to the framework budget decision taken by the government for the entire government term, postal voting would be possible for the first time in the parliamentary elections in the spring of 2019.

According to surveys, the low voter turnout among expatriate Finns is not due to a lack of interest but primarily to the fact that it is, practically speaking, impossible to vote due to, for example, long distances to polling stations. Another significant reason is the fact that voters feel that they do not get enough information about the candidates.

As the Bill on postal voting was circulated for comments in the spring of 2017, the Ministry of Justice received valuable feedback about factors that would potentially influence the successful organization of postal voting. In June 2017, the Parliament amended the Postal Act in Finland, allowing, for example, letters to be delivered less frequently than before. Such logistic challenges to postal voting can be overcome by proper planning.

Proper planning of information measures is needed for a successful first pilot as the legislation will finally allow 242,092 (according to 2015 figures) expatriate Finns with the right to vote to actually participate in the elections. Before postal voting becomes possible, an effective information campaign towards expatriate Finns will be needed. This is particularly important for elderly people or people with weaker language skills, and for those who do not have an Internet connection or who – even if their children have acquired a computer for them – are uncertain and have little experience in using it.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that before postal voting becomes effective, the Finnish government organize an understandable and effective information campaign about it by utilizing the multiple channels of both domestic and expatriate Finnish media. Information shall also be disseminated to Finland Societies, Finnish parishes, Suomi Schools, and any other organizations that may then pass the information on to their members.

3. Joint Nordic embassy buildings

The Nordic Council is the body for inter-parliamentary co-operation within the official Nordic co-operation. The Nordic Council was established in 1952. The Council has 87 elected members from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, as well as from the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland. **The Nordic Council of Ministers** is the official inter-governmental body for co-operation in the Nordic Region. The Nordic Council of Ministers works to establish joint Nordic solutions with visible positive effects for everyone living in the Nordic countries.

Nordic embassies already work together in Berlin. There is a shared embassy quarter housing the embassies of the five Nordic countries in Germany. The embassy quarter was opened on October 20, 1999. On February 7 this year, the National Property Board of Sweden announced that they had been tasked with planning a joint Nordic embassy for Sweden, Norway, and Finland in Hanoi, Vietnam. In addition, Sweden and Finland share an embassy building in Pristina, Kosovo.

Finland has an embassy in 76 countries, Sweden in 98 countries, Norway in 81 countries, Denmark in 60 countries, and Iceland in 22 countries. A positive consequence of having more joint embassies is that the Nordic countries together can be better represented all over the world. In a number of countries, expatriate Finns have to travel to another country to get their official matters dealt with. This proposal would make it easier for these expatriate Finns to maintain contact with the Finnish embassies.

The association Finnish Youth in Sweden is of the opinion that it is about time to strengthen the Nordic co-operation by establishing more joint Nordic embassies and increasing co-operation in the existing Nordic embassy buildings.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that the matter does not fall within the mandate of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. However, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes the importance of Nordic co-operation.

4. A parallel bilateral review of the language situation in Finland and Sweden

The Finnish-speaking minority in Sweden has had the status of a national minority since 2000, and Finnish is a national minority language. In Sweden, 420,000 people (4.2%) speak Finnish, and up to one million Swedes (10%) have Finnish roots. Finnish is not an immigrant language in Sweden but a language that was always spoken there. The association Finnish Youth in Sweden urges Sweden and Finland to increasingly publicize the fact that these countries have two common languages, Finnish and Swedish. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament must support all expatriate Finns, but its task must also be to support individual Finnish expatriate groups in their efforts based on their own needs and wishes.

Once in every four years, the UN carries out a *Universal Periodic Review* on how its member states are fulfilling their human rights obligations. The Human Rights Council is responsible for the report and visits each country, meeting representatives of civil society as well as government to inquire about their work on human rights. As a result, the Council's member states give recommendations to the countries reviewed on how to make improvements. The Council of Europe carries out similar reviews of how its member states succeed in protecting their national minority languages and national minorities.

Sweden and Finland are neighboring countries and close partners. Our countries have unique ties to one another, and there is a genuine Nordic co-operation going on between Sweden and Finland. Because our countries share two languages, Finnish and Swedish, we propose to launch a parallel bilateral review to report on how the respective governments are promoting the status of Swedish in Finland and Finnish in Sweden. Exactly because our countries are such close neighbors, this is an excellent way to engage each country with strengthening its majority language in the other country. We propose that such a review shall look at how each country is working to strengthen the respective language as well as what kinds of recommendations the countries are giving to one another.

We hope and believe that this can lead to an improvement of the status of Swedish in Finland and of Finnish in Sweden. We must work to promote a greater interest in these matters in each country's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and to bring the language issue high up on the bilateral agenda of Sweden and Finland.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that the initiative does not fall within its mandate.

II RESOLUTIONS ON CITIZENSHIP ISSUES

5. Long-term visas to Finland to be granted also on the basis of recommendations from Finnish expatriate communities

A proposal is made to the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs that a long-term visa to Finland could be granted on the basis of a recommendation from a Finnish expatriate community in Russia that has ratified the By-laws of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. Further information about how to apply for a visa to Finland as a citizen of Russia: <http://visa.finland.eu>

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Speakers' Council of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament will discuss the criteria for granting long-term visas between Finland and Russia with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

6. Free and unlimited visas for close relatives of Finnish citizens – Бесплатные и бессрочные визы для близких родственников гражданина Финляндии

A proposal is made that close relatives (siblings) of a Finnish citizen would be granted a permanent visa free of charge.

Russian citizens may be issued a visa free of charge if the purpose of their travel is, for example, research co-operation, a study visit related to their own studies, participation in an official exchange program between twin cities, or a visit to a close relative residing in Finland. Written evidence of the purpose of the trip and possible family relationship with a Finnish citizen must be provided. In the Agreement between the European Community and the Russian Federation on the facilitation of the issuance of visas, it is stated (Article 6): Fees for processing the visa application are waived for the following categories of persons: a) for close relatives – spouses, children (including adopted), parents (including custodians), grandparents and grandchildren – of citizens of the European Union and of the Russian Federation legally residing in the territory of the Russian Federation or the Member States.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Speakers' Council of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament is going to discuss the criteria for grant-

ing long-term visas between Finland and Russia with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, also in the case of siblings.

7. Authorizing and obligating Finnish embassies and diplomatic representations abroad to receive and forward notifications regarding changes in the marital status, birth of children, and citizenship of Finnish citizens.

Instructions provided to expatriate Finns by the Finnish Local Register Offices: www.maistraatti.fi/fi/Palvelut/ohjeita_ulkosuomalaisille/

When Finnish citizens live abroad, information about their personal data and address can only stay up to date in Finland if they make sure to notify any changes in such information to Finland. Notifications about changes (such as marriage, divorce, birth of children) shall be sent to the Jakobstad Unit of the Local Register Office of West Finland at P.O. Box 26, FI-68601 Jakobstad, or to the local register office of the most recent municipality of residence, or to the nearest Finnish embassy or consulate in the current country of residence. Inquiries about changes in personal information can be sent to international@maistraatti.fi, international@magistraten.fi

When the information in the population information system is up to date, passports, for example, can be issued more quickly.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that Finnish embassies and honorary consulates abroad be authorized to receive and forward notifications regarding changes in the marital status, birth of children, and citizenship of Finnish citizens living abroad.

8. Mobile passport unit to be established in Central Europe (Frankfurt)

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

A mobile passport unit will be established in Frankfurt-am-Main. Therefore, the initiative does not require action.

9. Increasing the efficiency of use of the mobile passport unit

In New Zealand, there is no Finnish embassy or consulate where it would be possible to renew passports. The nearest place where we can get our passport matters handled is the embassy in Canberra, Australia. Since a passport application must be submitted in person, we have to take time off work and travel to Canberra, often with the whole family. After years of “fighting” we have succeeded in having a so-called mobile passport unit visit Auckland. However, we were disappointed to find that the mobile passport unit would only be visiting Auckland *for only one day* in April.

We understand that we cannot have the mobile passport unit in Auckland for months in a row, but at least a week at a time would make much more sense. Many expatriate Finns residing in New Zealand apply for dual citizenship only because they find it so difficult to renew their Finnish passports. It is much easier to get a local passport with an electronic application, without having to go anywhere in person. Renewing a passport abroad costs many times the price of renewing a passport in Finland. Renewing passports is one of the most important consular services.

The mobile passport unit must continue to travel around in inland USA, and the decision by the Finnish government on circulating the mobile passport unit must continue to be implemented. We also ask that the mobile passport unit could travel around a country according to a given timetable.

The embassy in Australia now has a mobile passport unit which makes it possible to take care of passport matters at any location in Australia or New Zealand. The unit seldom visits any of these countries.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that those Finnish embassies which use mobile passport units be allocated sufficient resources to use them efficiently. Mobile passport units must travel around in their area so that the entire area is covered and that they are regularly available in different towns/states/neighborhoods. Mobile passport units must be available in one place for more than one day at a time.

10. Renewing passports and adding the unused months remaining in the old passport

A Finnish passport is issued for five years. Many countries require that, for a person to be able to enter the country, his/her passport must be valid for two to six months after entry into the country. Applying for a new passport abroad is cumbersome and expensive. This

is why many expatriate Finns choose to renew their passports during their holidays in Finland even months before their old passport expires. In this way, they lose months of validity of the old passport that they have already paid for.

For example, in the UK, it is standard practice that the “unused” months of the old passport, up to six months, are added to the validity period of the new passport.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that when a passport is renewed, its period of validity be extended by the remaining period of validity of the old passport. Six months could be set as a maximum.

11. Extending the validity period of passports to 10 years

Resolutions 4/2010, 9/2012, and 12/2015 concern the same topic.

The Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the manufacturing and regulation of biometric passports. The reasons why a ten-year passport cannot be taken into use have been recorded in Government Bill 85/2014:

1) identification: the older the photograph, the less reliable both the visual and the electronic face identification will be;

2) data security: the data security of the chip might become obsolete before the end of its lifetime; and

3) preventing fraud: a shorter validity period makes it possible to adopt new, more advanced technologies for the physical security features of passports. The durability of the chip is not a core issue. Some countries issue ten-year passports with a chip.

According to the Police Department, the chip manufacturer guarantees that the chip will work for five years. Experts say that with the current technology, the chip will last a maximum of seven years. Extending the validity period of passports will be considered as soon as the chip technology develops and manufacturers are able to guarantee a longer lifetime. In many countries, however, where biometric technology is being used, passports are issued for ten years. Such countries include, for example, Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Denmark, Australia, Norway, and the United States.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament encourages the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior to actively continue investigating the possibility of issuing Finnish passports for ten years.

12. A fee payable to the Finnish Immigration Service for determining citizenship status

The Finnish Immigration Service will, at the request of an authority or a party in the matter, determine a person's citizenship status, if the matter is of importance with regard to the existence of Finnish citizenship or some right or obligation related to it, the correctness of any entry in the public authorities' personal registers, an alien's residence in Finland, or some other reason equivalent to these.

Citizenship status means the person's present or former citizenship, statelessness, or unknown citizenship. Either the person in question or an authority may request determination of citizenship status.

You may ask the Finnish Immigration Service to determine your citizenship status if, for example,

- you want to know whether you are a Finnish citizen
- your citizenship information in the population information system is not correct (your true nationality is not the same as that registered in the population information system)
- you want to know the citizenship of a child in your custody.

Determination of citizenship status is subject to a fee.

An authority (the police, a Local Register Office, a diplomatic representation) shall request for determination of citizenship status if the information of a person's citizenship in the population information system may be incorrect or not up to date. In such cases, the determination of citizenship status is free of charge for the authority.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament chooses not to express an opinion on the initiative and concludes that it may be a matter of an individual case. The Finnish Immigration Service announces on its website that an authority (the police, a Local Register Office, a diplomatic representation) shall request for determination of citizenship status if the information of a person's citizenship in the population information system may be incorrect or not up to date.

13. Apostille

Registering citizenship of the United States with the Finnish authorities used to be a smoother process, as Finnish diplomatic representations, including honorary consuls, were allowed to certify an official document approved by the United States authorities. It is hoped that the certification process be made easier.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finnish embassies and honorary consulates abroad be authorized to certify original official documents and to forward them to Finnish authorities.

