

Strategic priority areas of the Finnish Foreign Service in 2018–2022

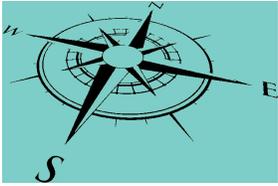
The strategic priorities of the Foreign Service — Foreign and security policy aims to strengthen Finland’s international position, to secure Finland’s independence and regional integrity as well as to improve the security and welfare of people in Finland. Taking note of global interdependencies, Finland promotes sustainable development as well as international stability, peace, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and equality.

The Ministry has defined the strategic priorities for its activities, to be advanced through cooperation between different policy sectors and different functions.

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Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFAF)

Vision

The wellbeing of the people of Finland is enhanced.

Mission

To strengthen Finland's international position, secure Finland's independence and regional integrity as well as to improve the security and welfare of people in Finland.

Values

Sustainable Development

International Stability

Peace

Democracy

Human Rights

Rule of Law

Equality

1. Security & Wellbeing

Enhance the security and wellbeing of Finland and its inhabitants.

Stakeholder(s)

EU

The Foreign Service will enhance the security and wellbeing of Finland and its inhabitants by working to improve the security and stability of the country and its neighbouring areas and by contributing to international security and stability. The aim of the Foreign Service is a unified, strong and operationally capable EU that focuses especially on growth and security. The remaining 27 EU Member States have started a process of development that will require Finland to actively present its views together with likeminded countries, and to engage in long-term commitment, for example to the EU as a security community. Concrete results must be reached particularly in efforts to deepen the single market, promote free trade, strengthen the EU's external action and defence cooperation and manage migration.

1.1. EU

Strengthen the EU's ability to act and to reinforce its global role.

The Foreign Service will make full use of the opportunities offered by Finland's forthcoming EU Presidency in 2019 to strengthen the EU's ability to act and to reinforce its global role.

Stakeholder(s):

EU

1.2. Baltic Sea Region

Promote the stability, security and prosperity of the Baltic Sea region.

The Foreign Service will promote the stability, security and prosperity of the Baltic Sea region.

Stakeholder(s):

Sweden :

It will intensify practical cooperation especially with Sweden.

Nordic Countries :

It will also draw on Nordic cooperation in dealing with both regional and international challenges.

1.3. United States

Promote political and economic cooperation with the United States.

The Foreign Service will promote political and economic cooperation with the United States and will focus especially on getting its own views heard.

Stakeholder(s):

United States

1.4. NATO

Develop cooperation between Finland and NATO.

NATO will play a key role in the promotion of transatlantic security. The Foreign Service will develop broad-based cooperation between Finland and NATO.

Stakeholder(s):
NATO

1.5. Arctic Region

Promote stability and the economic potential of the Arctic region.

Stability and the economic potential of the Arctic region will be promoted in cooperation with the other Arctic States.

Stakeholder(s):
Arctic States

Arctic Council :

During its Chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2017–2019), Finland is seeking to consolidate the Council's position and to advance the national interests of Finland.

1.6. Russia

Develop contacts with Russia based on the two-track policy pursued by the EU.

The Foreign Service will develop its contacts with Russia based on the two-track policy pursued by the EU. The jointly imposed restrictive measures against Russia will be observed and dialogue with Russia will be continued on selected matters of interest to Finland and the EU. Normalising cooperation between the EU and Russia is conditional upon finding a resolution to the Ukraine crisis and upon Russia's compliance with international law and its other international commitments. The Foreign Service will continue to actively influence the shaping of the European Union's common policy on Russia.

Stakeholder(s):
Russia

Ukraine

1.7. Conflict Resolution

Participate in conflict resolution and in the rebuilding of societies through crisis management, peacebuilding and development cooperation.

The Foreign Service will participate in conflict resolution and in the rebuilding of societies through crisis management, peacebuilding and development cooperation.

1.8. Mediation & Dialogue

Emphasise the role of mediation and dialogue in foreign and security policy.

The Foreign Service will emphasise the role of mediation and dialogue in foreign and security policy.

1.9. Democracy, Governance & Resilience

Build democracy, good governance and crisis resilience in fragile states.

Building of democracy, good governance and crisis resilience in fragile states, especially in the zone extending from Afghanistan to the Sahel, will be an important part of this work. By supporting democratic and sustainable

development and assisting developing economies in climate change mitigation and adaptation, we can help to prevent crises and forced migration.

Stakeholder(s):

Fragile States

Afghanistan

1.10. Disasters & Crises

Prepare for unexpected events and participate in alleviating their effects.

