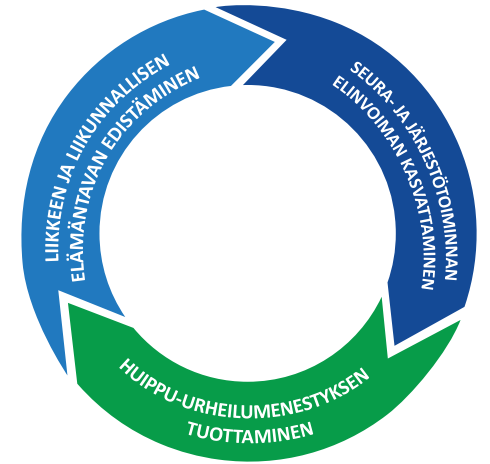




Physical activity and sport
FINNISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION GOALS

PREMISE



ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

Physical activity promotes well-being and prevents all significant chronic diseases.

Two thirds of all Finns do not do enough physical activity to maintain their health.

The cost of inactivity for the society is over €3 billion per year. The cost of inactivity is rising because our population is ageing and children are not moving enough.

In addition to physical health and well-being, physical activity also contributes to our mental health, the country's defence capability, learning, the community and work ability.

SPORTS CLUBS

Physical activity and sport is Finland's biggest popular movement.

Up to 1.8 million Finns participate in sports clubs. Sports clubs form the bedrock of Finland's biggest popular movement. They also play a major role in the promotion of well-being around the country. The Covid-19 has taken a toll on sports clubs, and they need support to recover.

The activities of sports clubs are strongly based on volunteers; they are the heart and enablers of Finnish sport. There are over 500,000 volunteers working in sports clubs. Their economical value on a yearly basis is approximately €700 million.

ELITE SPORT

Finnish people value success in elite sport.

Elite sport contributes to a sense of community. It creates experiences, provides role models and encourages people to be active. Elite sport also promotes Finland globally. Sport brings us together and inspires us.

Three out of every four Finns take interest in the success of Finnish athletes. To ensure great moments and success in the future, athletes must have an internationally competitive operating environment.

Physical activity and sport are intrinsically valuable — and in many other ways as well

Health and well-being

Less illnesses

Less mental health
problems

Less social exclusion

Functional capacity

Less accidents

Communities and
experiences

Employment

Local attraction

Jobs related to physical
activity and sport

Productivity

Longer careers without
gaps

Education and learning

Better
learning results

Civic competences

Meaningful activities

Finances

Less expenses from
health and social services

Increased tax revenue

Defence

National defence
capability

Environment

Less emissions

Sustainable development

FINNISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION GOALS

PREREQUISITES
FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
AND SPORT:
**Strengthening
financing and
structures**

ACTIVITY IN DAILY LIFE:
**Developing the On
the Move
programmes and
conditions for
daily physical
activity**

MEANINGFUL
PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES
FOR ALL CHILDREN:
**Developing the
Finnish model for
sport activities
for children and
youth**

SPORTS CLUBS AS
COMMUNITIES
**Supporting civic
involvement in
sport**

SUCCESS AND
EXPERIENCES:
**Promotion
of elite sport**

MAKING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT A KEY GOAL

Physical activity as a path to well-being and recovering after Covid-19

PREREQUISITES FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT | **Strengthening funding and structures**

The funding of physical activity and sport must be strengthened to ensure long-term promotion of physical activity. More diverse state financing options for the financing of physical activity are needed.

ACTIVITY IN DAILY LIFE | **Developing the On the Move programmes and the conditions for daily physical activity**

The national physical promotion programmes for physical activity for different age and demographic groups should be developed further: the programmes must be developed based on impact assessments. The coverage of actions in life stage transitions should be strengthened. Conditions for daily physical activity (i.e. walking, cycling and hiking) must be ensured.

MEANINGFUL PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES FOR ALL CHILDREN | **Developing the Finnish model for sport activities for children and youth**

More physically active school days and after-school activities. We should ensure that children and young people have the opportunity to engage in physical activity at their own level. Building on the successful experiences, pathways should be built to long-term physical activities, sports clubs and lower secondary sport schools.