14. The criteria for Finnish citizenship of expatriate Finns

Retaining Finnish citizenship at the age of 22 (present situation):

If you are a citizen of both Finland and another state, you may automatically lose your Finnish citizenship at the age of 22.

You will lose your Finnish citizenship automatically at the age of 22, if

- in addition to Finland, you are a citizen of another state, and
- you have not had sufficient connection with Finland.

If you lose your citizenship automatically, your child will not lose his/her Finnish citizenship.

A sufficient connection to Finland will ensure that you will not lose your Finnish citizenship. Your connection with Finland is sufficient, if

- you were born in Finland and your domicile is in Finland when you reach the age of 22, or
- you have lived in Finland or in another Nordic country (Iceland, Norway, Sweden, or Denmark) for a total of at least seven years before you reach the age of 22, or
 - at the age of 18–21, you have
 - applied for or been granted a Finnish passport, or
 - completed or are currently carrying out military or civil service or women's voluntary military service in Finland, or
 - been granted Finnish citizenship through application or declaration, or
 - notified a Finnish diplomatic representation abroad or a Local Register Office in Finland that you wish to retain your citizenship. Notification to an honorary consulate or the Finnish Immigration Service is not accepted. The form of the notification is free but it must be made in writing.

The Finnish Immigration Service notifies such Finnish citizens of the threat of losing their citizenship and the possibility of retaining their citizenship who have had their domicile in Finland for less than seven years.

The notification is sent each year to persons who will reach the age of 18 that year and whose address is available in the population information system. It is, therefore, important that your information in the population information system is up to date. You can check your information with the

Local Register Office of your latest domicile in Finland. If you do not know your domicile, you can request the Local Register Office in Pietarsaari to check your information. The Local Register Office will register the automatic retaining or losing of Finnish citizenship in the population information system and notify you of it.

If you have lost your Finnish citizenship at the age of 22 because you did not have a sufficient connection with Finland, you can re-acquire your Finnish citizenship by declaration. A fee will be charged for processing the declaration.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Nationality Act be amended to the effect that native Finnish citizens, who are also citizens of another country, can automatically retain their Finnish citizenship. In this way, they no longer need to prove that they have sufficient connection with Finland or notify Finnish authorities by the age of 22 of their wish to retain their Finnish citizenship.

15. Finnish citizenship to be granted to the children of former Finnish citizens as well as their children under 18 years of age by declaration

Section 60 of the Nationality Act that entered into force in 2003 contains a transitional provision on declarations for the acquisition of citizenship to be made within a fixed period of time by former Finnish citizens. According to this provision, a person who had lost his/her Finnish citizenship on acquiring the citizenship of an-

other state could reacquire Finnish citizenship by declaration without having to live in Finland. The possibility to reacquire Finnish citizenship lost on acquiring the citizenship of another state also concerned the children of former and current Finnish citizens even if they never had Finnish citizenship. The transition period laid down in the Act ran from June 1, 2003 to May 31, 2008.

After the transition period, former Finnish citizens can re-acquire their Finnish citizenship by declaration. *Children under 18 years of age in their custody* will also obtain Finnish citizenship if they are included as co-applicants in the declaration. If Finnish citizenship is only applied for the child (with the child as the main applicant), the child shall be a former Finnish citizen. The declaration on behalf of a child may only be made by the child's custodian.

However, you cannot reacquire Finnish citizenship by declaration if you lost it because you gave false information in your earlier citizenship application and thereby received your citizenship on false grounds. Neither can you reacquire Finnish citizenship by declaration if you lost it because of the annulment of paternity. Also, you cannot acquire Finnish citizenship by declaration solely by being a descendant of a former Finnish citizen. If you want to find out if you are or have been a Finnish citizen, you can request for determination of citizenship status by the Finnish Immigration Service.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Nationality Act be amended to the effect that the grown-up children (18 years or older) of both former and present native Finnish citizens and their children under 18 years of age may be granted Finnish citizenship by declaration.

III RESOLUTIONS ON SENIOR ISSUES

16. A care home for expatriate Finns to be established in the Helsinki area and the help needs of Finnish senior citizens to be coordinated

In Finland, housing services with varying levels of support are provided by municipalities, NGOs, and private companies. Residential services belong to the sphere of social welfare services as defined in the Social Welfare Act, and it is the responsibility of municipalities to provide these services. Because municipalities in Finland are responsible for caring for the elderly, and services are only offered to the inhabitants of each municipality, a repatriating senior citizen cannot apply for a place in a municipal retirement unit or senior home before moving to Finland. In the beginning of 2019, regions will become responsible for or-

ganizing social welfare and health care services. After the health and social services reform, people will have freedom of choice between private and public service providers. The number of senior citizens will increase in the future, and there is already a shortage of places in residential service units for seniors in many municipalities. Private companies and foundations which provide residential services have increased their housing production as a response to the increasing demand in recent years. In the Helsinki metropolitan area, residential service units usually have people on waiting lists. Municipalities also place elderly persons in service homes run by private companies from which they purchase services.

Senior citizens who have repatriated to Finland have, in most cases, purchased an apartment in a private retirement unit, or else they have first moved to an ordinary apartment (either their own or rented) and lat-

er sought themselves a place in a senior housing unit.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the association of Finnish repatriates (Suomen Paluumuuttajaty.) repeatedly applied for funding from Finland's Slot Machine Association (RAY) in order to build a senior housing unit specifically for Finnish repatriates. However, the applications were not successful. To some extent, the association of Finnish repatriates modeled the senior housing project after the collective housing community for senior repatriates in Denmark (Fredensborg Houses), which has been in operation since the 1960's. The Fredensborg Houses community is run by a foundation.

A resolution under the heading *Senior housing for returning expatriate Finns* was adopted in the 2012 session of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. Resolution 12/2012 reads: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament does not express an opinion on the initiative as such but urges the Secretariat to investigate different funding and implementation possibilities for housing services for returning expatriate Finns, together with associations of Finnish repatriates and other parties working with expatriate Finns who are interested in such co-operation.

The committee Finnish Seniors Abroad investigated the possibility of establishing a senior housing unit for Finnish repatriates, to a large extent funded by a foundation. The committee found, however, that setting up a foundation would involve a lot of bureaucracy and that nobody was willing to take care of the administration of the foundation. The committee Finnish Seniors Abroad comprises the following members: Finland Society, the Ministry to Finns abroad within the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, the Finnish Seaman's Mission, and the Finnish Institute of Migration.

The following resolutions have been adopted in earlier sessions on surveying the needs of aging expatriate Finns: 34/1998, 2/2000, 43/2002, 42/2005, and 16/2012.

34/1998: A mapping of the status of aging Finns in various countries, the forms of service and care for aging expatriate Finns, and official positions on support for Finnish expatriate pensioners. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament asks the Finnish government to adopt a position on supporting expatriate Finns in retirement age. At the same time, the Secretariat is asked to continue surveying the needs of aging expatriate Finns as well as the existing forms of support and services in different countries. The Secretariat is asked to establish a central directory of establishments providing care to expatriate Finns and to keep it up to date.

2/2000: Research and necessary practical measures regarding the status of expatriate seniors. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Finnish expatriate communities to survey the provision of care for the elderly at their own initiative. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also urges its Secretariat to continue its lobbying efforts to arrange and ensure the provision of care for expatriate seniors without delay.

43/2002: A study on expatriate Finnish seniors. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes

that the Secretariat, in cooperation with the committee Finnish Seniors Abroad, investigate the channels and funding possibilities to assist the Finnish Institute of Migration in carrying out research focusing on expatriate Finnish seniors.

42/2005: Research among expatriate Finnish seniors. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Secretariat look into possibilities to advance research focusing on expatriate Finnish seniors and opportunities to provide information in Finland to motivate such research.

16/2012: The rehabilitation needs of aging expatriate Finns to be surveyed. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament does not express an opinion on the initiative as such. Instead, it urges the Secretariat to investigate potential research bodies that could be interested in carrying out a survey on the rehabilitation needs of aging expatriate Finns and the availability of services in their native language. At the same time, the Secretariat is asked to inquire about the willingness of these organizations to participate in the funding or function as co-applicants when applying for funding for such a project.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Speakers' Council and the Secretariat to continue investigating the need for senior housing units or places in senior housing units dedicated for repatriates and different options for financing and implementation, as well as to identify bodies potentially interested in cooperation. At the same time, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament reminds the Speakers' Council and the Secretariat that they shall continue advocating for the provision of care for elderly expatriate Finns as well as report the results of their work in the next session of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

17. Student and employee exchange in elderly and dementia care

The following resolutions have been adopted in earlier sessions on the need to provide care and support in Finnish to aging expatriate Finns: 1/2000, 44/2002, 44/2005, 48/2005, and 28/2007.

1/2000: Care of expatriate Finnish seniors in a Finnish cultural environment. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Finnish expatriate communities to investigate, at their own initiative, possibilities of cooperation in their respective countries. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also urges the Secretariat to continue its advocacy efforts and cooperation to secure services, particularly services in Finnish, for elderly expatriates, and to carry out new projects.

44/2002: Finnish-speaking health care and home care trainees. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Secretariat to continue the coopera-

tion it has started with the Finnish Seniors Abroad committee and the Center for International Mobility to implement an exchange program for Finnish-speaking nursing and home care trainees, and to secure funding for it.

44/2005: Developing cooperation between expatriate Finnish organizations and health care colleges. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament points out that the continuity of funding must be ensured for various existing projects and traineeship programs focusing on expatriate Finnish seniors, so that they can be expanded to cover expatriate Finnish organizations as broadly as possible, and urges the Speakers' Council and Secretariat to continue looking into various cooperation projects and funding channels.

48/2005: Contact persons for work with expatriate Finnish seniors. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges expatriate Finnish organizations to study the possibilities of naming a contact person for work with expatriate Finnish seniors in their own area. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also urges the Speakers' Council and the Secretariat to continue monitoring traineeship programs and projects targeting work with expatriate Finnish seniors, and to try to develop and implement appropriate and necessary models of care for expatriate Finnish seniors.

28/2007: Trainees for Finnish expatriate senior work. Resolution: The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the University Unit of the Ministry of Education to increase funding for the senior homes traineeship program and urges social services and health care schools to investigate the possibility of launching traineeship programs for work with Finnish expatriate seniors. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also encourages the Speakers and the Secretariat to continue the work based on earlier resolutions to secure the continuity and funding of traineeship programs relating to senior work and senior care among Finnish expatriate seniors.

On the basis of these resolutions, the Speakers' Council and the Secretariat have made efforts to establish and continue work with expatriate Finnish seniors as well as trainee programs in the care for the elderly.

In the beginning of 2004, based on earlier resolutions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, the Finland Society started a traineeship program for polytechnic-level students in the social welfare and health care sector, in co-operation with the Finnish Centre for International Mobility CIMO. The aim of the program is to promote the well-being of Finnish expatriate senior citizens by providing trainees who speak Finnish or Swedish. The trainees are students of either social welfare or health care who have completed at least one year of study. The training period is included in their degree, which means that their school monitors the training. A prerequisite for this is that there is a skilled instructor available in the place of training, who is also able to contact the school if needed. Training periods in Finnish senior homes last from three to six months.

The National Board of Education and the Finnish Centre for International Mobility CIMO were merged in

the beginning of 2017 to form a new agency called the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI). The international traineeship programs can still be found at the CIMO website at www.cimo.fi. Training periods in the Finnish senior homes belong within the scope of the EDUFI traineeship programs. Each year, two application rounds are organized for training placements in the Finnish senior homes. Descriptions of the training placements available in the Finnish senior homes are published on the CIMO website. Students can search for training placements based on the descriptions. CIMO does a pre-selection of applications received by the deadline. A list of candidates is then sent to the Finnish senior home where the final selection of the trainee is made. Apart from funding challenges, it has also been challenging to attract students with sufficient language skills to apply for a traineeship abroad.