The Foreign Service is prepared for unexpected events, such as natural disasters and other humanitarian crises, and will participate in alleviating their effects.

1.11. Terrorism & Extremism

Participate in international cooperation aimed at combatting terrorism and weakening the breeding ground for extremist movements.

The increased importance of the link between external and internal security is evident in efforts to counter terrorism and cyber and hybrid threats. The Foreign Service will participate in international cooperation aimed at combatting terrorism and weakening the breeding ground for extremist movements.

Stakeholder(s):

EU :

The fight against terrorism requires seamless cooperation between different actors, including closer cooperation with partner countries in the EU.

1.12. Hybrid Threats & Crisis Resilience

Engage in international cooperation to prevent hybrid threats and to strengthen national crisis resilience.

The Foreign Service will engage in international cooperation to prevent hybrid threats and to strengthen national crisis resilience.

1.13. Cyber Threats

Participate in the fight against cyber threats and promote stability, security and freedom of interaction in the digital environment.

It will participate in the fight against cyber threats and promote stability, security and freedom of interaction in the digital environment.

1.14. Arms Control

Support arms control.

The Foreign Service supports arms control as a means to promote global security.

1.15. Arms Trafficking & WMD

Prevent illicit arms trafficking and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Foreign Service will work to prevent illicit arms trafficking and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The aim is to promote greater responsibility in the international trade of defence materiel and in the development of weapons technology.

DEMONSTRATION ONLY

2. Rules

Promote a rules-based international system.

Stakeholder(s)

UN :

Finland benefits from international relations that are based on jointly agreed goals and principles such as those in the UN Charter.

The Foreign Service will promote a rules-based international system.

2.1. International Law & Cooperation

Strengthen an international system grounded in international law and deepen rules-based cooperation.

The Foreign Service will work to strengthen an international system grounded in international law and to deepen rules-based cooperation.

Stakeholder(s):

UN :

As a global organisation, the UN plays a central role in this cooperation, but regional organisations such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe are also important along with the norms they establish.

OSCE

Council of Europe

2.2. EU

Strengthen the EU's unity and ability to act, based on the Union's common legal basis and values.

In its work, the Foreign Service will give priority to strengthening the EU's unity and ability to act, based on the Union's common legal basis and values. Fostering the EU as a security community and further developing the Union's external capabilities will strengthen Finland's own position as well. A unified EU will contribute most effectively to the promotion of universal values, sustainable development and the security and stability of Europe.

Stakeholder(s):

EU

2.3. WTO

Support the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The EU must take the initiative in actively supporting the World Trade Organisation (WTO). A well-functioning WTO capable of managing globalisation and advancing the rules-based system of international trade is important for Finland.

Stakeholder(s):

World Trade Organisation

2.4. Global Challenges

Foster a high level of ambition in the work of the EU as it responds to global challenges.

Additionally, it is essential to foster a high level of ambition in the work of the EU as it responds to global challenges, such as the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda and the climate actions required by the Paris Agreement.

Stakeholder(s):

EU

2.5. International Agreements

Promote an international system that is based on agreements.

The Foreign Service will continue to promote an international system that is based on agreements, as this underpins the security and wellbeing of Finnish society and helps Finnish companies operating internationally.

Stakeholder(s):

Finnish Society

Finnish Companies

2.6. AI

Promote the development of international regulation in the field of artificial intelligence.

The Foreign Service will also promote the development of international regulation in the field of artificial intelligence, in particular from the viewpoint of security policy, democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

2.7. Human Rights

Defend and foster the development of international law and human rights standards.

Finland will defend and foster the development of international law and human rights standards. One of the priority areas that Finland will focus on is the work to counter impunity, an essential element of which is the development of the EU's sanctions mechanism.

3. Economic Relations

Promote open economic relations that foster Finland's growth and support the involvement of Finnish companies in international trade and value chains.

Stakeholder(s)

Finnish Companies

The Foreign Service will promote open economic relations that foster Finland's growth and will support the involvement of Finnish companies in international trade and value chains.

3.1. Trade Liberalisation

Promote open economic interaction and solutions that support trade liberalisation.

The Foreign Service will promote open economic interaction and solutions that support trade liberalisation, and will support measures that boost the EU's ability to act in trade policy.

3.2. Trade Agreements

Support EU trade agreements.

The Foreign Service will also support EU trade agreements. These form a part of globalisation management and will also be important for Finland's expanding international trade relations and for the country's wellbeing in the changing international operating environment.

Stakeholder(s):

EU

3.3. Business Environments & Trade Barriers

Encourage favourable business environments and seek the removal of trade barriers.

