



FINLAND

“ A turn in the wrong direction ”

By Fingo

Main trends

Through the general election debates, 2022 was a starting point for the reduction and redirection of Finnish ODA. Development cooperation was a minor theme in the general elections of 2023. In the general political debate, most of the political parties and the public discussed the need to balance the state budget in order to reduce the deficit. Centre-right parties emphasised cuts in expenses, excluding tax rises from the fiscal toolbox. The nationalist-populist Finns Party, in particular, targeted development cooperation as an expense that should be cut. The 2023 election result led to the formation of a nationalist-populist and centre-right government in the summer of 2023. The new government announced major cuts in development cooperation and will lead to a lowering of the level of Finnish ODA during the 2023-2027 electoral term. In addition, the new government has stated that the Finnish ODA is going to be targeted “more strategically”. The meaning of this is still rather vague. It seems that the main idea is to 1) reduce the number of countries with bilateral cooperation, 2) introduce conditions for ODA – e.g. partner countries should not support Russia in the invasion of Ukraine in the UN and 3) to a larger extent pursue synergy between trade and development objectives.

The importance of Ukraine in the whole of the ODA was emphasised in 2022. In the coming years, it seems that in terms of funding Ukraine is going to be Finland's most important partner.

Government's relationship with civil society

The relationship between the government and civil society organisations has so far been good. There are both formal and informal opportunities to interact. Formal opportunities include extensive budget and political hearings or CSO participation

Reported ODA: EUR 1447 million

0.58% GNI (↑ from 0.47% in 2021)

Non-inflated ODA: EUR 1079 million

0.43% GNI (↑ from 0.45% in 2021)

Total inflated ODA: EUR 368 million

25.4% of total



in various official bodies steering development policy and there are many informal exchanges of information. We hope that during this electoral term, the new government will strengthen this tradition and consult CSOs on the preparation of the new policy report on trade and development policy which has been announced.

The Finnish government should:

- **Consult with development cooperation actors, including CSOs, before making decisions on ODA cuts. Serious consideration is needed to ensure that cuts cause as little harm as possible.**
- **Utilise the Report on Development Policy Extending Across Parliamentary Terms (2021) as widely as possible in this parliamentary term, pending the new policy report.**
- **Continue to take into account Finland's long-term goals and strengths in development policy, as well as the overall commitment to promoting global sustainable development goals. Even though Ukraine is important and a preoccupation for many Finns, excessive focus on one country while the overall development budget is cut can mean missed opportunities and long-term achievements in Finland's work with other partner countries and organisations. As a relatively large amount of aid is now flowing to Ukraine, Finland, like other donors, should pay serious attention to the efficient use of the funds.**