Within the European Union, the Erasmus program offers various opportunities to train and work in another EU member state. Finnish educational institutions in the social welfare and health care sector also have bilateral trainee programs of their own with senior homes in different countries and with Finnish expatriate organizations offering services to senior citizens. The schools require that the receiving organization provides a skilled instructor to supervise the training.

Employee exchange in the social welfare and health care sectors is subject to the work permit rules and professional licensing systems in force in different countries.

In its response to the FEP's resolution no. 9/2000 (Supporting work and traineeship possibilities in the social and health field), the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health stated that it is prepared to support measures to promote the work and training opportunities for workers and students of the social welfare and health care sector in expatriate Finnish organizations and institutions providing care. However, the Ministry also reminded that there is an increasing shortage of labor in the social welfare and health care sector.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that support for the care of elderly expatriate Finns, which is the basic idea of this initiative, is already being promoted on the basis of resolutions taken in previous sessions. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Speakers' Council and the Secretariat continue to follow up and report on the resolutions concerning trainee and employee exchange promoting care for elderly expatriate Finns.

18. A person's last will

Conditions and principles for the processing of personal data are laid down in the Personal Data Act. The Personal Data Act allows the processing of personal data if it is based on an obligation laid down in the law. The Act applies to the automatic processing of personal data and to other processing of personal data where the data constitutes or is intended to constitute a personal data file or a part thereof.

The implementation of the law on personal data is guided and supervised by the Data Protection Ombudsman. The purpose of the law on personal data is to fend off the data protection risks related to the use of information technology and new technologies, as well as to guide towards good practices in the processing and management of data. For this reason, it is necessary to take into consideration the law and, in particular, its requirement on proper planning when personal data is going to be processed automatically. (Source: Office of the Data Protection Ombudsman, www.tietosuoja.fi)

If a Finnish citizen dies abroad, it is reported to the Finnish diplomatic representation by the authorities of the country in question, by a travel agent's guide, or by an honorary consul. The diplomatic representation reports the death to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which forwards the information to the police in Finland.

When a Finnish citizen dies abroad, the Finnish diplomatic representation abroad will, if necessary, assist in matters related to organizing the burial, cremation, or repatriation of the deceased person according to the wishes of the family members. If the deceased person did not have insurance, the family is liable to cover all expenses. In the case of death, Finnish travel insurance usually covers either the cost of repatriation to the domicile of the deceased person in Finland or local funeral expenses. A funeral home will take care of the practical arrangements related to repatriation and the funeral.

A funeral testament is a system developed by the Finnish Association of Funeral Services to allow the author of the testament to make decisions about their own funeral. The funeral testament is signed and witnessed in the same way as an ordinary last will and testament. It is made in two identical copies, one for the author of the funeral testament and one for the funeral home. A funeral testament always includes a funeral plan in which the author of the testament can specify the services and products they want to have for the funeral. In the funeral testament, it may be specified that funds for the funeral shall be taken from the assets left to the author of the testament, or that the funds will be stored in a bank account specifically established for this purpose. The author can also sign a funeral pre-order agreement with the funeral home. After the death of the author, the funeral home with which the agreement was made has the right to withdraw funds in order to organize the funeral according to the funeral plan. (Source: Finnish Association of Funeral Services)

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Secretariat to continue disseminating information, in particular to senior expatriate Finns, about their possibilities to make sure that their last will is implemented. At the same time, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Secretariat to investigate and develop possibilities to promote the implementation of the last will of adult expatriate Finns.

19. Collecting health insurance contributions from retired expatriate Finns who live permanently abroad

The health insurance contribution collected from persons insured in Finland is approximately 1.5 percent of their taxable income. It is possible to request that one's liability to pay the health insurance contribution be lifted if the social insurance institution Kela has issued a certificate to the effect that the person is not covered by the national health insurance in Finland and that Finland does not have to reimburse his/her medical costs to the new country of residence.

In the case of pensioners who move permanently from one EU member state to another, the liability to cover their health care costs is automatically transferred to the other EU member state, if the person is entitled to pension also in the member state into which he/she is moving. If the person is not entitled to pension in the new country of residence, the former country of residence (for example, Finland) remains responsible for his/her medical costs under EU Regulation 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems. Pensioners permanently living in EEA countries or Switzerland have to pay a health insurance contribution in Finland, if Finland is liable to reimburse their medical costs to their new country of residence. When Finnish expatriate pensioners live permanently in countries outside the European Union, the EEA countries, or Switzerland, they do not pay a health insurance contribution to Finland.

To Finnish expatriate pensioners who pay the health insurance contribution to Finland, Kela issues an S1 form that they can use to get a health insurance card from their new country of residence. In addition, Kela issues the European Health Insurance Card with the so-called Green Card on the back side. With this card, the pensioner will receive the necessary treatment in the Finnish public health care system for a fee corresponding to the fee paid by local residents, as well as direct reimbursement for private health care services, emergency transport, and purchases of medical drugs in pharmacies.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that the initiative does not require action because the Finnish tax authorities only collect health insurance contributions from those retired expatriate Finns whose health care expenses Finland is liable to cover.

20. Supporting senior expatriate Finns

The Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns 2012–2016 contains the following definition of policies to facilitate repatriation of expatriate Finns:

3.5. Facilitating repatriation of expatriate Finns

Returning to Finland will be facilitated by disseminating information and providing advice and, if necessary, by taking other measures, in order to make repatriation a feasible solution, taking into consideration both the interests of Finland and the life situation of the individual expatriate Finn.

15. Policy:

* Expatriate Finns will be considered as potential repatriates when developing work-based immigration policy.

Action:

* Inform expatriate Finns more effectively about matters essential for repatriation in co-operation with different authorities and the Finland Society.

* Inform employers in Finland about the possibility to recruit repatriated Finns.

* Encourage persons studying abroad to return to Finland after completing their studies by actively informing them about training and further education opportunities as well as about the situation and opportunities in the labor market.

* Tackle problems in legislation and administrative procedures that slow down repatriation and make proposals to change them.

* Intensify co-operation with the church and local parishes.

* Investigate what kind of services are needed to support the return of expatriate Finns.

A Finnish citizen who returns to Finland will be covered by the Finnish social security system after notifying the Local Register Office about moving back to Finland permanently. Finland's social security system is based on residence, and everyone living permanently in Finland is entitled to social welfare and health care services as well as benefits granted by Kela.

In the 1980s, the Finnish government paid so-called repatriation grants to those who returned to Finland.

The repatriation grants were discontinued in the end of 1991. The repatriation grants were part of the labor policy measures introduced in the late 1980s that Finnish citizens moving to Finland could apply for in certain situations.

Every year, Finnish diplomatic representations abroad carry out a tremendous amount of different du-

ties to help and serve Finns abroad. Finns are born, married, divorced, get ill and die, also abroad. In all these situations, the diplomatic representations provide advice and help and work to do what is necessary as well as to keep the population information system up to date.

The deacons working within the Ministry to Finns Abroad and the social workers of the Finnish Seamen's Mission serve the expatriate Finns living in their respective regions.

A counseling service for senior expatriate Finns has been operating as a part of the counseling unit of the Finland Society for 20 years already. The main aims of the counseling service for senior expatriate Finns are the following:

To provide holistic counseling, information, and advocacy for aged and retired repatriated and expatriate Finns in matters related to pensions, social security, taxation, and international agreements; to give guidance to returning Finns on how to organize their move in practice as well as assist the target group and their families in handling matters with Finnish and foreign authorities and give guidance in finding an apartment or a place in an institution; to prevent age-related problems that expatriate Finns typically face, and advocate for securing services abroad in Finnish (for example, senior care in Finnish).

The Finland Society's counseling service for senior expatriate Finns is widely known among repatriated and expatriate Finns and among partners in Finland and abroad as the only expert and body serving this group from a holistic perspective. Due to the special character and specific needs of this target group, corresponding activities are not offered by anyone else. Therefore, persons belonging to the target group are referred to the Finland Society's counseling service by partner organizations, such as embassies and church employees as well as by the counseling services of Finnish municipalities.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament does not express an opinion on the initiative as such and points out that the Speakers' Council and the Secretariat already co-operate with bodies working with expatriate and repatriated Finnish senior citizens and have advocated for their interests.

21. Extending the time limit for adjustment of taxation back to five years

Earlier, it was possible to file a claim of adjustment against an income tax decision within five years from the beginning of the calendar year following the year in which the tax assessment process was finished. From the tax year 2017 onward, the appeal period is three years from the beginning of the calendar year following the assessment. For example, a claim of adjustment

regarding tax year 2017 must be filed by 31 December 2020. Taxes may be subject to appeals also by the Tax Administration, if it receives information affecting the assessment after the assessment has been completed.

In tax treaties between countries, the right of taxation is divided between the country of residence and the country where the income was sourced. If the taxation right is given to the country of source in part or in total, the country of residence will eliminate double taxation by using either the exemption method or the credit method. In the exemption method, the income is exempted from tax in the country of residence, and in the credit method, the tax paid in the country of source is subtracted from the tax that would be collected on the same income in the country of residence. If it is agreed that the income is exempted from tax in the country of residence, it is almost always also agreed that the country of residence can take the exempted income into consideration when assessing tax on other income.

The country of residence will only eliminate double taxation when tax has been collected in the country of source according to the provisions of the tax treaty. For example, if, according to the tax treaty, pension income is only subject to tax in the country of residence but a double tax has been collected on this pension income in the country of source, the country of residence will not eliminate double taxation. In this case, the person must turn to the tax administration of the country of source and apply for a refund of the tax that was inappropriately levied. The person must turn to the tax administration in the country of source to find out how to correctly apply for a refund.

Taxation abroad against tax treaties

The tax treaties also contain provisions concerning a so-called mutual agreement procedure. In special circumstances, the competent authorities in both countries (usually the Ministry of Finance or the Tax Administration) can negotiate in order to eliminate double taxation or taxation contrary to the treaty. The result of such negotiations may be that one of the countries, or both, will forgo their tax or part of it. However, the countries do not have a binding obligation to do so. If the taxpayer has filed a claim for adjustment to an appeal authority, the negotiations will only start after the appeal authority has given its decision on the appeal.

In a mutual agreement procedure, the tax authorities of both countries will exchange opinions by correspondence and attempt to find a solution to a specific tax issue. The correspondence may last several years and the final outcome may simply be a recommendation to the taxpayer to submit an appeal or an application for a tax refund in the country of source. Therefore, the mutual agreement procedure cannot be regarded as a primary tool for achieving better results than would be obtained through a normal refund application or request for correction submitted by the taxpayer.

The mutual agreement procedure will typically only be practicable in situations where the other country has not adjusted the taxes even after an appeal was made.

A mutual agreement procedure shall be requested from the Finnish Tax Administration

To request a mutual agreement procedure, a taxpayer resident in Finland can send a letter to the Finnish Tax Administration. The letter can be freely formulated and shall have the heading "Request to start a mutual agreement procedure within the meaning of an international tax treaty". Some tax treaties include provisions on the latest possible date to start a mutual agreement procedure. In some cases, the competent authority will be the Finnish Ministry of Finance. If this is the case, the Finnish Tax Administration will refer the matter to the Ministry. Before presenting the official request, the taxpayer should contact the Finnish Tax Administration to establish the feasibility of a mutual agreement procedure. (Source: www.vero.fi)

AGREEMENT between the Republic of Finland and the Swiss Confederation for the avoidance of double taxation with respect to taxes on income and on capital

Article 25: Mutual agreement procedure

1. Where a person considers that the actions of one or both of the Contracting States result or will result for him in taxation not in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement, he may, irrespective of the remedies provided by the domestic law of those States, present his case to the competent authority of the Contracting State of which he is a resident or, if his case comes under paragraph 1 of Article 24, to that of the Contracting State of which he is a national. The case must be presented within three years from the first notification of the action resulting in taxation not in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement.

2. The competent authority shall endeavor, if the objection appears to it to be justified and if it is not itself able to arrive at a satisfactory solution, to resolve the case by mutual agreement with the competent authority of the other Contracting State, with a view to the avoidance of taxation which is not in accordance with the Agreement. In the event the competent authorities reach an agreement, taxes shall be imposed, and refund or credit of taxes shall be allowed by the Contracting States in accordance with such agreement.