SPORTS CLUBS AS COMMUNITIES | **Supporting civic involvement in sport**

By strengthening the ability of sports clubs to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, we can also help people return to their sports activities. This will support the long-term work of sports clubs. The amount of funding for sports clubs and associations should be kept, at least, at the same level as before and funding should be granted for several years at a time.

SUCCESS AND EXPERIENCES | **Promotion of elite sport**

We should promote the professionalism and capacity of elite sport by supporting athletes, coaches and sports academies as well as by developing the competence of athletes and coaches and improving the socio-economic status of athletes. The position of lower secondary and upper secondary sport schools as well as elite athlete friendly higher education institutions should be strengthened.

Strengthening funding and structures

Background: From 2024, the funding of physical activity will be renewed. Funding will no longer be connected to gambling profits, and physical activity will be funded from the general budget funds, which means that it will be mostly tax financed. State financing for physical activity has been approximately €160 million per year. In the new financing model, there is also a strong social basis for financing physical activity. Today, the social significance of physical activity is understood even better than before. In addition to being a leisure time activity that provides new experiences, physical activity is strongly connected such things as health, functional capacity and well-being, including the prevention of mental health problems and loneliness, the sustainability of public finances, sustainable development, productivity, national defence capability and learning. Therefore, it is justified to strengthen and diversify the financing of physical activity.

Strengthening funding and structures

CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- + The long-term financing of physical activity and sport should be safeguarded. The financing to promote a physically active lifestyle should be increased cross-governmentally in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and the Ministry of the Environment. In the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, promoting health and social well-being is an important goal. In the Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of the Environment, promotion of physical activity should be implemented by financing the enabling of walking, cycling and hiking.
- + Promoting physical activity by means of taxation. For instance, lowering the VAT of all physical activity services that are subject to VAT to a lower tax rate (10%). Currently, some physical activity services are subject to a 24% VAT.
- + Providing support for the construction of sports facilities and completing required maintenance work, as well as the sustainable use of facilities.
- + Using physical activity impact assessments more widely in decision-making.
- + Promoting a cross-government approach by establishing a permanent coordination body for sport policy.
- + Supporting physical activity skills in different occupations, such as in early childhood education and other education-related occupations, as well as ensuring the functionality of physical education in the school system.



ACTIVITY IN DAILY LIFE:

Developing the On the Move programmes and conditions for physical activity in daily life

Background: The national promotion programmes for physical activity, i.e. On the Move programmes, promote diverse, low-threshold opportunities for physical activity for all age groups. The programmes cover early childhood education, basic education, upper secondary and higher education students, adults, families as well as seniors.

The programmes are currently in various stages: some were only recently established, while others go back decades. The programmes will not be continued automatically in the next parliamentary term. However, there are strong grounds for continuing, developing and strengthening the programmes. They are essential government actions that provide each age group with exciting opportunities for engaging in physical activity. They help us achieve our goal of people being active enough to safeguard their health and well-being. Other great physical activity programmes are also implemented in Finland, such the Congregation on the Move programme.

It is important to consider equality when promoting opportunities for physical activity and to make physical activity accessible for everyone. Approximately 15% of the Finnish population require adaptation to take part in physical activity.

ACTIVITY IN DAILY LIFE:

Developing the On the Move programmes and conditions for physical activity in daily life

CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- + Based on impact assessments, continuing and further developing the national promotion programmes for physical activity, i.e. the On the Move programmes.
- + Launching a cross-sectoral physical activity programme to tackle inactivity. Establishing the On the Move programmes and the sport policy coordination body as tools of this physical activity programme.
- + Tripling those central government transfers to municipalities and wellbeing services counties that are based on the health and wellbeing performance coefficient.
- + Ensuring good conditions, financing and community structures for walking, cycling, hiking and everyday physical activities.
- + Extending the coverage of implemented actions in life stage transitions, for instance, when starting a family or entering the world of work after graduation.
- + Strengthening the cooperation between the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Education and Culture in the promotion of health through physical activity.
- + Encouraging and helping municipalities and wellbeing services counties to build cross-sector service chains to offer guidance on physical activity.



MEANINGFUL PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES FOR ALL CHILDREN:

Developing the Finnish model for sport activities for children and youth

Background: The Finnish model for sport activities for children and youth aims to provide each child with a free-of-charge sports activities during school days. The ongoing phase of the model continues the work completed in a pilot in the spring of 2021. The model has already reached over two thirds of Finnish municipalities, and it has been implemented swiftly.

