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FINNISH BAR ASSOCIATION  
SUOMEN ASIANAJAJAT

# UN GLOBAL COMPACT FINNISH BAR ASSOCIATION

Communication on Engagement  
17 April 2025

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# TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS

- We are pleased to confirm that the Finnish Bar Association (“FBA”) reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment, and Anti-Corruption.
- This Communication on Engagement covers the period from April 2023 to April 2025. It includes selected reports published by the FBA, highlighting the organisation’s activities in support of the UN Global Compact. We have also listed relevant events and initiatives the FBA has participated in that promote the Ten Principles.
- We warmly welcome any feedback on this Communication on Engagement and on our ongoing efforts to uphold and implement the Ten Principles.



# WHAT IS THE FINNISH BAR ASSOCIATION AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

- The Finnish Bar Association is a public entity that approves new attorneys-at-law and supervises their professional activities in Finland and upholds rule of law and fundamental rights. Only members of the Finnish Bar Association are entitled to use the title of attorney-at-law in Finland. Our activities are based on the Finnish Advocates Act.
- The Finnish Bar Association also plays a major role in shaping Finnish legal policy. The Finnish Bar Association is actively involved in developing legislation by participating in working or expert groups or by giving opinions on legislative proposals during the legislation process.



# OUR MISSION STATEMENT

- The Finnish Bar Association is a public entity established in 1919. It carries out statutory duties and exercises public authority in matters related to the membership and oversight of attorneys-at-law. The Association regulates the profession, provides guidance and training, and is responsible for organising the bar examination – a key requirement for becoming an attorney-at-law in Finland.
- One of the FBA's central roles is to contribute to the legislative process by bringing forward the perspectives of citizens and businesses on legal protection at the drafting stage. All activities are firmly grounded in the promotion and defence of the rule of law. Attorneys-at-law play a vital role in safeguarding Finland's strong constitutional state – now and in the future.



# SUPPORTING THE TEN PRINCIPLES

- We recognize that a key requirement for participation in the UN Global Compact is the annual submission of a Communication on Progress (COP) that describes the Bar Association's efforts to implement the Ten Principles. This includes a description of practical actions (i.e., disclosure of any relevant policies, procedures, activities) that the committed entity has taken (or plans to undertake) to implement the UN Global Compact principles in each of the four issue areas (human rights, labour, environment, anti-corruption).



Niko Jakobsson  
Secretary General  
Finnish Bar Association



# DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS

- As a signatory of the UN Global Compact, the Finnish Bar Association is committed to promoting responsibility in various ways – including supporting best practices, raising public awareness, contributing to dialogue, and ensuring that all its activities are grounded in the principles of responsibility.
- This Communication on Engagement (COE) report contains a description of practical actions that the Finnish Bar Association has taken to promote and advance the implementation of the UN Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption.



# CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

- All our activities are founded on responsibility. The Finnish Bar Association is a public entity regulated by the Finnish Advocates Act, which promotes the availability of independent, professional and ethically impeccable legal services for persons – regardless of income or place of residence – and legal entities in Finland.
- To us, responsibility means not only improving the judicial conditions in Finland, but also setting an example for responsible operations. We support certain permanent partners, such as the Pride Organization in Finland.
- All our members must follow a specific binding code of conduct for attorneys-at-law that goes through the whole society and helps to maintain the Rule of Law from the individual level right through to society at large.



HUMAN RIGHTS

# HUMAN RIGHTS

- Finnish Bar Association ensures that everyone in Finland has access to professional assistance in important legal matters. We promote the availability of independent and professional attorney services for everyone – whatever their means or place of residence. All attorneys-at-law are required to follow strict ethical guidelines at all times — both in their professional duties and in their private lives.
- As a Bar Association, we ensure that our members fulfil their obligations, such as attending 18 hours of supplementary training every year. We also provide guidance and supervision in order to ensure that attorneys perform the tasks given by their clients with diligence and integrity. We are in turn supervised by the Chancellor of Justice to ensure that we perform our statutory duties correctly.