3. The competent authorities of the Contracting States shall endeavor to resolve by mutual agreement any difficulties or doubts arising as to the interpretation or application of the Agreement. They may also consult together for the elimination of double taxation in cases not provided for in the Agreement.

4. The competent authorities of the Contracting States may communicate with each other directly for the purpose of reaching an agreement in the sense of the preceding paragraphs. When it seems advisable, in order to reach agreement, to have an oral exchange of opinions, such exchange may take place through a Commission consisting of representatives of the competent authorities of the Contracting States.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Tax Administration and, if necessary, the Min-is-

try of Finance investigate and make the necessary changes to practices that lead to double taxation of Finnish expatriate senior citizens, against the tax treaties concluded by the Finnish government to prevent double taxation. In addition, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Tax Administration publishes clear instructions on its web-

site for filing a claim for adjustment of double taxation. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Tax Administration extends the handling time of claims for adjustment back to five years until a permanent solution has been negotiated with the States Parties to the tax treaties.

IV RESOLUTIONS ON SOCIAL ISSUES

22. A permanent social worker's post to be established in the Spanish Costa del Sol

We are renewing the initiative submitted on May 22–23, 2015 with the following specifications and additional justifications.

An increasing number of people who move to the Spanish Costa del Sol are employed by Finnish companies and are, therefore, covered by the Finnish social security. This concerns both people of working age, who have employment, and their school-age children. Particular attention should be paid to the students of the Finnish school in Costa del Sol and their parents who have to keep their domicile and social security in Finland in order for their children to be able to study in this school.

When families move, they bring with them their social problems that are often made worse by living in a foreign country and culture. Language problems prevent them from turning to Spanish authorities. Often, quick and preventive help and support intervention would prevent the problems from getting worse and would lead to both better and cheaper results. This would also benefit the Finnish municipality where the affected persons have their domicile.

Ordinary tourism is also increasing. At the moment, an estimated 20,000–30,000 Finns live in Costa del Sol during the winter season. Most of them are tourists for a relatively short time and are covered by the Finnish social security. A smaller number of people have moved to Costa del Sol permanently and transferred from Finnish to Spanish social security.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Finnish government establish a permanent social worker's post in the Spanish Costa del Sol.

23. Health care expenses in Finland of expatriate Finns living in certain countries

Pensioners who pay their taxes to Finland on real estate, capital income, etc. as well as full state and municipal tax on their pensions, and who (legally) reside

permanently (6 months + 1 day) abroad in countries with no reciprocal health care agreement with Finland, must take out travel insurance to cover their potential medical expenses.

In this way, these people, who have earned their pensions from careers in Finland and who live in countries with no reciprocal health care agreement with Finland, are put in an unequal position compared to persons who live in countries that have such agreements.

The people in question may spend a significant part of the year in Finland, often at their holiday houses, which is financially significant for rural municipalities due to, for example, the real estate taxes they pay and the services they purchase.

In their countries of residence, these persons usually have access to health care covered by health insurance, so that when they spend part of the year in Finland, their need for health care would normally be limited to emergency care. A health insurance contribution could be collected from those who are willing to pay, in the same way it is collected from other Finns.

We know that residing in Finland is a precondition to having access to Finnish social security and health care, unless otherwise provided in agreements with other countries. Factors that could justify a right to compensation of medical expenses could include an earnings-related pension received from Finland on which all taxes are paid to Finland in full, due to decades of employment in Finland; real estate taxes paid to Finland; and permanent and significant ties to Finland, such as owning real estate and spending a significant part of the year in Finland. Taxpayers should get at least some value for their money. A difference of one day (6 months +/- 1 day) should not be decisive.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to investigate whether Finns who live in countries which do not have a social security agreement with Finland and who pay their taxes in Finland could have the right to use Finnish health care services during their visits to Finland at the same price as persons residing in countries with which Finland has a reciprocal health care agreement.

24. Registering a vehicle in Finland for an expatriate Finn

An expatriate Finn residing in Central Europe wanted to buy and register a car in Finland, but this turned out to be impossible. Many expatriate Finns visit Finland regularly and would like to register a car in Finland.

A response by the Finnish Transport Safety Agency (Trafi):

It is possible to register a vehicle in the name of a person residing abroad.

If the owner has a foreign address, the vehicle must also have a holder (a natural or a legal person) with an address in Finland (including the Åland Islands), because in Finland, the vehicle tax demand note is not sent to a foreign address.

The registered holder or owner of the vehicle is liable to pay tax. If both an owner and a holder have been registered, the holder is liable to pay tax. The tax liability may be transferred from the holder to the owner by agreement. The application must always be made by the owner.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Ministry of Transport and Communications investigates how registering vehicles in Finland could be made easier for expatriate Finns.

25. Reducing the fee for registering a divorce at a District Court in Finland in the case of a marriage between a Finn and a non-EU citizen

Person X divorced a Swiss spouse. The marriage had been registered in Switzerland. Since Switzerland is not a member of the European Union, the divorce ruling given in Switzerland must be submitted to the Finnish authorities, together with a translation (in Finnish or Swedish) made by an authorized translator. It must be accompanied with a freely formulated application to register the ruling also in Finland. The matter is processed by a District Court to which the application with annexes shall be sent by mail. The processing fee used to be 80.90 euros but was increased to 250 euros as of the beginning of 2017.

In 2014, a working group within the Ministry of Justice submitted a proposal for a new law on court fees. The working group proposed that processing fees be increased and that the number of matters that are processed free of charge be decreased significantly. According to the proposal, processing matters in a court of law would, as a main rule, be subject to a fee.

The operating costs of courts of law amounted to a total of 267.5 million euros in 2013. Thirteen percent of this was covered by income from court fees. The share

is small because processing in a court of law is free of charge in, for example, criminal matters and a significant part of administrative matters.

The intention now was to bring the fees closer to the actual processing costs. The working group justified the increased fees by saying that processing either free of charge or at a low fee had not encouraged people to solve their disputes outside courts of law in matters in which it would have been the most appropriate solution.

According to the proposal, processing fees would mostly increase by 50-500 euros, depending on the matter and the court of law in question. After the increases, the processing fee in, for example, a criminal matter or an enforcement matter would be 250 euros, and in an extensive civil matter, 500 euros in each instance.

In 2014, the fee for processing a civil case in a District Court was 86 euros, if the case was closed during the written preparation, and 122 euros, if the case was closed in an oral preparatory session. If a civil matter was processed in a main hearing with a single judge, the fee was 159 euros, and with a full panel of judges it was 196 euros.

The proposal was part of the reform program for the administration of justice for 2013–2025.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament decided not to express an opinion because the background information for the initiative was not clear enough.

26. Kela card to be issued to Finnish citizens living abroad

When Finnish citizens who live abroad (and who would be eligible for a Kela card if they were a resident in Finland) come to visit Finland, they would appreciate having a Kela card to use while in the country. We believe that, at the moment, it takes three weeks to get the card when applying for it on arrival. Some countries have time restrictions on how long one can be overseas without losing some pension benefits. In Australia, this time limit is only six weeks, which means that, since there is a delay of three weeks in getting the card, one will miss out on having the card for half the visit.

Having a Kela card issued as a permanent entitlement would enable expatriates to enjoy their visit for the whole time they are in Finland.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament decided to reject the proposal.

V RESOLUTIONS ON STUDY AND TRAINING ISSUES I

27. Increasing the state subsidy for the Kulkuri School of Distance Education

The Kulkuri School of Distance Education, run by the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation, is a school for students living abroad. It provides children living abroad with distance and online education in the Finnish language and literature as well as other subjects included in the curriculum of the Finnish comprehensive school. The online school makes it possible to study one's native language even when no Finnish language schools (Suomi-koulu) exists in one's place of residence. Many Finnish language schools also use the services of the Kulkuri School of Distance Education, for example the Finnish language school in Frankfurt. When necessary, it is possible to complete the entire comprehensive school curriculum and receive a school leaving certificate from the Kulkuri School of Distance Education.

The annual amount of discretionary state aid that has been allocated to the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation for the Kulkuri School of Distance Education has been 140,000 euros since 2008. In the years from 2012 to 2015, the Parliament took annual decisions to increase the aid by 25,000 euros per year. In 2016, the additional appropriation of 50,000 euros, decided by the Parliament, was not paid in full. It was cut by the National Board of Education so that the amount paid to the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation was 31,000 euros.

The state aid does not vary according to changes in the number of students or courses completed, or other changes in costs. When there is an increase in the number of students or in the level of other costs, the operation starts making a loss. In 2016, the Kulkuri School of Distance Education brought the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation's budget to a deficit of 30,000 euros.

The reason for the changing funding needs is a shift to a modern operating environment, in other words, online teaching instead of earlier book-based teaching. Online teaching is more efficient, more interactive, and pedagogically better, and, overall, corresponds to the requirements of a modern learning environment.

In the current situation, it is impossible to develop and expand online teaching if the state subsidy is not increased. Unless the state subsidy is increased, the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation will be forced to significantly increase the tuition fees of the Kulkuri School of Distance Education in order to balance its economy. This will place children living abroad in an unequal position and mean that studying will only be possible if their parents can afford it. It should be a fundamental right of every child living abroad to maintain and develop their native language.

In order for the operation of the Kulkuri School of Distance Education to break even without causing a deficit to the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation or leading to pressure to increase tuition fees, the state subsidy should be 200,000 euros per year.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to comply with the will of the Finnish Parliament and take action to increase the annual state subsidy for the Kulkuri School of Distance Education run by the Finnish Lifelong Learning Foundation to at least 200,000 euros per year, so that online tuition is made possible. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes that these must be funds specifically allocated to the Kulkuri School of Distance Education, which do not reduce the funding for other operators included in the budget line in question.

28. The state subsidy granted to the Summer High School Association for organizing summer camps for Finnish expatriate children and young people to be secured in the future

The Board of the Summer High School Association has decided that, in the summer of 2017, no Finnish language courses will be organized for Finnish expatriate children and young people due to cuts in the state subsidy. We feel it would be extremely important to secure a sufficient state subsidy for the Summer High School Association so that it can continue to organize summer camps for Finnish expatriate children and young people. For Finnish expatriate children and young people, the camps are an extremely important contact with their other home country, as well as an opportunity for them to practice their Finnish and to get to know Finnish culture in a completely Finnish-speaking environment outside their homes and Finnish language schools.

A comment from the Summer High School Association, requested by the FEP Secretariat:

In 2015, the Board of the Summer High School Association decided that no courses in the Finnish language and culture for Finnish expatriate children and young people would be organized because of cuts in the state subsidy. It was a difficult decision, but as there was repeated fluctuation in the level of the state subsidy, the course activities of the Association had to

be reduced. Therefore, it was decided that the activities would focus on summer high schools. The present activities can only cater for those over 15 years of age as a target group. A summer high school course will be organized for them for the second time in the summer of 2017.

State subsidies granted to the Summer High School Association for summer high schools and activities for expatriate Finns in 2011–2015 (State aid for NGOs 29.10.51):

2011	212,000 €
2012	158,000 €, the subsidy was cut by 54,000 € (34%) compared with the preceding year
2013	258,000 €
2014	160,000 €, the subsidy was cut by 98,000 € (38%) compared with the preceding year
2015	162,000 €

Each year, a total of almost 200 children and young people, aged between 7 and 18 years, from around 40 different countries participated in the courses for expatriate Finns. Around 20 teachers and teacher trainees worked in the courses. Every year, there were more applicants than could be admitted to the courses. The repeated fluctuations in the amount of the state subsidy posed a financial challenge also in relation to the annual timetable, as while our operations were already starting, we could not cancel the contracts of our teachers and teaching assistants at the start of the course term.

The Summer High School Association has been organizing courses for Finnish expatriate children and young people since the 1970s. The Summer High School Association possesses invaluable expertise and knowhow about organizing courses for expatriate Finns. The Summer High School Association also has the contacts relevant for the operations and is trusted by Finnish expatriate families to provide courses with excellent content and high quality.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to increase the state subsidy allocated to the Summer High School Association at least to the same level as in 2013 to make it possible to restart the important summer camp activities for Finnish expatriate children and young people. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes that these must be funds specifically allocated to the Summer High School Association, which do not reduce the funding for other operators included in the budget line in question.

