

FINLAND: END FORCED STERILISATION

Dear Minister Annika Saarikko,

it is a human right that one's gender identity be acknowledged. While Finland provides an opportunity for change of legal gender markers by means of the "Act on Legal Recognition of the Gender of Transsexuals", it does so only under highly restrictive circumstances. Among other things, applicants must present a medical statement certifying that they wish to belong permanently to the "opposite" gender, live in that gender role and have been sterilised or are "for some other reason infertile". The Act also restricts the possibility to access legal gender recognition to individuals who have reached the legal age of majority, i.e. the age of eighteen. The whole process is cumbersome, stigmatising, and may take more than three years.

Because of these obstacles, transgender persons such as Sakris Kupila, a 21 year old medical student, youth activist and a defender of transgender rights, are being denied legal gender recognition. Furthermore, those who are advocating for more human laws face discrimination and harassment – for example, because of his work advocating for the rights of trans people, Sakris has faced intimidation, threats of violent beatings, and open hostility, forcing him to take a year away from his education.

The current procedure to obtain legal gender recognition in Finland is humiliating and violates the rights of transgender persons to be free from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, to the highest attainable standard of health, to private life, and to recognition as a person before the law. In falsely conceptualising trans persons as objects of medicine rather than human beings, it further contributes to an atmosphere of hostility towards transgender persons, particularly those advocating for their human rights.

WE THEREFORE CALL ON YOU TO

- Ensure that the gender of Sakris Kupila is legally recognised without requiring him to undergo sterilisation, other medical treatment, or a mental health diagnosis;
- Revise the Act on Legal Recognition of the Gender of Transsexuals by abolishing the need for sterilisation, other medical treatment, and a mental health diagnosis as requirements for a person's legal recognition of their gender identity;
- Develop a gender recognition procedure that is quick, transparent, based on self-determination, and available irrespective of age, medical or financial status;
- Recognize and support transgender rights and those who, like Sakris, defend transgender rights in Finland.

Sincerely,

NAME, SURNAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
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The addresses will only be used for the petition and not be given out to any third parties. Please send the petition to the above mentioned address. Please send a copy to the Finnish embassy: Botschaft von Finnland . Rauchstraße 1 . 10787 Berlin

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