

A DIRECTION FOR FINLAND[®]



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WORK, EQUALITY
AND SECURITY

SDP'S ELECTION PROGRAMME

SDP

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The Social Democratic Party of Finland



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'I want to live in a country where people have the courage to look forward and strive to create something new.

Above all, I want to live in a country where the most ambitious aim, regardless of the circumstances, is to respect everyone's dignity and offer everyone the chance for well-being.

One party or a single decision-maker cannot bring about a change.

We need people who want change for it to happen. In a democracy, this will be expressed in elections.'

– Antti Rinne, Party Chairman



The Social Democrats want to build a Finland where every individual is valuable and important just the way they are.

A DIRECTION FOR FINLAND – WORK, EQUALITY AND SECURITY

It is time to look forward. It is time to find the ways, with which Finland will rise from the long recession as a country where people are equal and everyone is treated fairly. As a country where indivisible human dignity for all, sustainable development and trust in the future are realised. It is time to build Finland, once again, into a fair, just and equal society. For this we need growth and solidarity.

The Social Democrats want to build a Finland where every individual is valuable and important just the way they are. We want to build a society where everyone can succeed irrespective of their background and where help and support are ready when needed. We want to build a Finland that, in the international community, promotes policy that aims at realising human rights and peace, and ambitiously develops environmentally friendly technology.

For us, the keys to success are work, equality, security and trust among people, not power of the market forces. The key to civilization is the courage to take care of the weakest even when the financial situation is hard. We invite everyone for whom these values are important to make this Finland a reality.



The possibilities of sole proprietors and small business owners for growing their business must be supported.

GROWTH SECURES WELL-BEING

The most important mission for the coming electoral term is to generate sustainable economic growth and new work. Only this will secure well-being also in the future. To support growth, we must have the courage to seek new means.

Because of the financial recession and the permanent change in the age structure, the leeway of the state and municipalities is, on national level, small. This is why what this time requires from decision-makers is honest choices, the ability to concentrate on the essential, and honesty in what is defined as essential and why. For many important objectives, there is only a limited amount of money.

At the same time we must invest in new growth and take care of the most important functions of the welfare state. The welfare state must see to it that, even in difficult times, everyone stays aboard. It must reduce inequality and prevent social exclusion. At the same time the welfare state is an profitable investment: without it we do not have the educated, healthy workforce on which to build growth.

The state must promote investments for the future more strongly than at present. Especially long-term investments require an

active role from the public sector. This is crucial for the trust of the private sector to recover and growth to start. We must open-mindedly seek new alternatives to promote investments, for example, by utilizing combinations of public and private financing. Support for companies must be directed at supporting the growth and internationalisation of small and medium sized companies, promoting employment, developing know-how as well as research and development.

A small country must know how to pick fields where we can be bigger than our size as pioneers. Preventing climate change and protecting the environment must be raised to a special position. A clean environment has an intrinsic value. It can also be a source of new work and growth. Solving the environmental crisis is a global challenge that also requires new technology. This is one of the big trends in response to which we can develop new products and services to export. The employment and growth perspective must be strengthened in state ownership policy.

Finnish economic policy is a part of European economic policy. That is why Finland must be actively involved in influencing that changes to the economic policy and institutions are made also on the European level. The possibilities for public investments and the operating space of financial policy must be increased and harmful tax competition reduced for it to be possible to invest in growth.

This is how the Social Democrats will invest in growth and new jobs in the coming electoral term:

WE WILL CREATE A NEW, MORE DIVERSE EXPORT STRATEGY.

Climate change prevention, urbanisation, renewable energy, and innovations related to education, health and care offer a new basis for export success stories both in services and industry.

WE WILL INCREASE PUBLIC INVESTMENTS.

The aim is to boost the economy, create demand for work and strengthen growth prospects of the private sector. Europe policy will be tuned to support economic growth and a significant increase in investments.

WE WILL BUILD NEW FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS FOR DOMESTIC INVESTMENTS.

Examples of targets can be investments in the care of real estate property of municipalities and common infrastructure.

WE WILL SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURS' POSSIBILITIES TO GROW THEIR BUSINESS.

The VAT liability threshold of businesses must be raised, the waiting period of entrepreneurs' sick leave must be cut by three days, and the defects in the social security of entrepreneurs' family members must be fixed.

WE WILL EXPEDITE INVESTMENTS AND REDUCE STANDARDS HINDERING BUSINESS GROWTH.

The application and complaint backlog must be cleared, permission processes must be made swift and clear, conflicting decisions by different authorities must be reduced, and starting a business in Finland must be made easier. When clarifying regulations, however, it is important that, for example, grey economy prevention, security, or the level of work safety or environmental protection are not compromised.

WE WILL INVEST IN EDUCATION AND KNOW-HOW.

Education not only has an intrinsic value, it is also an individual's best insurance in the rapidly changing world. From the point of view of the labour market, it is particularly important to strengthen change security and to look after the know-how of the lesser trained adult population which is under the biggest threat of unemployment, as well as the adequate quality and supply of secondary and higher education.

WE WILL ENSURE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR EXPANSIVE BUSINESSES TO GROW AND EMPLOY.

The narrow shoulders of export and the small number of businesses striving for international growth are a significant social problem. The bottlenecks in financing, getting competent workforce and the smooth functioning of permission processes that expansive businesses face must be removed. New business and employment in creative industries must be strengthened.

WE WILL STRENGTHEN THE PURCHASING POWER OF THE DOMESTIC MARKET.

Wage agreements must be such that those who work have enough money for living. We will strengthen the purchasing power of those with low and middle income by lightening taxation. Strengthening employment, equality and domestic purchasing power and demand are in the centre of tax decisions.

WE WILL INCREASE RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION ESPECIALLY IN BIG CITIES.

A significant increase in the supply of housing will lower the cost of housing and allow moving to the place of work when necessary. Planning and starting construction must be expedited, co-operation of the state and municipalities in land policy must be promoted, and the emergence of reasonably priced residential production must be adequately supported. The demand for housing must be met by promoting, in particular, dense construction within existing communities. Special attention will be directed at developing suburbs and preventing inequality between areas. The property tax of planned but undeveloped plots must be raised.

WE WILL STRENGTHEN ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND EFFICIENCY.

The supply of domestic, low-emission renewable energy must be strongly increased, and the Euros spent in energy must be kept within domestic consumption and employment better than at the moment. The diversity of the energy range must be strengthened further.

WE WILL GENERATE GROWTH AND WELL- BEING IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.

We can accelerate the growth of the economy through sensible regional and industrial policy that concentrates on the strengths and know-how of each region and subregion. The specialisation and expanding cooperation of universities in the regions with local businesses, good quality infrastructure and working services form the conditions for the success of the entire country. The growing significance of the Arctic region should be utilised sustainably. The awareness and utilisation of European financial channels must be enhanced.

WE WILL ENCOURAGE THE SWIFT INTRODUCTION AND APPLICATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY IN THE WHOLE SOCIETY.

Productivity benefits must be maximised rapidly and fully – in the private and public sector alike.



A clean environment is a source for new work and growth.





***A fair working life also means a wage that you can live on
and hours that also leave room for other life.***

FAIR WORK, FAIR PAY

The biggest problem in the working life is unemployment. It is unsustainable that hundreds of thousands of Finns able and willing to work cannot enter the working life despite their efforts. Prolonged unemployment erodes the ability to work and is linked with many social problems. Thus we must do everything we can in order to break long periods of unemployment and hereditary exclusion from the working life.

Along with alleviating unemployment, we must take care of the well-being at work and the lengthening of careers of those who do work. The most important things are to enhance the quality and equality of the working life and that everyone is treated fairly in the working life. Everyone must be given the chance to participate in work, for well-being at work, to combine work and family life and to retire healthy and disability-free.

A fair working life also means a wage that you can live on and hours that also leave room for other life. The Social Democrats do not accept a labour market where people in a weak position are taken advantage of or where talented and hard-working people are burnt out with too much work or unreasonable demands and pressure.

Equality is realised in a fair working life. In a good working life, just as in a good society, people are equal irrespective of their gender, background, skin colour, age, sexual orientation, or other personal feature.