29. Funding of Finnish language schools

The funding of Finnish language schools (Suomi-koulu) has been relatively uncertain over the years. The

amount of the state subsidy allocated to Finnish language schools has remained at 450,000 euros for decades. As a result of persistent lobbying and efforts by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, an additional appropriation of 200,000 euros was granted by the Finnish Parliament in 2011. In 2012–2015 the additional appropriation was 150,000 euros. For 2016, the Parliament granted an additional appropriation of 200,000 euros. At the same time, however, the basic subsidy was cut down by 13% to 390,000 euros. We have had to fight every year to get the additional appropriation, while the basic subsidy is being cut at the same time.

The appropriation allocated to Finnish language schools should be brought to a permanently sufficient level, because the number of Finnish language schools and their students is growing all the time. As the number of schools and students to whom the funding is distributed grows, the amount of subsidy per student decreases. In some places, the salaries of the teachers in Finnish language schools are at the same level as in the 1970s with no possibility of an increase.

Another problem is that the funding for Finnish language schools is still included in the same budget line with several other bodies which means, for example, that other bodies organizing activities for Finnish expatriate children and young people compete for the same funds with Finnish language schools, and it is more difficult to allocate to Finnish language schools the additional appropriation that has been granted to them.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament demands that the Ministry of Education and Culture comply with the clearly expressed will of the Finnish Parliament and permanently increase the state subsidy granted to Finnish language schools (Suomi-koulu), taking into consideration their continuously increasing number.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to include in the government budget a new budget line dedicated to Finnish language schools in order to make the funding situation clearer.

30. Children under 3 years of age to be covered by the state subsidy for Finnish language schools

The Finnish government supports the activities organized in Finnish language schools (Suomi-koulu) for children from 3 to 18 years of age, when the group consists of a minimum of six children. The support funding for Finnish language schools should be extended to cover children under three years of age, because the first years of life are crucially important for language development. A number of Finnish language schools have a lot of children under 3 years of age wishing to

attend, and it depends on the resources available in each school what kind of services can be offered to this group.

Take the Finnish language school of Seattle as an example:

The school has been in operation since 1995. For more than 20 years, every year, about half of the school's students have been under 3 years of age. In 2017, 41 out of 94 students in the school are under 3 years old. During the past six months, about 70 new Finnish families with children have moved to the Seattle area. This has led to an explosive growth in the number of students in the Finnish School. The rapid growth and large demand bring challenges in terms of running the everyday operations of the school and planning for the future. This year, new families have had or are going to have about 20 new babies. The music groups for babies and groups for children under school age in the Finnish School of Seattle are so popular that unborn children are already being registered at the school. Parents use advance registration in order to secure a place in the Finnish language school for their children. Because of sparse resources, the Finnish School is not able to offer places to everyone who would wish to attend.

Including children under 3 years of age in the state subsidy would bring significant help and support to all Finnish language schools in the world. This would mean that developing and growing Suomi Schools would be able to hire new competent teachers, rent additional space, and increase the number of groups offered to the youngest expatriate Finns.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to extend the state

subsidy to cover the activities for children under 3 years of age in Finnish language schools (Suomi-koulu) and to increase the appropriation for Finnish language schools accordingly. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes that this appropriation must be specifically allocated to children under 3 years of age so that they will not share the funding allocated to those aged 3 to 18 years.

31. Reducing the group size in Finnish language schools

An increasing number of children who either speak Finnish very little or not at all, are seeking a place in Finnish language schools (Suomi-koulu). Teaching them together with children who speak more Finnish is very challenging and may hinder language learning for both groups. The most appropriate alternative would be to teach them in separate groups. This requires additional funding so that the group size can be reduced from six to four, six students being the current criterion of eligibility for state subsidy.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Ministry of Education and Culture to reduce the group size, required to qualify for state subsidy, from six to four pupils (cf. Decree issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture 1777/2009, Section 3). In this way, high-quality teaching in Finnish language schools (Suomi-koulu) can be guaranteed for students with varying levels of language skills.

VI RESOLUTIONS ON STUDY AND TRAINING ISSUES II

32. Traineeship subsidy for university students

In Finland, several traineeships are available to university students, giving them an opportunity to acquire experience of work in their field of study. However, many traineeship advertisements state that a training subsidy from the university is a precondition for hiring. This places Finnish students who are studying for a degree abroad in an unequal position compared to those studying in Finland, because not many foreign universities offer the same kind of training subsidy as Finnish universities do.

Those who study abroad can finance their training

with the help of a stipend or a grant, but their amounts are usually too small.

A similar subsidy system should be available to Finnish students studying abroad as the one intended for students studying in Finnish universities, or else there should be a larger number of traineeships for which a training subsidy is not required. Information about grants available to students studying abroad should also be provided more clearly.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that

students studying abroad should have easy, centralized access to information about grants and other funding options.

In addition, Finns studying abroad should be able to benefit from the same subsidy system to fund their traineeship periods in Finland as those students who study in Finland.

33. Act amending the Act on Liberal Adult Education 1765/2009. To be added: The authorization may also be granted for education provided abroad

An increasing number of Finns move abroad. Many people also live abroad only for part of the year. For example, they may spend the winter season in the Spanish Costa del Sol, in Florida, or in Thailand. Finnish senior citizens who live abroad permanently or part of the year need leisure activities in Finnish also outside Finland.

Over the years, the Finnish Association of Adult Education Centres (Kansalaisopistojen liitto KoL) had received many requests to organize courses for adults in Finnish in Costa del Sol. Therefore, the Association turned to the Ministry of Education in order to survey the need for education in Costa del Sol. In 2004, the Ministry launched a project to identify the needs and to start activities among the Finns in Costa del Sol. A steering group was set up for the project, consisting of the Head of Unit of the Department for Adult Education in the Ministry of Education, the President of the Finnish Association of Adult Education Centres, the director of the Summer University of Jyväskylä, and the director of the Association for Educational Activities. The project was organized by the Finnish Adult Education Association.

The activities continued with project funding until 2008, after which, following the advice of the Ministry, the support association for the Sofia Adult Education Centre was established to continue the operation from the beginning of 2009. The operation has been going on successfully for more than 11 years. The Sofia Adult Education Centre is a good example of Finnish adult education and a model of education export.

The Sofia Adult Education Centre is also an example of an adult education center abroad that has not been given the authorization to run an adult education center. It is not mentioned in the Act on Liberal Adult Education that an authorization to run an adult education center could be given to a provider of education operating abroad, whereas such a possibility is mentioned in the corresponding Acts on basic education and upper secondary education.

The Act amending the Act on Liberal Adult Education 1765/2009) should be amended to allow the granting of such an authorization. The following sentence should be inserted into Section 4 of the Act: The authorization may also be granted for education provided abroad. (Cf. Basic Education Act 628/1998,

Section 7, and Act on Upper Secondary Education 629/1998, Section 3.)

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Act amending the Act on Liberal Adult Education (1765/2009) be amended by inserting the following into Section 4: "The authorization may also be granted for education provided abroad".

34. Lack of space and remedial teaching in European Schools

European Schools are educational establishments jointly controlled by the governments of the Member States of the European Union. There are a total of 13 European Schools in different European countries. The European Schools receive their funding from the European Commission and from the Member States. Children and young people who go to school in Finland have a subjective right to remedial teaching and to special needs education. Children enrolled in European Schools are not treated equally in this respect, because the European Schools do not have the same obligation. The number of pupils in the European Schools in Brussels have increased in recent years, and most of the schools are completely overfull. Entry to the schools has been restricted (in violation of the Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns), and learning conditions in the schools have decidedly deteriorated. In addition, it has been found that there is a need for school social workers in the European Schools. At the moment, there are no such professionals working in the schools.

It is also problematic that the European Schools can only issue an European Baccalaureate diploma which corresponds to a combination of the comprehensive school leaving certificate and the upper secondary school leaving certificate in Finland. Therefore, if a pupil does not continue his/her studies in the upper secondary level, he/she will not receive a document corresponding to a school leaving certificate from basic education. This means that it is not possible to finish the European School at the stage of completing basic education and apply to, for example, a vocational school in Finland.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the responsible educational authorities take action to remedy the problematic conditions in which Finnish students study in European Schools and to secure a safe and healthy learning environment.

In addition, the support services for learning and studying (student welfare services) and the

relevant staff resources should be secured in the way required by Finnish law.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also proposes that the Finnish authorities investigate whether European Schools could issue a proof of education corresponding to the Finnish comprehensive school leaving certificate to those students who do not complete the European Baccalaureate.

35. Completing a National Certificate of Language Proficiency outside Finland

According to the current Finnish legislation on National Certificates of Language Proficiency, it is not possible to take a general language proficiency test abroad. As laws and agreements made by human communities and can, therefore, be amended, this law should be amended to make it possible to take general language proficiency tests abroad in the future. It is not reasonable that expatriate Finns must travel to Finland to complete the general language proficiency test. Organizing the test also outside Finland would ease the burden for test organizers in Finland as well as help to make sure that everyone who wants to take the test is able to do it. At the moment, the test events quickly become fully booked and many people do not even get in to take the test. The corresponding proficiency test in the Swedish language, organized by Sweden, can be taken abroad and no problems have occurred.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that in order to support the official languages of Finland, the law on National Certificates of Language Proficiency must be amended to make it possible to take the general language proficiency tests in the official languages of Finland even outside Finland.

36. Specifying and amending the authorizations to provide education of existing Finnish expatriate schools

There are schools providing basic education in line with the Finnish national curriculum in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Tartu, Brussels, and Fuengirola in the Spanish Costa del Sol. As the only Finnish school abroad, the Finnish school in Costa del Sol also provides upper secondary school education in accordance with the Finnish national curriculum.

The authorizations to provide education state "temporary residence" as the criterion for student enrollment, and the interpretation of this requirement in accordance with Section 5 of the Act on Domicile, as well as the requirement of the Ministry of Education and Culture to provide an extract from the Population Regis-

ter, have been causing problems in defining the length of temporary residence. In their discussion (379/1981) of the justification for the law, the legislator stated that in the case of schools abroad, the temporary nature of residence may sometimes be difficult to determine. The law is based on the philosophy that as long as a child, young person, or adult has not migrated from Finland, their residence abroad is temporary.

The Finnish school in Costa del Sol is one example of a school from which students return to Finland to continue their basic education or upper secondary school education, or to pursue further studies after completing their basic education or upper secondary school education.

As society has changed, we now can witness not only permanent migration but also mobility in two directions. In such situations, a flexible return to the home country, i.e. Finland, must be guaranteed so that conditions are favorable for pursuing further studies and careers.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Ministry of Education and Culture renegotiate the content of the authorizations of the existing Finnish schools abroad so as to safeguard the possibility of Finnish citizens to flexibly receive education within the Finnish educational system in Finnish.

37. Obstacles to the freedom of movement for foreign students to be eliminated

The association of Finnish youth in Sweden (Sverigefinska ungdomsförbundet/ Ruotsinsuomalaisten nuorten liitto) wants to promote the possibility of young people to freely study in the Nordic countries. We have found that the admission procedures of Finnish universities involve obstacles to the freedom of movement. These obstacles are in conflict with national, Nordic, and international agreements, laws and regulations. The Nordic countries should strive to eliminate such barriers, not to maintain them.

Finnish educational institutions put foreign students in a less favorable position in student enrollment than their Finnish peers. This is done already at the application stage. For example, the grades of foreign students are not taken into consideration in the admission process, and they cannot be translated to fit the Finnish grading system. This is a problem because expatriate Finns, as well as citizens of the Nordic countries and EU member states, cannot compete for admission on the same criteria. Since students are, to a large extent, enrolled based on their grades, this is not acceptable. In Sweden, all applicants can compete for admission to all degree programs on the same criteria, and foreign grades can be translated to fit the Swedish system.

At the moment, the information that Finnish educational institutions provide on their websites in Swedish is, in many cases, incomplete. Providing information in Swedish should not be a problem, because according to the Constitution of Finland, Finnish and Swedish shall have equal status. This is also worth our attention, because according to the Nordic Language Convention, students have the right to submit written assignments in another Nordic language even when classes take place in Finnish. How can this right be implemented if the affected students cannot even obtain basic information about the school and its degree programs in Swedish? Insufficient information simply makes it more difficult for expatriate Finns, as well as citizens of the Nordic countries and Swedish-speaking Finns, to be admitted to these educational institutions in Finland.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament should work towards getting the Ministry of Education to oversee that Finnish educational institutions give equal treatment to all students and applicants. We also want laws to be complied with and respected!

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Finnish educational institutions to accept the grades of applicants from outside Finland, adjusted to the Finnish grading system, so that their possibilities to apply for admission into Finnish educational institutions would be the same as those of Finnish applicants.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Finnish educational institutions to apply common agreements and rules that determine the admission criteria for applicants from outside Finland, and to provide clear information about them.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Finnish educational institutions to comply with the Constitution of Finland and to provide the relevant information on their websites in both of Finland's official languages.

VII RESOLUTIONS ON CULTURAL ISSUES

38. Finns in Oregon, United States, need a permanent Finnish pastor

A long time ago, Finnish migrants established and built several churches in different parts of the United States to keep up Finnish religious traditions with the help of Finnish pastors who were migrants themselves. In 2016, in all, there were only 15 tourist pastors and church musicians of the Church of Finland in North America. All the time, however, Finns travel to the United States for work, studies, or vacation. Finns need reliable and continuous pastoral guidance of a high quality in Finnish. In 2014, in Florida, 3,646 people visited the church and the Mass was celebrated or there was smaller-scale worship on 47 occasions; in New York, the Mass was celebrated 21 times and there were 11 weddings and 2 funerals; and in California and Texas together, the Mass was celebrated on 32 occasions.

The Messiah Lutheran Church of Portland, established in 1907 and located in Oregon, is one of the few parishes that is still active. The parish now belongs to the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Oregon Synod). For the past ten years or so, the Finnish church in Portland has been able to continue with services in Finnish by inviting voluntary retired pastors from Finland to work in their church. The parish has covered the cost of the pastors' travel and reimbursed their expenses. The pastors have stayed for a maximum of three months. Unfortunately, the parish has often been forced to cope for long periods of time with no pastor at all.

Already in the 2012 session of the FEP, the Finnish parishes in the Northwestern states requested the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland to establish

the position of a pastor (resolution 17/2012). The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposed at the time that the Unit for Ministry to Finns Abroad would co-operate with the Finnish parishes in the Northwestern states of the United States (Oregon, Washington) so that the Finnish parishes would have an opportunity to recruit retired pastors or pastors on alternation leave to work as visiting pastors in the parishes.

In both Oregon and Washington, the expatriate Finnish communities are well established with traditions that go back for decades. The communities consist of both aged Finns and young new migrants. Both communities are active in different associations related to, for example, the Finnish language and culture, but without a pastor, there is a threat that church activities cannot continue.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament will forward the wish of having a shared Finnish pastor in Oregon and Washington to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland's Unit for Ministry to Finns Abroad. The Unit for Ministry to Finns Abroad should cooperate with both parishes.

39. A Week of Positive Talk to be organized November 20-26

The wandering poet of the Spanish Costa del Sol, Erkki J. Vepsäläinen, has been organizing a Week of Positive Talk in Fuengirola since 2004. During the week,

the pupils in the Finnish school in Costa del Sol write an essay on "I Speak Positively". During the Week of Positive Talk people learn to speak positively and organize tiny moments of good mood for themselves and others in order to bring about a joy of life and a thirst for life. The project has a Facebook page titled "Puhun hyvää" (I speak positively).

This is a popular event in Costa del Sol: for example, the Fuengirola Television recorded the award ceremony and the program was shown on TV on several days. In addition, schools outside Spain participated in the Week of Positive Talk. The Good Hope School in Cape Town was selected by the Finnish ambassador to South Africa to participate in 2011 and 2012 by the pupils writing about their positive thoughts. Thanks to Mr. Vepsäläinen's son, Jari Vepsäläinen, the St. Margaret's English Secondary and Primary School in Hong Kong has participated in the essay writing effort for two years.

So far, the expenses related to the activity, such as additional work by teachers and printing costs of diplomas, have been covered by a private person (Erkki J. Vepsäläinen himself).

Other Finnish expatriate communities and Suomi Schools could adopt this idea and organize a Week of Positive Talk according to the model planned by Erkki J. Vepsäläinen.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament rejects the initiative and proposes that those behind the initiative use other channels to promote their purpose.

40. Cultural tourism between Italy and Finland

Many expatriate Finns residing in Italy are active in different fields of culture, innovating and developing various events, trips, and seminars. They advertise the special treasures in Finland that receive wide recognition outside Finland: the clean nature, high level of education, unique art, and crafts tradition. This message is often communicated with the help of design, film, music, visual art, and performance art. Sustainable tourism is an effective way to build a bridge between Italy and Finland, recognizing both our special identity and our strengths that create a foundation for cooperation between the people of our countries. There is increasing cooperation between Finland and Italy in different sectors, such as tourism, gastronomy, art, and education. Visit Finland and Food from Finland as well as many Italian bodies, such as Slow Food, see great opportunities for cooperation between our countries.

Embassies and consulates also offer excellent support to private initiatives, and Finns in Italy have the choice of a number of partners, such as Finland Societies, the embassy, and bodies like Team Finland, Finpro, Food from Finland, Visit Finland, and Tekes

(the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation). However, what is missing in Italy is a structure that would specifically promote cooperation between Finnish communities operating separately. It is, therefore, proposed that a nationwide committee be established to bring together expatriate Finns active in all regions of Italy. Its mandate would be to bring the actors together and to establish relations between cultural actors and businesses in different tourist attractions. The committee would provide support in the innovation phase and offer help in building networks and disseminating information through networking, training and communication. The committee would co-operate with various local stakeholders. If this would work in Italy, it might become a model for corresponding activities elsewhere.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament cannot express an opinion on the initiative because it is still in its early stages. At the same time, it proposes that those behind the initiative develop a cooperation network model, especially since the initiative is based on the knowledge of expatriate Finns about the local culture and business.

41. Finnish Expatriate Parliament's recognition of the Finnish Room Committee of the University of Pittsburgh, within the University of Pittsburgh's Nationality Rooms

For a long time, the Finnish Room Committee of the University of Pittsburgh has been raising funds and developed the drawings for a Finnish Nationality Classroom to be established in the University's famous Cathedral of Learning. From the beginning, this 42-storey tower was built to house nationality classrooms representing the original cultures that have been involved in the development of the American culture. The tower has 30 rooms which are seen by tens of thousands of visitors every year. Twenty-eight rooms are also used as ordinary classrooms in which the students of the University of Pittsburgh attend their courses.

The Nationality Rooms are a part of the University's wider international cultural activities. Every year, several grants offered by the Committees are given out to students and professors to support their international work. The Finnish Room Committee sponsors visiting musicians and scholars, organizes lectures and events related to the Finnish culture, receives new Finns who come to live in Pittsburgh, and provides translation services and classes in the Finnish language. The Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Programs staff also participate in the work with international relations carried out by the City of Pittsburgh and a number of local associations.

It is a source of amazement that, as yet, there is no Finnish Nationality Classroom. Completing this room and opening it for use would bring general attention to the appreciation of our culture.

The decoration of the room was selected in a competition for Finnish students of architecture in 2006. The winner was Mika Gröndahl, whose vision of a traditional smokehouse living room was further developed to include details of a traditional Finnish log construction as well as symbols and artifacts typical of late 18th and early 19th century. The Finnish Nationality Room will be built as a gift to the University which will then maintain it as part of the University's Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Programs.

The Finnish Room Committee and the small Finnish community in Pittsburgh hope to receive support for the project from all Finns in Finland and from expatriate Finns in the United States. They hope to be able to complete the construction work the following summer in 2018. For this to succeed, the project should be given extensive publicity.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

Taking into consideration that the project of the Finnish Room Committee within the University of

Pittsburgh involves significant action to cherish the Finnish cultural heritage in the United States, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that the information channels of Finland Society and the Secretariat of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament shall be utilized.

56. AN INITIATIVE TO THE CULTURAL COMMITTEE, ADDED BY THE SESSION

A working group to be established to create a cultural political program for the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Speakers' Council should investigate and decide upon establishing a possible working group to work on the cultural political program.

VIII RESOLUTIONS ON INFORMATION ISSUES

42. A database on expatriate Finns to be established for smart networking

Outside Finland, there are a lot of Finnish entrepreneurs and other people involved in business life, and many of them are interested in helping other Finns who wish to establish a business in their area. This initiative proposes to establish a database in which expatriate Finnish enterprises and experts can register information about themselves.

In the context of the 2012 session of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, there was a discussion event, where expatriate Finnish professionals expressed their interest in helping Finnish enterprises and entrepreneurs wishing to start or expand international operations in their countries of residence.

The Federation of Finnish Enterprises and the Finland Society had already earlier sought out expatriate Finns who were interested in helping Finnish entrepreneurs. Since then, the Federation of Finnish Enterprises has maintained a register of expatriate Finns who are available to help Finnish entrepreneurs and enterprises in other countries.

In the beginning of 2018, the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation (Tekes) and Finpro, an organization helping Finnish enterprises go international, will be merged into Business Finland within which the operations of both Finpro and Tekes will continue as before.

This is part of the Team Finland reform. Finpro has established an Expert Search database of persons living in different foreign countries, as well as other bodies who can help enterprises that are starting or expanding their international operations and who can, at the same time, function as points of contact for Finpro. The database includes service providers, consultants, law firms, and private individuals, among others. All contacts have been verified by Finpro.

To maintain a corresponding open database would involve a lot of work in checking the background of those included in the database and in keeping the information up to date. Information about Finnish enterprises abroad is available from various sources such as chambers of commerce and Finnish embassies. The Finland Society's network also makes it possible to find, for example, people working in a given sector in different countries.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that similar registers, as the one proposed in the initiative, already exist or are being planned. Expatriate Finnish experts and enterprises may contact the bodies who maintain such registers if they wish to be included in such networks.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes that networks must be open and that information about them should be disseminated effectively.

43. Following Finnish television and radio programs abroad

Expatriate Finns wish to be able to watch Finnish television programs and keep abreast of events in Finland with the help of television. A large number of expatriate Finns also pay the Public Broadcasting Tax but feel that they are not getting enough value for their money.

Earlier in the spring of 2017, the European Parliament adopted a regulation on the portability of online content services which will make it possible to view on-demand media services like Yle Areena within the European Union territory in 2018. This means that the entire content of Yle Areena will also be open for viewing within the EU territory early next year. However, this means that the viewer must register and log into the Yle Areena service so that it can be verified that the viewer is Finnish. Opening the service in this way requires changes to certain technical functionalities of Yle Areena, which means that Yle (the Finnish Broadcasting Company) cannot as yet specify a date when their European-wide service will open.

However, the entire content of Yle Areena cannot be made globally available because of copyright reasons. For some program content, Yle will not or cannot acquire global broadcasting rights. Typically, such content includes many international programs, international inserts within programs, music content, or international sports events. However, Yle always strives to acquire as extensive broadcasting rights as possible. About 80% of domestic content can be viewed anywhere in the world.

For these reasons, Yle will not have the possibility or the right to open the entire Yle Areena for global access next year, either.

All Yle's radio channels can be listened to as direct broadcasts anywhere in the world.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges Yle (the Finnish Broadcasting Company) to continue negotiating copyrights and other factors related to a global program offering with the relevant stakeholders so that, in the future, Yle Areena's offering could be available as extensively as possible all over the world.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Speakers' Council to negotiate with the government about the unjust features of the Public Broadcasting Tax.

44. Updating the communication methods of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and Finland Society

The electronic information channels of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and Finland Society include their respective websites and Facebook pages, their common electronic newsletter Sutinat, and e-mail. However, Twitter has not been taken into use because of insufficient resources, as Twitter would require constant updating and monitoring.

Finland Society's meeting documents and invitations to meetings are already now mostly sent electronically. So far, the documents of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament have been sent by traditional mail, but the FEP by-laws do not prevent sending them electronically.

