Self-determination Model Presented to Finnish Parliament

article, legal gender recognition

On 22 September, the Finnish government presented its proposal to introduce self-determination in gender recognition. Finland is the last amongst its Scandinavian neighbours to have an infertility requirement on the books.

If adopted, the procedure will be written and based on self-declaration of the applicant. The requirement for infertility and for a mental health diagnosis will be removed as well as any other medical requirements. The procedure will be accessible for Finnish citizens and resident non-citizens, such as recognised refugees. An applicant needs to submit a written application, which needs to be confirmed after at least 30 days.

TGEU regrets that the government has not taken up the recommendation of the specialised working group to enable access for minors. The working group had suggested 15 years of age. The government proposal foresees only applications for legal adults. This leaves minors without the possibility to have documents supporting their lived gender identity. 71% of trans people in Finland realised they are trans before the age of 18, according to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency's LGBTI Survey 2019.

On a positive note, trans parents will be able to have their gender identity recognised on the birth certificate of their children. This prevents unnecessary outings and safety risks for the family.

The proposal has long been awaited. Civil society organisations have been criticising the lack of reform for over ten years. TGEU calls on Finnish legislators to quickly move ahead and finalise this overdue reform, adding a pathway for minors.

Read the press release from the Finnish government.