



# UN Global Compact Finnish Bar Association

Communication on Engagement 17 April 2023



# To our Stakeholders

- We are pleased to confirm that the Finnish Bar Association (“FBA”) reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact during the period of April 2021 and April 2023.
- In this Communication on Engagement, we also enclose a few reports published by the organisation for the activities undertaken to support the UN Global Compact. We have also listed the activities and events that the FBA has participated in which also support the UN Global Compact and its ten Principles.
- We warmly welcome feedback on the content of this Communication of Engagement and our efforts to implement the Ten Principles





# What is the Finnish Bar Association and what does it do?

- The Finnish Bar Association is a public entity that approves new attorneys-at-law and supervises their professional activities in Finland and upholds rule of law and fundamental rights. Only members of the Finnish Bar Association are entitled to use the title of attorney-at-law in Finland. Our activities are based on the Finnish Advocates Act.
- The Finnish Bar Association also plays a major role in shaping Finnish legal policy. The Finnish Bar Association is actively involved in developing legislation by participating in working or expert groups or by giving opinions on legislative proposals during the legislation process.



# Our Mission Statement

- The Finnish Bar Association is a public entity, originally founded in 1919. We have legislated duties and we exercise public power related to the management of our membership of attorneys-at-law and the supervision of the profession. We also regulate attorneys-at-law, provide guidance and training to them, and are responsible for arranging the bar examination, which is one of the requirements for obtaining the title of attorney-at-law.
- One of our key tasks is to influence the legislature by raising citizens' and companies' views on legal protection at the drafting stage. All activities of the Bar Association are based on defending the principle of the rule of law. Attorneys-at-law are essential for upholding the strong constitutional state of Finland also in the future.





# Supporting the Ten Principles

- We recognize that a key requirement for participation in the UN Global Compact is the annual submission of a Communication on Progress (COP) that describes the Bar Association's efforts to implement the Ten Principles. This includes a description of practical actions (i.e., disclosure of any relevant policies, procedures, activities) that the committed entity has taken (or plans to undertake) to implement the UN Global Compact principles in each of the four issue areas (human rights, labour, environment, anti-corruption).



# Description of Actions

- As a signatory member of the UN Global Compact member, the Finnish Bar Association pledged to participate in and engage with UN Global Compact in a variety of ways, such as to help advance best practices, public awareness, scientific journals, and founding all our activities on responsibility.
- This Communication on Engagement (COE) report contains a description of practical actions that the Finnish Bar Association has taken to promote and advance the implementation of the UN Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption.





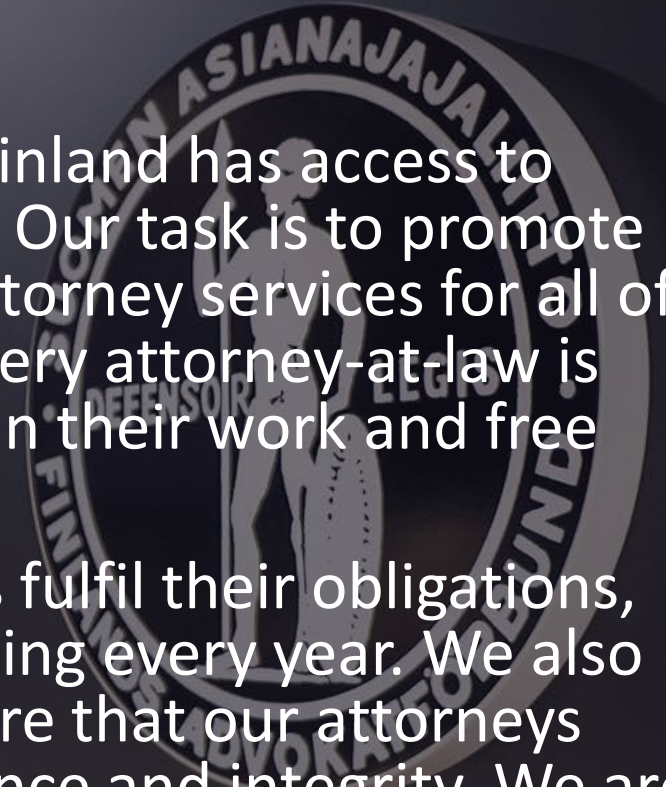
# Corporate Responsibility

- All our activities are founded on responsibility. The Finnish Bar Association is a public entity regulated by the Finnish Advocates Act, which promotes the availability of independent, professional and ethically impeccable legal services for persons – regardless of income or place of residence – and legal entities in Finland.
- To us, responsibility means not only improving the judicial conditions in Finland, but also setting an example for responsible operations. We also support certain permanent partners, such as the Pride Organization in Finland, with free visibility, campaigns and press releases.
- All our members must follow a specific [binding code of conduct](#) for attorneys-at-law that goes through the whole society and helps to maintain the Rule of Law from the individual level right through to society at large.