The Foreign Service will promote Finland's exports by encouraging favourable business environments and seeking the removal of trade barriers.

3.4. Free Trade Agreements

Improve companies' awareness and use of free trade agreements.

The Foreign Service will play a part in improving companies' awareness and use of existing free trade agreements.

Stakeholder(s):

Finnish Companies

3.5. Value Chains & Partnerships

Support the participation of Finnish companies in international value chains and foster partnerships based on innovative expertise.

The Foreign Service will support the participation of Finnish companies in international value chains and foster partnerships based on innovative expertise.

3.6. International Procurements & Projects

Support the participation of Finnish entities in international procurements and development cooperation projects.

Additionally, the Foreign Service will support the participation of Finnish entities in international procurements and development cooperation projects.

3.7. Digitalisation & AI

Engage in cooperation on digitalisation and artificial intelligence.

The Foreign Service will actively engage in cooperation on digitalisation, ensuring that the opportunities offered by artificial intelligence, for example, are utilised.

3.8. Foreign Investment

Attract foreign investment to Finland.

Attention will also be focused on attracting foreign investment to Finland.

3.9. Bioeconomy & Clean Solutions

Promote Finnish expertise in the bioeconomy and clean solutions sectors.

The Foreign Service will promote the effective utilisation of Finnish expertise in the bioeconomy and clean solutions sectors, including in energy-efficient renewable energy solutions and the opportunities provided by the circular economy.

3.10. Sustainable Development

Promote sustainable development.

Through all of these commercial and economic activities, the Foreign Service will seek to promote sustainable development in Finland and globally.

3.10.1. Developing Countries

Strengthen sustainable development in developing countries.

The Foreign Service will work to strengthen sustainable development in developing countries also by focusing on the economic foundations, job creation, business and livelihoods, and taxation capacity.

Stakeholder(s):

Developing Countries

4. Human Rights, Equality & Democracy

Strengthen human rights, equality and democracy.

The Foreign Service will work to strengthen human rights, equality and democracy. The Foreign Service will promote human rights, equality, equity and support for participation as part of global responsibility.

4.1. Girls & Women

Strengthen the position and rights of girls and women.

The Foreign Service will intensify efforts to strengthen the position and rights of girls and women, for instance by supporting the work of international actors and through advocacy and resources. Equality is also supported through observance of the regulations on open international trade.

Stakeholder(s):

Girls

Women

4.2. Democracy, Law & Resilience

Strengthen democracy, the rule of law and societal resilience globally.

The Foreign Service will work to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and societal resilience globally.

4.3. Education, Training & Capacity Building

Offer expertise and know-how in education and training as well as related capacity building.

The Foreign Service will offer its cooperation partners information and experience based on Finnish models and practices. This includes offering expertise and know-how in education and training as well as related capacity building.

4.4. Law, Rights & Freedom

Promote the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms.

Freedom, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms serve as the basis of the EU's values and standards. The Foreign Service will work to promote these and to make sure all EU Member States are committed to them.

Stakeholder(s):

EU Member States

5. Climate Change

Promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda and work to mitigate climate change.

The Foreign Service will promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda and will work to mitigate climate change. Finland has pledged to bear its share of the global responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All of the Foreign Service's priorities promote the attainment of the goals set in the 2030 Agenda.

5.1. Sustainable Development

Promote sustainable development.

The Foreign Service also promotes sustainable development through its operating practices in the Ministry and the missions abroad.

5.2. Foreign Policy

Ensure that sustainable development and consistent and coherent action are integral to Finland's foreign policy.

The Foreign Service plays a part in ensuring that sustainable development and consistent and coherent action are integral to Finland's foreign policy overall and that there is improved coordination between all administrative branches.

5.3. Africa

Promote of sustainable development in Africa.

Through development policy and development cooperation, Africa will remain Finland's central partner in the promotion of sustainable development.

Stakeholder(s):

Africa

5.4. Experiences & Practices

Emphasise Finland's experiences and practices.

In its international cooperation, the Foreign Service will emphasise Finland's experiences and practices. These include the priorities set out in the Government Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely a carbon-neutral and resource-wise Finland and a non-discriminating, equal and competent Finland.

5.5. Paris Agreement

Promote implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The Foreign Service will promote implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change and take part in international cooperation to mitigate climate change and to promote adaptation, including through the energy and climate diplomacy of the EU.

5.6. Developing Countries

Focus on environmentally sustainable development in developing countries.

In addition, the Foreign Service will focus more strongly on environmentally sustainable development in developing countries by supporting sector-specific programmes in these countries, participating in international climate and environmental financing and by taking part in normative work.

