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Finland's place and future are at the core of the European Union

The Confederation of Finnish Industries EK, the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK, the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland Akava, Finnish Professionals STTK, Local Government Employers KT, Personnel and Governance Policy Department, Office for the Government as Employer and the Labour Market Organisation of the Church believe that decisions to be taken in the coming years to reform and shape the European Union will have an important impact on position on Finnish citizens and Finland as part of Europe. We therefore need to define what kind of a European Union we would want, and where we want Finland to be in that Union.

Finland can only prosper as part of European Union.

Europe needs new economic growth and jobs, but also a stable business environment. Decisive questions of the near future concern the functioning and reforms of the EU and its Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), internal and external security, deepening of the single market and the social dimension, as well as the EU's role in shaping globalisation. For citizens, companies and the whole Finnish society it is of fundamental importance that we work actively at the core of the EU. This requires a strengthening and clarification of our objectives and ambitions. In a Union of variable speeds of integration Finland cannot afford to be left in a position where our possibilities to influence European developments and to pursue Finnish interests are weakened.

The reform of the EMU should strengthen the member states' capabilities to promote growth and employment while strengthening incentives for running healthy public finances. Streamlining the rule framework of the SGP and its implementation would strengthen its credibility and legitimacy. The introduction of the European Stability Mechanism and of the Banking Union have made the EMU more stable than ever before. When developing new means for strengthening the stability and resilience of the EMU, risks of moral hazard and permanent transfer mechanisms have to be avoided. Better use should be made of already existing mechanisms. For example, the EU-budget could be made more sensitive and reactive to differences in economic cycles between member states, and its structure should be more focused on supporting, growth, skills and job creation.

Goods, services, capital and data are still facing barriers to movement on the single market. Protectionist measures hampering free movement are not in the interest of companies, employees or consumers and need to be reduced. At the same time, it needs to be ensured that all apply and follow commonly agreed rules. Predictability of the regulatory environment over the whole Union for new and existing operators

alike will ensure equal opportunities and a level playing field, ensure the rights of employees and consumers, and encourage companies to innovate and invest.

We need genuinely European labour markets. The social dimension of the EU needs to be developed in a manner that will promote the creation of good jobs and ensure a globally competitive business environment for companies. The social pillar can become a roadmap for progress, pushing forward balanced structural reforms while ensuring employees' rights within the competences of the EU. Dynamic labour markets create conditions for social security systems to be able to take care of those that are unemployed.

What is required from Finland?

We want a united, dynamic and tolerant Europe, with strong economic growth, a well-functioning single market, internal mobility and external security. We want to build the future of Europe on science and research, skills and knowledge, as well as on courage to do things in new ways. A strong and well-functioning EU is for the benefit of all.

The functioning of the EU needs to be improved and unity among member states needs to be protected as much as possible. The distribution of competences and responsibilities between the EU and its member states must be respected in the current environment, but may need to be reassessed over the long term. The European Commission, Parliament and Council must respect also the needs of small member states, such as Finland. Independence, integrity and transparency of the European Institutions and the community method of decision making are of essential importance for small member states.

In a global environment Finland can only succeed as part of Europe, by contributing to EU policy making in a strategic and proactive manner. We commit ourselves to constructive dialogue and cooperation with the Finnish government and the European Institutions in order to ensure that Finland will remain at the core of the work that will shape the future of the EU.

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