# Human Rights

- Finnish Bar Association ensures that everyone in Finland has access to professional assistance in important legal matters. Our task is to promote the availability of independent and professional attorney services for all of us – whatever our means or place of residence. Every attorney-at-law is obliged to adhere to strict ethical guidelines both in their work and free time.
- As a Bar Association, we ensure that our members fulfil their obligations, such as attending 18 hours of supplementary training every year. We also provide guidance and supervision in order to ensure that our attorneys perform the tasks given by their clients with diligence and integrity. We are in turn supervised by the Chancellor of Justice to ensure that we perform our statutory duties correctly.

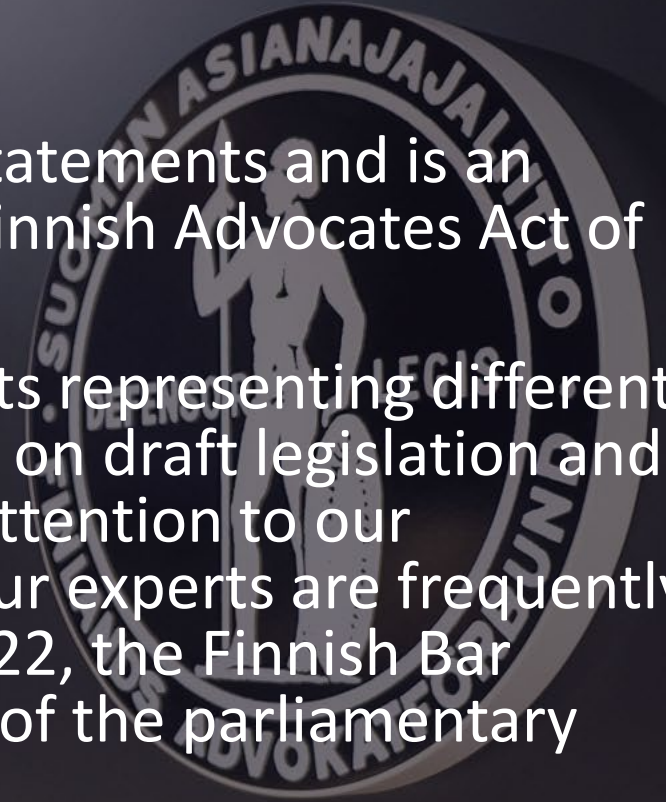






# Human Rights

- The Finnish Bar Association is an active issuer of statements and is an active party in the legislative process. Under the Finnish Advocates Act of 1959, the FBA also acquired statutory duties.
- The Finnish Bar Association has 19 teams of experts representing different fields of legal specialization, who issue statements on draft legislation and bills for new legislation. The legislators pay close attention to our statements during the drafting of new laws, and our experts are frequently heard by various Parliamentary committees. In 2022, the Finnish Bar Association issued 82 statements and 21 hearings of the parliamentary committee.
- Members of the Bar give their expertise to this work pro-bono.





# Human Rights

- Attorneys' work is based on fundamental and human rights. There is a broad consensus in the Finnish society on the role of attorneys-at-law in the development of judicial conditions. The Finnish Bar Association is primarily known for its statutory duties and promotion of fundamental and human rights.
- Especially during these crucial years of Russian attack to Ukraine, we have communicated prominently on current judicial issues and injustices, and matters related to the work of attorneys. For this, we have used channels such as the Finnish Bar Association's own Advokaatti magazine, our events, various statements, press releases and campaigns, and our active social media channels. Of these, the Association's Twitter account is especially active at all hours. We also published a special [campaign web page 2021 for Ukraine](#) and replanned our programme of the Attorney's Day event in May 2021 to support Ukraine.
- We have the worthy task of defending fundamental and human rights and equal access to legal aid.





# Human Rights

- Defensor Legis is a law journal published by the Finnish Bar Association since 1920 and is the oldest attorney publication in the Nordic Countries.
- Defensor Legis includes practical articles from various fields of law, along with selected legal cases. The publication is intended for legal experts, and everyone interested in the development of the judiciary.
- Defensor Legis is published four times a year. A third of the publication's readership consists of non-attorneys.
- In April 2022, we published an extra journal concerning the attack towards Ukraine. There were six articles of legal scholars' views on the war in Ukraine. We also provided actions to help the Ukrainians by donations, by international cooperation with other European Bars and by providing a helping hand for governmental purposes, i.e. for the Finnish Immigration Office.



# Labor

- Keeping Finland just and equal is important to us. To this end, when the regular workdays of the attorneys-at-law that volunteer in our expert groups end, they start writing the long statements required by the thorough drafting of legislation. Legislation is busy work, and the expert teams of the Finnish Bar Association do their part to eliminate gaps from the legislative bills passed by Parliament and ensure that all perspectives have been considered in them.
- Our attorneys-at-law do volunteer work in many projects related to social responsibility, participating actively in projects coordinated by the Finnish Bar Association in addition to the social responsibility projects of their own law firms.





# Labor

- Attorneys' on-call service is free legal advice for consumers.
- Free legal advice organized by the Finnish Bar Association's chapters is available in sixteen localities around Finland. The attorneys on call can tell you whether you should seek legal assistance in your case and can refer you to the correct authority or an attorney-at-law versed in the appropriate field.
- This on-call service is also done pro-bono by the members of the Finnish Bar and it is very popular. It ensures that all people regardless of age, gender or wealth, needing legal help will get a possibility to get their legal problems solved. About over 1000 consumers visit our on-call services every year.



# Labor

- The well being of the employees in the legal profession is very important for the Finnish Bar Association. The Bar took part in a Nordic study of workplace health and well-being of law firm employees in 2021-2022 (survey by Jens Näsström). A particular area of interest to the Finnish Bar is the position of women within the profession. Currently many women attorneys leave the field after turning 35 years – finding work-life-balance maladjusted. For that purpose, we arranged campaigns such as “#oikeusjaksaa”, in which we urged offices to take part in committing to certain workplace health well being statements for their employees in 2021. The campaign was very successful.





# Labor

- The Finnish Bar Association contributes to the improvement of judicial conditions in Finland by issuing statements on the legislative and other projects of the Ministry of Justice, the European Union, the Parliament and various authorities. As a rule, the Finnish Bar Association's judicial policy statements are drawn up as volunteer work by the Association's teams of experts. We have roughly 125 top experts working in our twenty or so expert teams to improve society.
- Attorneys-at-law have given and give permanently volunteer legal education lessons in secondary schools and upper secondary schools everywhere in Finland. The lessons on the rights and obligations of young people are free of charge for the schools.
- We are a Platinum Partner of Finnish Pride event 2021-2023.