# HUMAN RIGHTS

- The Finnish Bar Association is an active issuer of statements and is an active party in the legislative process. Under the Finnish Advocates Act of 1959, the FBA also acquired statutory duties.
- To support the continuous development of legislation the Finnish Bar Association has established 19 legal expert groups focusing on various areas of law. These groups issue statements on draft legislation and bills for new legislation. The legislators pay close attention to our statements during the drafting of new laws, and our experts are frequently heard by various Parliamentary committees.



# HUMAN RIGHTS

- Most recently, we launched a new expert group on Fundamental and Human Rights, reflecting our commitment to the rule of law and the promotion of equal access to justice.
- In 2024, the Finnish Bar Association issued 62 statements and attended 32 hearings of the parliamentary committee.
- Members of the Bar give their expertise to this work pro-bono.



# HUMAN RIGHTS

- Attorneys' work is based on fundamental and human rights. There is a broad consensus in the Finnish society on the role of attorneys-at-law in the development of judicial conditions. The Finnish Bar Association is primarily known for its statutory duties and promotion of fundamental and human rights.
- Throughout the ongoing years of Russia's attack on Ukraine, we have actively communicated on current judicial issues, injustices, and the role of attorneys – and have strengthened our cooperation with the National Bar Association of Ukraine.
- We have also deepened our collaboration with our Nordic counterparts to support the rule of law and the legal profession all over the world under exceptional circumstances. In 2024 we for example gave a joint statement in support of the legal profession and judiciary in the US.



LABOR

# LABOR

- Keeping Finland just and equal is important to us. To this end, when the regular workdays of the attorneys-at-law that volunteer in our expert groups end, they start preparing the statements required by thorough drafting of legislation. The expert groups of the Finnish Bar Association work to ensure that legislative bills passed by Parliament are comprehensive and well-considered, leaving no significant gaps and reflecting diverse perspectives.
- Our attorneys-at-law do volunteer work in many projects related to social responsibility, participating actively in projects coordinated by the Finnish Bar Association, in addition to the social responsibility projects of their own law firms.
- More than ten percent of attorneys-in-law in Finland serve in a position of trust within the Finnish Bar Association.



# LABOR

- Free legal advice clinics organized by the Finnish Bar Association's chapters are available in sixteen cities around Finland, usually once a month in each city.
- This drop-in service is also provided pro-bono by the members of the Finnish Bar. It ensures that all people regardless of age, gender or wealth needing legal help, will get a possibility to have their legal problems solved. Over 1000 consumers visit our clinics every year.
- A few times a year we also provide free legal advice clinics specially aimed at the LGBTQ+ community.



# LABOR

- To make legal matter more understandable to the general public, we created the role of media attorneys-at-law in 2020. Their role is to share information about the legal profession and to clarify common questions related to the administration of justice, defence, and dispute resolution. Media attorneys-at-law are experienced interviewees who are able to explain and comment on legal matters in a clear an accessible way, both in television and print media.