This is how the Social Democrats will enhance the working life in Finland in the coming electoral term:

**WE WILL STRENGTHEN
EQUALITY IN THE
LABOUR MARKET.**

We will particularly strongly support such collective settlements that will narrow gender pay gaps and function especially for the benefit of those who work in part-time or temporary employment. The aim is to divide family leaves equally between both parents.

**WE WILL PREVENT
TRAMPLING ON
WORKERS' RIGHTS
AND CONTRACT
SPECULATION.**

We will ban zero hour contracts, intervene in underpaid work, and strengthen the position of temporary workers.

**WE WILL DEVELOP THE
YOUTH GUARANTEE
FURTHER.**

The human and economic cost of social exclusion of young people is immense. That is why every young person is guaranteed a path to studies, apprenticeship or work within the Youth Guarantee. The Guarantee must be further developed from the perspective of the youth. Municipalities' responsibility of employment measures must be emphasized.

**WE WILL MAKE THE
WORKING LIFE
MORE FLEXIBLE ON
WORKERS' TERMS.**

Flexibility in working hours and the ways of work enhances the quality of the working life, supports well-being and thus lengthens careers, and brings about a good atmosphere in the work place. This benefits both employers and employees.



WE WILL SEEK A SOLUTION THAT WILL GUARANTEE A DIGNIFIED PATH TO RETIREMENT FOR THE ELDERLY UNEMPLOYED PERMANENTLY UNABLE TO WORK.

People tiring out in appeal queues and falling through support systems must no longer be an option.

WE WILL ENHANCE THE POSSIBILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN WORK OF PEOPLE WHO ARE PARTIALLY ABLE TO WORK AND DISABLED IN DIFFERENT WAYS.

Reforms are needed in rehabilitation, training, employment subsidies, and work placement.

WE WILL INTERVENE IN THE REASONS OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS.

Stress, burnout, depression and other mental health problems are a significant public health problem. Preventing them must be taken seriously. When problems arise, the availability of services, access to care and possibilities for getting back to work must be enhanced.



Preventive services, future growth factors or the security of a decent life of people with the lowest income must not be compromised.

GET THE BASICS IN ORDER

– VALUE EQUALITY AND SECURITY

The meaning of solidarity is emphasised in financially difficult times. Even though the economic leeway is limited we must attend to the unity of the Finnish society, realisation of equality and parity, and securing the conditions of well-being for all. If we make cutbacks in the basic structures of the welfare state that are targeted wrongly and perceived as unfair we lose a lot more than what we gain.

Preventive services, future growth factors or the security of a decent life of people with the lowest income must not be compromised. Every child and youngster must be guaranteed a fair starting point and equal opportunities for building their life – irrespective of their background. Also, no-one should have to be afraid of getting old. Together we must take care of people who fall ill, lose their job or ability to work, or get in an accident, and help them to a new start. This will enhance the feeling among all Finns that we are in the same boat.

To fight the return of the class society and strengthen the social unity and security of the Finnish society, we must, regardless of the financial situation, carry out investments and reforms that will increase equality and justice. It is particularly important to also ensure the development of the Finnish society according to sustainable development in terms of the environment. Preventing global warming, considering biodiversity, and committing to emission reduction are intergenerational solidarity.

This is how the Social Democrats will strengthen the Finnish society in the coming electoral term:

WE WILL LOOK AFTER EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY.

The significance of education for the development of individuals and societies must be acknowledged fully. The best features of comprehensive school – equality and everyone's right to learning – must be strengthened as an inseparable right that belongs to all children. A small and remote country like Finland cannot afford to waste the talent of any children.

Additional funding must be directed to schools operating in areas that need special support and learning environments must be updated in the entire country to increase school satisfaction. Culture, exercise, and other activities that pupils can participate in irrespective of their ability to pay must be linked to school days. The well-being at work of teachers and their possibilities to improve their professional skills must be seen to. Mouldy schools must be fixed or closed down.

WE WILL DEVELOP THE TAX SYSTEM TO BE FAIRER.

It is not right that the tax rate of someone who has a regular job is higher than the rate of those who live on significant capital income. The prevention of grey economy must be further intensified by increasing transparency of ownership, acting against tax havens and companies operating in them, and closing loopholes in taxation.

WE WILL ENHANCE THE STATUS OF PEOPLE LIVING ALONE AND SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES.