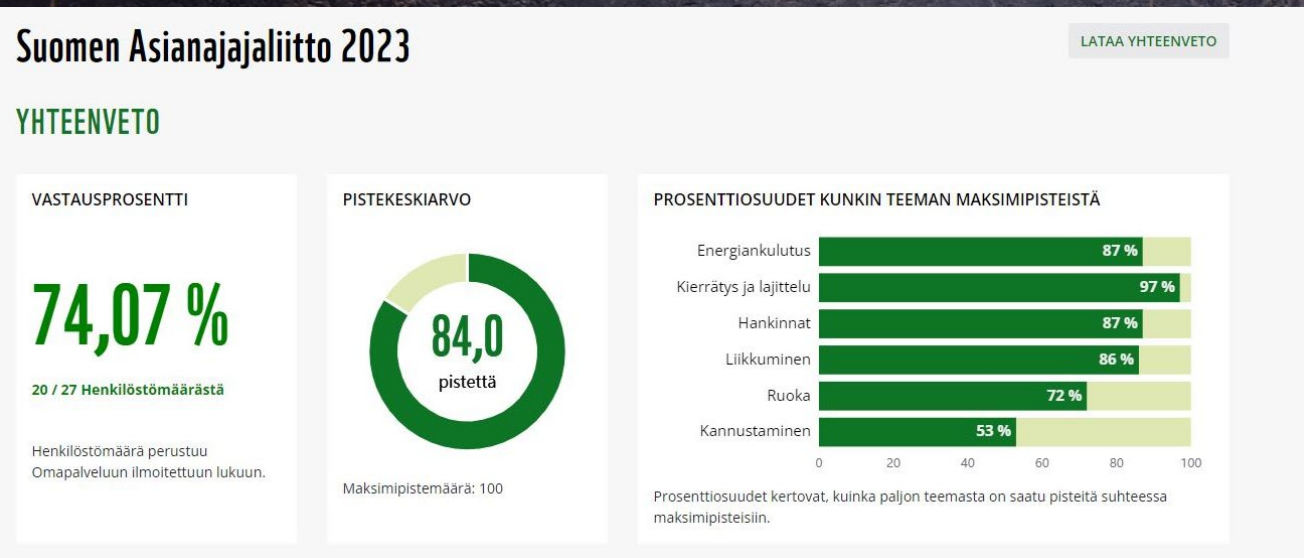
# Environment

- The Finnish Bar Association joined WWF Green Office in 2021. Green Office is a global environmental management system and certificate for organizations.
- Green Office includes a model to build a suitable environmental management system for the organization, allowing to reduce the workplace's carbon footprint and to use natural resources sustainably.
- Green Office is the most influential environmental system in the world. To be able to use the Green Office certificate, we must report annually about our progress.



# Environment

- Since 2021, Finnish Bar Association has reported every year a remarkable process in the organization's environmental work.
- This year, we reported our results of the Consumption Method Meter and the Climate Calculator. The result in the first one is as follows – the latter will be published later in the spring by WWF.







# Environment

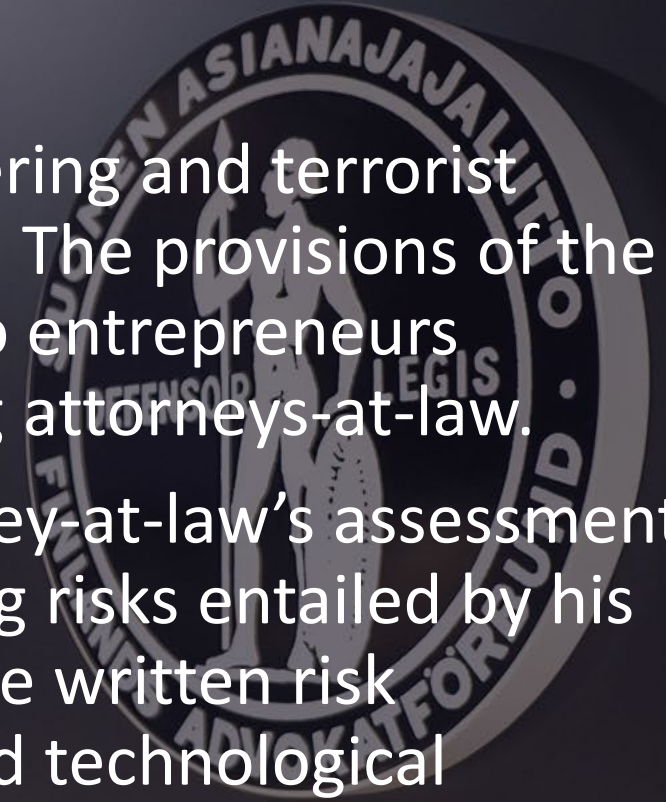
- Finnish Bar Association constantly informs and encourages its employees to be active in environmental work with a specific Green Office newsletter. We also invite top climate experts to give speeches at our biggest events, i.a. Attorney's Day 2021.
- We have digitalized all our paper archives in 2022 and encouraged law firms to do the same. We work remotely, arrange web courses and favor vegetarian and fish food in our events. We measure and report all our environmental work specifically and openly.





# Anti-Corruption

- The prevention and exposure of money laundering and terrorist financing are a part of corporate responsibility. The provisions of the anti-money laundering act (444/2017) apply to entrepreneurs operating in certain lines of business, including attorneys-at-law.
- Risk-based operations are based on the attorney-at-law's assessment of the money laundering and terrorist financing risks entailed by his or her assignments and client relationships. The written risk assessment must also take geographic risks and technological advances into account, particularly with the proliferation of electronic services.





# Anti-Corruption

- Based on their risk assessments, attorneys are required to draw up appropriate guidelines and practical procedures for identifying and knowing their clients. Attorneys-at-law are required to ensure that the personnel of the law firm is aware of the procedures and guidelines followed at the office, and that compliance is monitored.
- The Finnish Bar Association instructs attorneys on their obligations related to the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing and supervises compliance with the provisions of the Money laundering act. Attorneys-at-law must be able to demonstrate to the Bar Association that they have appropriate risk-based procedures in place for knowing their customers and managing the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing.





## CONCLUSION

**As the preeminent national voice of the legal profession, Finnish Bar Association is a quintessential member of the UN Global Compact, for it is through lawyers functioning as advocates that the goals of the UN Global Compact are often implemented.  
We respectfully request the application be granted.**

