



Lapsiasiavaltuutetun lausunto ulkoministeriölle; Euroopan neuvoston syrjimättömyyden, moninaisuuden ja osallisuuden johtokomitean koronaepidemiaa koskeva kysely

Viite: Ulkoministeriön lausuntopyyntö 29.5.2020;
PCOTMWMA-24

Taustaa

Euroopan neuvoston syrjimättömyyden, moninaisuuden ja osallisuuden johtokomitea (CDADI) on valmistelemassa arviota siitä, miten COVID-19 -pandemia on vaikuttanut syrjimättömyyteen, moninaisuuteen ja osallisuuteen jäsenvaltioissa. Kyselyssä kartoitetaan COVID-19 -kriisin vaikutuksia kansallisiin, etnisiin, uskonnollisiin ja kielellisiin väestöryhmiin sekä pakolaisiin ja LGBTI-henkilöihin.

Answers by the Ombudsman for Children in Finland

The role of the Ombudsman for Children is to ensure that the status and rights of children are upheld by legislators and society's decision-makers. The Ombudsman for Children is an independent and impartial central government authority whose mandate is based on the [Act on the Ombudsman for Children \(1221/2004\)](#) and on the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The Ombudsman does not have authority over the affairs of individual children or families and cannot comment or overturn other authorities' decisions. The Ombudsman is placed in the administrative sector of the Ministry of Justice.

- 1. Please provide information on any steps taken to establish whether the COVID-19 pandemic has had a different impact on the specific groups or communities mentioned above as compared to the general population, or on any available reports, research or statistical data to this effect.*

The Ombudsman for Children in Finland was nominated as an independent expert member in the Scientific Panel set by the Government of Finland that assessed the current and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Finland¹. The Scientific Panel consisted of 13 academics from several fields of disciplines, and it published its report 1st of June 2020, but this report is available only in Finnish. In this report it was acknowledged that the pandemic poses a risk for different minority groups, such as roma-people, sami-people, asylum seekers, people with disabilities, people placed in closed institutions, such as prisons, people placed in semi-closed institutions, such as children's

¹https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/10616/tieteellista-tukea-koronakriisin-jalkihoitoon-covid19-tiedepaneeli-asetettu



homes and half-way houses, and especially people with intersectional marginalized position. Children and young people belonging to different minorities are in serious risk of short and long-term negative risks of the COVID-19 -pandemic.

- 2. Please provide information on measures taken to mitigate any differentiated impact on the above-mentioned groups or communities.*

In Finland it is forbidden for service providers to gather and register information on the ethnic background of service users, and thus it is difficult to follow up, how the pandemic affects people that belong to different marginalized groups. The Ombudsman for Children in Finland has been active on gaining information from NGO's, the Lutheran Church, researchers, citizens and different municipal and governmental agents, and international agents such as the Ombudsmen for Children in Nordic countries and Europe (ENOC).

The Ombudsman did a survey for the Child Advisory Board² on the effects of COVID-19 on the child population in Finland from the point of view of different actors.

The Ombudsman provided information for the group set by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health that assessed the effects of pandemic on the child's rights.

The Ombudsman has held regular meetings with different actors to provide and gain knowledge on the wellbeing of different groups of children and young people.

The Ombudsman has provided weekly reports to the Government on the observations that the institution has gained from different sources.

- 3. Please describe the measures taken, if any, to reach out to the above-mentioned groups or communities, to involve (or consult) their representatives in communicating the government response to the COVID-19 crisis, and to enable community leaders to provide feedback on the challenges faced by their communities.*

According to the information that the Ombudsman has received, different NGO's, governmental agencies and municipal level actors have been active in taking contact to the different groups of people and their communities, and the communication has been reciprocal.

- 4. Please provide information on the impact of measures taken by law enforcement officials regarding compliance with containment regulations by the above-mentioned communities.*

The Ombudsman for Children has nothing to report.

² <http://www.lapsiasia.fi/en/ombudsman/neuvottelukunta/>



5. *Please provide information on media and other public statements stigmatising or inciting hatred towards certain communities in connection with COVID-19. Please describe actions taken to counter this phenomenon.*

The Ombudsman for Children is aware of the stigmatizing news on certain minority groups being more infected than other groups (people with Somali-background living in Helsinki and people living in facilities for arriving refugees and asylum seekers).

Jyväskylässä 9.6.2020

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