It is already stated in the FEP's Standing Order (12 §) that the minutes of the parliamentary session shall be sent by e-mail to all member communities of the FEP and to all representatives and observers who participated in the session, and that the minutes shall also be published on the website of the FEP. Other articles concerning mailing (2 § and 4 §) only state that Finland Society "will send an invitation and the agenda for the session" to all registered Finnish organizations and registered representatives, without specifying the sending method. It is also stated that a summary of the motions and the report of activities shall be published on the website of the FEP.

Since the Finnish Expatriate Parliament does not have funding of its own, it constitutes a huge cost item in the budget of Finland Society, in particular in the years when it is convened to session. A total of 193 communities participate in the 2017 session, which means that the mailing of the documents is expensive and involves a lot of work. A transfer to fully electronic mailing will bring significant savings in terms of both money and working hours.

The Finland Society's website was modernized in the spring of 2017 and the website of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament will also be modernized, which will further improve the efficiency of disseminating information electronically.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that Finland Society and the Finnish Expatriate Parliament start to use electronic mail in their mail communication. Traditional mail can still be used when necessary.

45. Support to Finnish expatriate electronic media

The Ministry of Education and Culture sets aside a budget appropriation to be distributed by Finland Society as grants to support both Finnish expatriate associations and expatriate Finnish media as well as information efforts of Finnish expatriate associations and communities. Grants to organizations are distributed twice a year and information grants once a year. Grants to organizations are intended, for example, for organizing events and renovating meeting rooms and buildings.

Information grants fall into two categories: basic grants and special grants. Basic grants have been issued for the printing and mailing costs of expatriate Finnish magazines and the newsletters of associations and organizations. Special grants are issued to Finnish expatriate newspapers and magazines, the newsletters of Finnish expatriate associations, and to Finnish expatriate radio stations for purchases, specific projects, and broadcasting costs. In addition, special grants may be issued, for example, to Suomi Schools for specific projects such as a school magazine. Purchases are considered to cover things like cameras, computers, desktop publishing software and similar tools and, in the case of radio stations, acquisitions of music and various tools.

In Sweden, the Finnish-speaking radio station Sisuradio, with its regional departments, is affiliated with Swedish Radio, and there is a Finnish-speaking department within the Swedish national TV company SVT (Sveriges Television).

Finnish-speaking media continue to be a very important part of the life of expatriate Finns regardless of the Internet, and for example in the Spanish Costa del Sol, radio broadcasting in Finnish plays a significant role in disseminating information from the authorities and about emergencies and disasters. In addition, newspapers, magazines, and radio broadcasting in Finnish are crucially important everywhere for keeping up the Finnish language skills and a Finnish identity.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament proposes that the Speakers' Council negotiate with the Ministry of Education and Culture with the aim of securing sufficient funding for Finnish expatriate media, both traditional and electronic.

46. An electronic archive to be established for Ingrian Finnish cultural co-operation

After the repatriation program for Ingrian Finns ended on July 1, 2016, the Finnish government has an opportunity to support the start of a new phase of contacts with Ingrian Finns.

Ingrian Finns will be part of Finland's migration pol-

icy both as expatriate Finns and as repatriates. Finland has implemented several significant support projects in areas where Ingrian Finns live. The history of Ingrian Finns is also part of Finnish history. However, it is precisely during the time of Finnish independence that we have the least knowledge about Ingrian history.

An actively updated electronic archive with applications for mobile devices would form a foundation for continued cultural cooperation with Ingrian Finns. Internet technology makes it possible to provide shared access to existing archives in Finland, Estonia, Russia, and Sweden, with links to their electronic databases as well as historically valuable, fragile collections in private ownership. This is also a way to better preserve and display them. They can be combined with records of tradition, biographies, and photographic material owned by Ingrian Finnish communities, local associations and individual people. Being easily accessible, the archive would bring research, records of tradition, and audiovisual recordings all to one place covering the entire field of Ingrian Finnish culture.

In this way, Ingrian Finnish communities, local associations, and people interested in the history of their family or area would be able to participate in a culture which is their own or in which they have an interest. There is an obvious need for building together, partly with the help of experts and partly with volunteers, among Finns with an Ingrian background and their organizations, as well as among experts in history and research and Ingrians in Estonia, Russia, and Sweden.

It would be possible to follow the project, independent of place and time, and it would reach out to young and old Ingrian Finns, researchers and citizens, who live scattered in the neighboring areas and neighboring countries. The live archive would also function as a platform for learning about Ingrian history and culture. Apart from education, culture, and research, there are other possible focus areas related to, for example, professional activities and entrepreneurship.

It is the Ingrian Archive, donated by the association of Ingrian Finns in Finland and now housed in the Finnish National Archive, that plays a crucial role in recording the history of Ingrian Finns. The material in the archive comprises approximately 40 binders, and very little new material has been added since the Second World War. Electronic databases also exist in the Archive of the Finnish Literature Society (SKS), in the National Archives of Estonia, in various museums in St. Petersburg, and elsewhere. Newer material is lying fragmented in the archives of Ingrian associations in different countries.

At the time of adopting resolution 28/2012 of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament on the Ingrian records collection and database, cooperation was started between Ingrian associations in neighboring countries in order to collect and organize newer materials into an Ingrian archive. The plan was to digitize the Finnish Ingrian association's collection of approximately 1500 photos and link the photo database to an electronic map that could be used to present materials on cultural and family history in each parish and village. Due to

lack of funding, the project was not continued, but it is a good example of the possibilities offered by an electronic archive: via the map, it is possible to access photo folders and the necessary metadata, as well as stories, comments on biographies, copies of letters, video, etc. linked to the material.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament supports the efforts of Ingrian Finns to establish an electronic ar-

chive and database. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament, therefore, appeals to the Finnish government that it would allocate resources to establishing an electronic network on an Internet platform that would bring together scattered information and actors with an interest in Ingrian Finnish culture and history.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament considers the Ingrian Finnish project as an excellent pilot project, which can be used as a model for other surveys and studies on expatriate Finns.

IX RESOLUTIONS ON FINANCIAL AND STATUTORY ISSUES

47. Accounts and budget of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

The funding of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament comes entirely from the budget of the Finland Society. In the Finland Society's accounts, costs are itemized according to the different functions of which cost center 501 is reserved for the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. Each year, the staff of the Finland Society prepares a budget proposal to the Finland Society's Board which is responsible for the Society's accounts. The Board has authorized the Executive Director to report on the Finland Society's accounts to the Financial Committee of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, for the part related to the FEP.

In line with the FEP's resolutions 59/2005, 49/2007, 58/2010, 36/2012, and 38/2015, the Finland Society will continue supporting the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and will, also in the future, report on the FEP's expenditure to the Financial Committee and the Speakers' Council.

The expenditure of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament in session years has amounted to approximately 100,000 euro, in recent years 130,000 euro, which represents a very significant share of the economy of the Finland Society. In resolutions 36/2012 and 38/2015, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament urged the Ministry of Education and Culture to take this into account when considering the budgetary appropriations to be granted to the Finland Society. Neither the establishing of the FEP 20 years ago or the fact that the Finland Society functions as its Secretariat have brought no increase into the funds allocated to the Society. In session years, the expenses related to the Finnish Expatriate Parliament represent a quarter of the Finland Society's spending, while in the years when there is no session (as in 2016), the cost of the FEP is about one-third of the state subsidy. The Finland Society staff take care of the everyday business and advocacy work for the FEP together with the Board.

The FEP has no external sources of funding. The number of Finnish expatriate communities which have

ratified the FEP By-laws is increasing steadily (there are now 530 communities in 39 countries). There is an increasing demand for the services of the FEP and the Finland Society, but the state subsidy for activities for expatriate Finns, which is a significant source of funding for the Finland Society, has remained the same for 18 years. The subsidy has been received since 1997. The amount of the subsidy went down from 275,000 (in 2014) to 265,000 (in 2015) and further to 235,000 (in 2016). This subsidy is also used to support the activities of the FEP. A drop of 15% in two years seemed to be compensated when the subsidy was increased in 2017 (to 255,000). In fact, however, the Finland Society's capacity to support Finnish expatriate organizations, Suomi Schools, and Finnish expatriate media is reduced by another, even more dramatic cut in state subsidy that is taking place simultaneously and affecting the whole Society: the aid for cultural activities in Finnish expatriate organizations (in other words, the grants to organizations to support cultural and leisure activities) was cut in three consecutive years by about one-third, and cut further in 2017. The Finland Society, like the FEP, has a significant role to play in the state aid budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture, as it is the only supporter of expatriate Finns, whose number is approximately 1.6 million, including some 300,000 Finnish citizens.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament resolves that the Finland Society shall continue supporting the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and report on its expenses also to the Financial Committee and Speakers' Council of the next session.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Finnish Parliament and the Ministry of Education and Culture to pay attention to the Government Policy Programme on Expatriate Finns for 2017-2021, in which the government policy is to secure the operation of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

48. The website of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and its forms to be available in Russian - Создание сайта www.usp.fi и регистрационных форм на русском языке

According to Article 9 of the By-laws of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, the languages used by the parliament are Finnish, Swedish, English, and Russian. Since the founding session in 1997, it has been regular practice that those who need interpretation from and into Russian during the session have organized the interpretation for themselves. Throughout the history of the FEP, the FEP materials and information have been available in Finnish, Swedish, and English, and these three languages have also been used in the sessions. Interpretation has also been provided into these languages.

The staff of the Finland Society can take care of part of the communications and documentation of the FEP in Finnish, Swedish, and English, but part of the translation services have to be acquired from an external service provider. There is no Russian-speaking staff in the Finland Society, so all materials would have to be translated by an external service provider. If forms were available in Russian, their texts would also have to be translated by an external service provider.

As it is the primary purpose of the Finland Society to serve expatriate Finns, its aim is to provide as extensive service as possible, but the availability of resources sets the limits to what can be done. Of all communities involved in the FEP, 22 communities from Russia and 22 from Estonia have ratified the By-laws of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. Expanding the language offering from the present primarily depends on financing. The FEP does not have a budget of its own, separately from the Finland Society; instead, it has a cost center in the Finland Society's budget. The financial situation of the Finland Society requires prioritizing, and at the moment, it is not possible to expand the language offering of the FEP. It is, therefore, well justified to carry on with the present practice.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that, according to Article 9 in its By-laws, its languages are Finnish, Swedish, English, and Russian. In the founding session in 1997, it was jointly agreed that those who need interpretation into Russian will take care of the interpretation and translation services themselves. This practice has functioned well, and no amendments in this regard are proposed to the By-laws or Standing Order of the FEP. The possibility of the Eastern European region to translate their regional website into Russian will be investigated. At the moment, there are no resources available for translating the forms into Russian.

49. A badge of merit system for the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

It is proposed that a system of awards/badges of merit be set up for the Finnish Expatriate Parliament as soon as its status is established.

The Finland Society awards badges of merit to distinguished expatriate Finns. A proposal for a badge of merit can be made either by a Finnish expatriate community or by the Finland Society. A proposal can be made by a member of the Board of the Finland Society, the Executive Director, a Finnish expatriate community, or a private individual by submitting a proposal with justifications to Finland Society. The golden badge of merit is awarded in recognition of work carried out with special distinction and the silver and bronze badge in recognition of work carried out with distinction to strengthen the contacts of expatriate Finns with their home country and to preserve the Finnish culture among Finns living abroad and their children.

The Finland Society supports Finnish expatriate organizations and media by distributing grants from the subsidy annually allocated for this purpose by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The grants must be applied for. In 2016, the subsidy from the Ministry of Education and Culture was 195,000 euro, while in 2017, it is 170,000 euro. In 2016, the Finland Society also distributed an extra 30,000 euro to support the organization of "Finland 100" events in other countries. The FEP Speakers' Council receives a small annual grant to support the regions, and young people's participation in the session of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament is supported by awarding travel grants.

For the time being, the FEP does not have a budget of its own, only a cost center in the Finland Society's budget. In the present situation, it is not possible to set up a separate system of awards or badges of merit, but if the FEP is made permanent and/or it receives a dedicated budget appropriation, the initiative should be revisited.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

At the moment, the initiative is not topical. If the status of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament is made official, and/or it receives a dedicated budget appropriation, the initiative will be revisited.