# LABOR

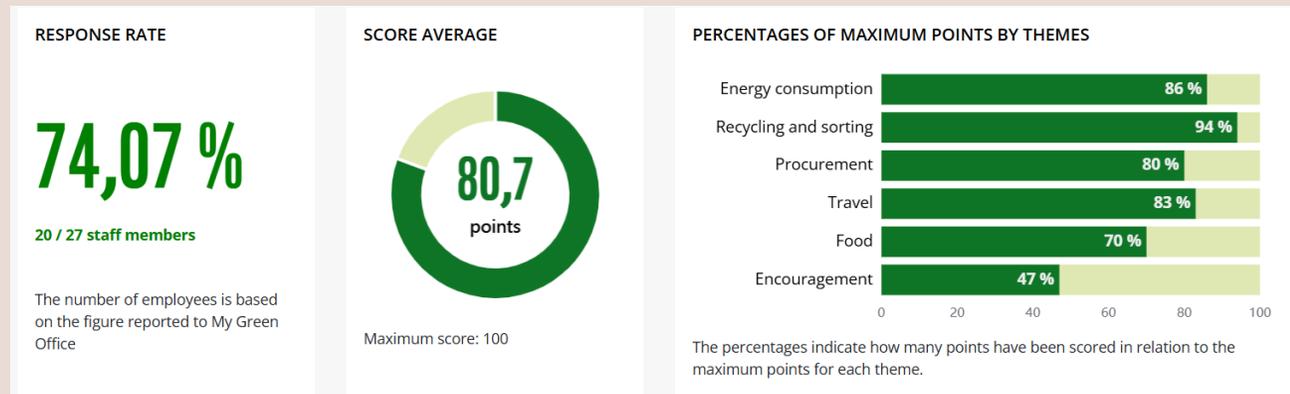
- The Finnish Bar Association contributes to the improvement of judicial conditions in Finland by issuing statements on the legislative and other projects of the Ministry of Justice, the European Union, the Parliament and various authorities. As a rule, the Finnish Bar Association's judicial policy statements are drawn up as volunteer work by FBA's expert groups. We have roughly 125 legal experts working in our twenty or so expert teams to improve society.
- Attorneys-at-law volunteer in giving legal education lessons in secondary schools and upper secondary schools throughout Finland. The lessons on the rights and obligations of young people are free of charge for the schools.
- We have been partners of the Helsinki Pride community since 2021, and as partner we aim to draw attention to the fundamental and human rights of sexual and gender minorities.



ENVIRONMENT

# ENVIRONMENT

- The Finnish Bar Association joined WWF Green Office in 2021. Green Office is a global environmental management system and certificate for organizations, allowing to reduce the workplace's carbon footprint and to use natural resources sustainably.
- Green Office is the most influential environmental system in the world. To be able to hold the Green Office certificate, we must report annually about our progress.



# ENVIRONMENT

- We have digitalized all our paper archives in 2022 and encouraged law firms to do the same. We work often remotely, arrange web courses and favor vegetarian and fish food in our events. We measure and report all our environmental work.
- From a sustainability perspective, our workplace takes part in a yearly cycling competition that encourages people to commute by bike. We also take part in Energy Saving Week each year, and our team-building days are spent in nature.
- All training courses for attorneys-at-law are organized with the option to participate remotely and we are currently transitioning from physical attorney-at-law ID cards to a digital attorney-at-law app.



# ANTI-CORRUPTION

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- The prevention and exposure of money laundering and terrorist financing are a part of corporate responsibility. The provisions of the anti-money laundering act (444/2017) apply to entrepreneurs operating in certain lines of business, including attorneys-at-law.
- Risk-based operations are based on the attorney-at-law's assessment of the money laundering and terrorist financing risks entailed by his or her assignments and client relationships. The written risk assessment must also take geographic risks and technological advances into account, particularly with the proliferation of electronic services.
- Based on their risk assessments, attorneys are required to draw up appropriate guidelines and practical procedures for identifying and knowing their clients. Attorneys-at-law are required to ensure that the personnel of the law firm is aware of the procedures and guidelines followed at the office, and that compliance is monitored.



# ANTI-CORRUPTION

- The Finnish Bar Association instructs attorneys on their obligations related to the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing and supervises compliance with the provisions of the Money laundering act. Attorneys-at-law must be able to demonstrate to the Bar Association that they have appropriate risk-based procedures in place for knowing their customers and managing the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing.
- In 2024, the Finnish Bar Association initiated a revision of its Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Guide with the aim of publishing the updated version in 2025. The goal is to make the guide a more illustrative and comprehensive tool for all attorneys, providing clearer guidance and practical examples to support them in fulfilling their AML obligations effectively.



# CONCLUSION

- As the preeminent national voice of the legal profession, Finnish Bar Association is a quintessential member of the UN Global Compact, for it is through lawyers functioning as advocates that the goals of the UN Global Compact are often implemented. We respectfully request the application be granted.





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