The potential of this model has also been recognised in sports clubs, and the model is used to support young people's equal opportunities to engage in sports activities. During 2022, the model will be made permanent and recorded in the Youth Act. During the next parliamentary term, this model should be made even more effective to better meet the diverse needs and wishes of children, as well as to encourage more people to move.

Developing the Finnish model for sport activities for children and youth

CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- + Extending the model to all Finnish municipalities to reach the entire age group and increasing the model's financing in the same relation. Making the financing term three years instead of the current one year.
- + Developing equal paths that enable participation in physical activities, sports clubs and lower secondary sports schools. Creating opportunities for more goal-oriented sports activities.
- + Promoting youth work that prevents social exclusion and encourages young people to participate in physical activities and sports clubs.
- + Investigating the possibility of extending the model and piloting it with upper secondary and higher education students.
- + Promoting the role of sports clubs and other local sports organisations as service providers within the model.
- + Adding an extra hour of physical activity to the school day.



SUOMEN
OLYMPIAKOMITEA

SPORTS CLUBS AS COMMUNITIES

Supporting civic involvement in sport

Background: Sports clubs form the bedrock of physical activity and sport in Finland. Sports clubs are popular in Finland: up to 1.8 million Finns participate in their activities. By supporting sports clubs, we can provide people with opportunities to engage in physical activity as well as support Finland's success in elite sport. The activities of sports clubs and associations are strongly based on volunteers: more than half a million volunteers work in the clubs. A volunteer-based system is a cost-effective way for the society to organise physical activities and sports.

Sports clubs are also important as employers: about a fifth of Finland's 10,000 clubs are also employers. The Covid-19 also took a toll on sports clubs, and especially children and young people could not participate in their hobbies. Now, it is time to support sports clubs and associations and help people return to their sports activities.

Supporting civic involvement in sport

CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- + Sports clubs and associations should be supported in recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic. They should be granted, at least, the same amount of funding as before.
- + Granting funding to sports clubs and associations for 2–4 years at a time in order to support their long-term work.
- + Increasing private funding by introducing a deduction for donations made to sports and physical activity organisations.
- + Ensuring sufficient incentives for volunteer work and investigating the possibilities for promoting sports activities by means of taxation.
- + By means of increasing financing, strengthening sustainability and equality in sports clubs and ensuring a safe operating environment, from recreational activities to elite sport.
- + Supporting employment in sports clubs and removing barriers to employment. Summer job vouchers for young people are a good example.



SUCCESS AND EXPERIENCES:

Promotion of elite sport

Background: Finnish people love sport. Studies show that Finns value success in elite sport and want to see Finland succeed. Three out of every four Finns take interest in the success of Finnish athletes.

Role models that encourage others to be physically active are part of sport. Elite athletes provide positive examples that others can follow. Elite sport is also global promotion for Finland. In addition, sport contributes significantly to employment and the economy.

Compared to the athletes of other countries, Finns should have equal opportunities to succeed. Where supporting elite sport is concerned, we cannot fall behind our competition. In the future, there must be a larger group of young athletes in Finland who are on the path to becoming an elite athlete and have an inspiring vision of the future, competent coaches and the opportunity to develop into internationally successful professional athletes.

Promotion of elite sport

CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- + Increasing financing of elite sport to a level defined by the Finnish Parliament ([SiVM 22/2018](#)) and continuing the granting of extra funding, which was provided during the current parliamentary term to support sports academies, training centres and elite athletes.
- + Promoting professionalism in elite sport by supporting athletes, coaches and experts. The socio-economic status of athletes (e.g. unemployment and pension security, social benefits for students and support for families) should also be improved.
- + Recognising the importance of lower secondary sport schools and including their funding as part of the national basic education structure.
- + Strengthening the financing and position of upper secondary sport schools.
- + Building a network of elite athlete friendly higher education institutions and creating a degree for athletes.
- + Bringing elite sport facilities and their usability to an internationally competitive level.
- + Applying to be the host of international competitions and working towards being accepted as a host.
- + Promoting research on elite sport and its funding.