50. Removal of a ratified organization from a registry of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament after inactivity

Under Article 1 of the By-laws of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, the FEP consists of the representatives of Finnish communities abroad. A community wishing to get involved in the FEP must ratify the FEP's By-laws. The By-laws contain no mention of how a community

could be expelled from the activities of the FEP. Neither is it stipulated in the By-laws or the Standing Order how active the communities must be.

According to the By-laws, the Finnish expatriate communities involved in the FEP have a right, but no obligation, to participate in sessions and to put forward initiatives. According to the FEP Handbook, it is desirable that only those Finnish communities, which have a visible and active role in their local community of expatriate Finns, participate in the activities of the FEP.

The 2005 session of the FEP adopted the following resolution (25/2005):

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges that the organizations taking part in its work be responsible in providing up-to-date contact information for the parliament's use and mandates the Secretariat to publish the contact information on the FEP's website. If an organization has not provided up-to-date contact information during the course of three session terms, the Secretariat shall remove the organization from the FEP's registry after hearing the regional Deputy Speaker.

It seems that this practice is still feasible. According to the By-laws, the parliament convenes every second or third year. Three session terms will mean a maximum of nine years and a minimum of six years. Many organizations operate on a voluntary basis and are, in practice, run by a few active volunteers. When, for one reason or another, long-term activists step down from the organization, its activities may be paralyzed. Such a situation may last a short time only, or it may prevail for a long time. For an open forum for co-operation like the FEP, it is not feasible to establish strict obligations regarding the operations. The more Finnish expatriate communities have ratified the By-laws of the FEP and thus become involved in its activities, the stronger the FEP will be.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that Resolution number 25 of the 2005 session already gives the Secretariat the possibility to remove a member organization from the membership register, if the organization has not updated its contact details within three session terms. The FEP considers that it is not appropriate to make this policy stricter.

51. The status of observers in the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

According to Article 2 of the By-laws, representatives of Finnish expatriate communities may participate in the FEP's plenary session so that each community may send 1 to 3 representatives to the session, depending on how many members it has. The number of observers, on the other hand, is not limited in any way.

The number of observers in the sessions has varied

as follows: 50 (2000), 53 (2002), 56 (2005), 57 (2007), 46 (2010), 27 (2012), 47 (2015), and 81 (2017). Even though observers have a passive role in the session (no right to speak or vote), it has been considered important that member communities may send other people, apart from the representatives, to follow the session. Considering the tight schedule of the two-day session, which makes it necessary to limit the duration of the speeches of representatives in the session (Standing Order, 8 §), it would be impossible timewise to allow observers also to speak in the session room.

According to 3 § of the Standing Order of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, the Finland Society should also be given the names of the representatives, their substitutes, and any other persons wishing to follow the work of the Parliament, no later than six weeks before the session. It is appropriate that observers are specifically mentioned in the Article, because they are also appointed by the member communities.

According to 7 § of the Standing Order, committee sessions are closed to outsiders.

According to the FEP Handbook, committees may decide to allow observers to be present and to speak in the committees. Observers do not have a right to vote. In case there are so many representatives that there is no room for observers in the meeting rooms, the Secretariat may, under authorization from the Speakers' Council, limit the right of observers to participate in a session or a committee meeting.

Observers are mentioned in 12 § of the FEP Standing Order. It is, therefore, consistent to also mention observers in 4 §.

According to Article 12 of the FEP By-laws, to amend the Parliament's Standing Order, a simple majority is required at the Expatriate Parliament session.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament resolves to amend 3 § of its Standing Order as follows:

The Finnish organizations are to inform the Finland Society of their participation no later than three months before the session. The motions, which each organization wishes to be considered, are also to be submitted at the same time. The Finland Society should also be given the names of the representatives, their substitutes, and observers, as well as any other persons wishing to follow the work of the Parliament, no later than six weeks before the session.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament resolves to amend 4 § of the Standing Order as follows:

The Finland Society will send the registered representatives and observers the agenda for the session, including all motions, no later than one month before the session.

The language of the Swedish version of paragraph 11 will be checked.

The Speakers' Council is urged to investigate the status of observers in the Finnish Expatriate

Parliament and to put forward an initiative to the next session about a possible amendment to the By-laws or Standing Order.

52. Social media groups in the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

According to Article 1 of the By-laws of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, communities joining the Expatriate Parliament have to confirm the FEP By-laws and inform the Secretariat about the ratification of the By-laws in writing.

The FEP is not an association in legal terms. The FEP cannot be registered in Finland because the nationality of its members does not meet the requirements of the Associations Act (26.5.1989/503). According to Article 1 of the FEP By-laws, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament consists of the representatives of Finnish communities abroad. This loose definition is to guarantee that as many Finnish expatriate communities as possible could participate in the FEP's activities.

According to the FEP Handbook, in order for a community to participate, it has to be fundamentally Finnish and a functioning part of the local Finnish community. The By-laws and Standing Order contain no provisions or instructions on the activity, ways of working, or meeting practices of the communities. Social media offers tools, for example, for communication between members, online meetings, disseminating information in an increasingly varied way, and online scheduling between different stakeholders. In this way, social media is not an end in itself but primarily a tool supporting the activities of an association.

The communities involved in the FEP form a very heterogeneous group. It is not important for the FEP whether a community acts virtually and meets online or in the same physical location. Today, many communities and groups keep in contact with the help of social media. Examples of this include Finns in the FEP's Southern Europe, Middle East and Africa region as well as Finnish students in Stockholm.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that any community, including social media communities, that fulfills the criteria for ratification by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament (the community is a functioning part of the local Finnish community and is fundamentally Finnish) and the requirements set on organizations/communities, can participate in the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament also urges the Secretariat to investigate whether future sessions can be aired through direct webcast.

The proposal was rejected.

53. Putting forward initiatives in the name of a region of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament to be made possible by decision of the regional meeting

Initiatives are the element in the FEP's activities where each Finnish expatriate community involved can exert influence on the activities of the Parliament and on its opinions and statements. According to Article 5 of the By-laws, each Finnish expatriate community, having ratified the By-laws, the Speakers' Council, and the Finland Society have the right to submit initiatives to the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. In addition, according to the FEP's Standing Order 3 §, the motions which each Finnish community wishes to be considered are to be submitted no later than three months before the session.

According to the FEP Handbook, an initiative must be signed by the President or other member of the Board of Directors of the community who made the initiative. Because of this requirement, initiatives cannot be made in an electronic form but have to be sent to the Secretariat by mail, fax, or as a scanned e-mail attachment.

Regional meetings are mentioned in Article 4 of the FEP By-laws: The plenary session will elect the Deputy Speakers and their alternates from among those candidates who have been nominated in the regional meetings preceding the plenary.

According to the FEP Handbook, Deputy Speakers shall strive to organize meetings in their respective regions. One regional meeting should always be organized so that the initiatives to be put forward from each region can be prepared and developed. The FEP regions are large in geographic terms and distances are long. It is not necessarily the case that all communities in the region, which have ratified the FEP rules, also participate in the regional meetings, which would undermine the credibility of the regional meeting in putting forward initiatives. On the other hand, if one of the communities in the region has made an initiative supported by the other communities in the region, one official signature must be considered sufficient. Other communities supporting the initiative can express their support by e-mail. This would not require an amendment of the By-laws but would make the operation smoother than the present procedure, where all communities supporting an initiative must submit a signed initiative.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concludes that the procedure of putting forward initiatives shall be made smoother in the way that the communities of a region may put forward a joint initiative officially signed by only one FEP community. Other communities supporting the initiative may announce their support by e-mail, sent by their chair-

person or other member who has the right to sign for the community.

54. Possibilities of young people to influence the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

A new Youth Act (1285/2016) came into force in Finland on January 1, 2017. The new Act aims to strengthen the inclusion of young people; to support their growth into independence, their spirit of community and leisure activities; to promote their equality, equal opportunities and rights; and to improve their living conditions and the environment for their growth. The achievement of these aims is based on: 1) shared responsibility, cultural diversity, and internationalism; 2) sustainable development, healthy living, and respect for life and the environment; and 3) cooperation across sectors. The Youth Act covers people who are under 29 years of age.

Since 2009, the Finland Society has been receiving a state subsidy from the Ministry of Education and Culture to be used for activities for youth. The Ministry requires that, in the future, youth activities are consistently developed, based on careful planning, and the social impact of the activities is evaluated.

The strategy of the Finland Society was updated in the spring of 2017. In the proposals for action based on the strategy, it is concluded that the Finland Society shall prepare a program for Finnish expatriate youth. To get background information for the program, the first thing to do is to survey the needs and wishes of Finnish youth abroad regarding, for example, the FEP. Finnish expatriate youth will be offered an opportunity to get involved and be heard about the forms of participation available today. (The preliminary contents of the program)

It is proposed in the initiative, that the Youth Committee be abolished and that the session elect a youth delegate with an alternate to work side by side with the Deputy Speakers in the Speakers' Council. Removing the Youth Committee from the list of permanent committees would give the wrong signal in a situation where there is a desire to develop youth activities. It is worth noting that among the committees, there is also a Senior Committee dealing with senior issues.

The Speakers' Council of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament consists of eight Deputy Speakers and their alternates. Every region has the opportunity to influence the choice of Deputy Speaker. Electing a Deputy Speaker is not a matter of age; the most suitable person should be selected for the position. It is recommended that young people also be selected for key positions in Finnish communities. In order to increase youth activity, the FEP regions may elect, for example, persons with the responsibility for youth matters to maintain close contact with the Deputy Speaker of the region.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament urges the Finland Society and the FEP to co-operate with young expatriate Finns in order to prepare a program for expatriate Finnish youth that will look into the situation and opportunities for young expatriate Finns and set guidelines for development. The implementation of the program for expatriate Finnish youth will be monitored in the FEP's Youth Committee, which will also decide upon the future guidelines of the program.

55. Sending session documents by e-mail

The Finland Society's strategy was updated in the spring of 2017, with well-timed communications in multiple channels as one of its areas of focus. The action includes, among other things, drafting a communications plan, taking into consideration the multiple channels of communication and the different target and user groups, as well as defining the goals and responsibilities related to communications. The communications plan will be prepared in the autumn of 2017. The new, increasingly diverse and service-oriented website went live on June 15. There are also plans to reform the website of the FEP. Both the FEP and the Finland Society have Facebook pages of their own.

According to the FEP's Standing Order 2 §, the Finland Society will send an invitation to all registered Finnish organizations no later than six months before the session. According to the Standing Order 4 §, the Finland Society will send the registered representatives the agenda for the session, including all motions, no later than one month before the session. The Standing Order does not mention in what way the documents shall be sent to the communities and those registered. It is thus possible to interpret the Standing Order to allow the material to be sent electronically. So far, the session documents mentioned in 2 § and 4 § of the Standing Order have been sent by mail.

More than 530 communities are involved in the activities of the FEP. The amount of paper to be mailed is significant (the environmental perspective) and the mailing effort means a large cost for the Finland Society (the financial perspective). In addition, the session documents are frequently changed and modified up until the days of the session (the efficiency perspective). Taking all this into consideration, it is recommended that the documents be sent electronically in the future, and that the latest versions be made available on the FEP's website.

According to the FEP's Standing Order 12 §, the minutes of the parliamentary session shall be sent by e-mail to all member communities of the FEP and to all representatives and observers who participated in the session. It is also stated that the minutes shall be published on the website of the Finnish Expatriate Par-

liament. It is consistent with this to amend paragraphs 2 and 4 of the FEP's Standing Order to the effect that in the future, the documents will be sent to the member communities in electronic form.

According to Article 12 of the FEP By-laws, to amend the Parliament's Standing Order, a simple majority is required at the Expatriate Parliament session.

RESOLUTION OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT:

The Standing Order of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament is amended as follows:

2 § The Finland Society will send an invitation to all registered Finnish organizations primarily by e-mail no later than six months before the session.

4 § The Finland Society will send the registered representatives and observers the agenda for the session, including all motions, primarily by e-mail, no later than one month before the session.



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