The needs of single parent families must be better taken into consideration in daycare services and fees. The tax credit for domestic help or household expenses must be developed from the viewpoint of people living alone and its application in supporting elderly people living at home must be enhanced.

WE WILL DECREASE HEALTH INEQUALITIES CAUSED BY INCREASING INEQUALITY.

Health inequalities based on wealth speak of inequality in the society. Poverty is seen even in the length of life; people with low income have a smaller possibility to take care of their health than others.

When reforming social and health services, attention must be concentrated on enhancing the quality and effectiveness of common services and smooth service chains. The objective of the reform is a strong, operational and first-rate public social and health care system that people trust, which is supplemented by service production of the private sector and organisations.

Unhealthy multi-channel funding must be dismantled and the position of non-profit parties as service producers must be strengthened.

WE WILL SUPPORT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN.

It is important to consider different kinds of families and different stages of life in services. A good child health clinic, daycare, and preschool guarantee children a good basis for starting school and reduce inequality among children. Domestic service for families with children must be strengthened and broadened to apply to more families – early intervention in incipient problems brings big savings later. Expenses to families caused by daycare fees must not hinder accepting work.

WE WILL INTERVENE IN PROBLEMS CAUSED BY INVOLUNTARY LONELINESS.

Loneliness is a form of inequality in modern times, which has serious effects on well-being and health. The possibilities of assistance work by organisations to intervene in loneliness must be strengthened both in associations and on the Internet. Mental health work must be invested in. Public spaces must be opened up to the use of non-governmental organisations.

WE WILL SUPPORT THE WORK OF INFORMAL CARERS.

Services to informal carers, and the availability of support and legal protection to them must be enhanced through new informal care legislation. The flexibility of working life must be developed so that more and more carers have the possibility to combine work and caring for their next of kin.

WE WILL SECURE DIGNITY IN OLD AGE.

More and more people can live a long life in better health. Elderly people are a significant part of an active society. The change in the age structure is permanent, so good ageing must be seen as part of all activities in the society from community planning to various care services. The basis for a good life in old age is in supporting people's functionality and capacity to live at home. Home-delivered services, rehabilitation, and informal care must be strengthened. Alongside this, diverse communal facilities of assisted living and group homes must be built.

WE WILL PREVENT POVERTY AMONG PENSIONERS

We will raise the guaranteed pension. This will help getting along in everyday life and increase security.

WE WILL GUARANTEE EVERYONE'S RIGHT TO CULTURE.

Art and culture belong to everyone and are an important part of spiritual growth and a full life. Taking a diverse interest in culture must not depend on a person's wealth or place of residence. The conditions of free education must be secured and the right to develop oneself must be ensured for all.



Services to informal carers, and the availability of support and legal protection to them must be enhanced through new informal care legislation.

WE WILL STRENGTHEN FINLAND'S SECURITY AS A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

The mission of Finland's foreign and security policy is to promote the security of Finland and the well-being of Finns. Our membership in the European Union is also a central security policy choice. As a member we are in the core of European values, democracy and equality.

We see the EU as a union of sovereign states. The common currency and free movement have a key significance in the integration of countries. In a world of increasing interdependency, Finland is active in cooperation that promotes security in the UN, the EU, the OSCE and other forums of multilateral cooperation.

Finland's security is best served by maintaining the current security policy. Finland's decisions on the membership in the European Union, the partnership with NATO, increasing defence cooperation with militarily non-aligned Sweden, and keeping our own defence in shape are a sustainable path. We emphasise the fundamental meaning of international economic and social

interaction in strengthening peace and promoting solidarity and equality. The foundation of Finland's security policy is universal conscription, convincing defence capacity, and defending the entire area of the country.

WE WILL STRENGTHEN THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES.

In a truly equal society, the rights and inclusion of minorities and diverse culture are cherished. Racism and discrimination are reprehensible. Sexual and gender minorities are to have the same rights as the majority population. Immigration policy must be equal and fair. The know-how of immigrants must be better utilised.



***Advance voting in Parliamentary elections: Wed–Tue
8 to 14 April 2015 in Finland, and Wed–Sat 8 to 11 April
2015 abroad. Election day Sunday 19 April 2015.***

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ALL YOU NEED
IS PEOPLE
WITH COURAGE.

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