Stakeholder(s):

Developing Countries

5.7. Clean Tech

Promote exports, innovations and investment in Finnish cleantech expertise.

The Foreign Service will support sustainable development by promoting exports, innovations and investment in Finnish cleantech expertise, as well as striving to strengthen research and innovation activities.

5.8. Energy & Carbon

Promote clean energy and circular economy solutions and reduction of the adverse effects of black carbon.

The Foreign Service will promote clean energy and circular economy solutions and reduction of the adverse effects of black carbon.

5.9. Arctic Cooperation

Strengthen wellbeing both in the Arctic region and globally.

The aim of Arctic cooperation will be to strengthen wellbeing both in the Arctic region and globally by promoting viewpoints that cover security, the environment and climate issues, as well as commercial and economic considerations.

6. Services

Provide services.

The Foreign Service will provide a range of services. The Foreign Service serves the entire state administration, citizens, companies, organisations, the media and other stakeholders. The functioning of the Foreign Service is dependent on a comprehensive and agile network of diplomatic and consular missions abroad, which offers channels and tools that should be utilised to the maximum. The rapidly changing environment requires that the Foreign Service is capable of effective anticipation, monitoring, analysis, information distribution and flexible use of resources. With its diverse range of expertise, it is possible for Finland to promote its objectives and to improve risk management as part of comprehensive security even in rapidly changing conditions. Strengthening Finland's crisis resilience and that of the Foreign Service is of key importance. Effective bilateral and multilateral diplomacy at various levels, based on solid expertise and compact networks, is an indispensable tool of the Foreign Service for getting its views heard.

6.1. Digitalisation & Social Media

Increase attention on digitalisation, including social media.

The Foreign Service will focus increasing attention on digitalisation, and this will include social media as an operating environment.

6.2. Business Services

Serve the needs of companies.

The Foreign Service will also serve the needs of companies. The roles and responsibilities of Heads of Mission as leaders of Team Finland activities will grow. This will be based on close cooperation and coordinated goal-setting in cooperation with the Business Finland organisation.

6.3. Export Promotion

Develop know-how in export promotion.

The Foreign Service will also systematically develop its know-how in export promotion.

6.4. Consular & Entry Permit Services

Provide consular and entry permit services.

A growing number of Finns and foreigners use the consular and entry permit services provided by the Foreign Service. The services provided on a daily basis can include travel safety, assistance for Finns in distress abroad, crises requiring consular assistance and contingency planning, issuing passports and visas, handling cases of death abroad, and entry permit and family reunification matters.

6.5. Visas

Rapidly process of visa applications.

It is important to ensure that the services provided by the Foreign Service give a positive signal to international experts considering living in Finland. Rapid processing of visa applications will facilitate foreign visitors' smooth arrival in Finland, ensuring that the Finnish economy can benefit from the euros spent by them.

6.6. Consular Service Development

Further develop consular services.

The consular services offered by the Foreign Service will be further developed with due regard to the upcoming amendments to the Consular Services Act and the needs of Finnish missions abroad.

6.7. Communications & Branding

Promote Finland's interests through effective communications and country branding work.

Finland's interests will be promoted through effective communications and country branding work. The public diplomacy and country branding work of the Foreign Service are based on Finland's position as a state governed by the rule of law, a dynamic Nordic welfare state rooted in equality and Western values, and a state that holds the European Union as its most important political reference group.

6.8. Economic Relations

Present and promote Finnish know-how, key experts, culture, curiosities and phenomena, and the strengths of Finnish society.

External economic relations will be supported by presenting and promoting Finnish know-how, key experts, culture, curiosities and phenomena, and the strengths of Finnish society.

6.9. Awareness & Implementation

Make the strategic priorities widely known and support implementation.

The Foreign Service will make the strategic priorities laid down in this policy paper widely known through various channels of communication and will also support the implementation of these priorities.

6.10. Communications Skills

Improve the communications skills of Foreign Service personnel.

Special attention will be paid to improving the communications skills of Foreign Service personnel.

6.11. IT Skills

Update information technology skills in the Foreign Service.

The changes brought about by the increasingly rapid progress of artificial intelligence and the algorithm economy require effective updating of information technology skills in the Foreign Service.

6.12. Safety

Safeguard the ability of the Foreign Service to operate effectively.

Safeguarding the ability of the Foreign Service to operate effectively will be of greater significance in a rapidly changing international operating environment.

Administrative Information

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Submitter:

Given Name: Owen

Surname: Ambur

Email: Owen.Ambur@verizon.net

Phone: