

Committee: UNICEF

Topic: Practicing Freedom of Religion with a Special Emphasis on Forcible Imposition of Religion on Young Children

Country: Finland

Delegate: Tuğçe Yaşın

Position Paper

Finland is a Nordic country in Northern Europe. When Finland's Freedom of Religion Act was amended in 2003, the debate of whether children should get taught religion in school rose up. Those holding fast to traditional values demanded the preservation of religious instruction, where as others felt that religious instruction should be eliminated altogether. The agreement guaranteed the rights of minorities and ensured that the child receives an education in accordance with their family's decisions. Non-religious students study a subject called Life Perspective Studies, which includes ethics, worldview studies and comparative religion.

Religion is taught in comprehensive schools and upper secondary schools for one to two hours a week by the school's own teachers or experts hired on a temporary basis. Minority-religion study groups are offered if there are at least three students of the same affiliation in the school.

The goal of a religious curriculum is to familiarise kids with their own religion and the Finnish traditions of belief, acquaint students with other religions and help them understand the cultural and human significance of religions.

The religious affiliation of a child under the age of 12 is decided by the parents together.

The religious affiliation of a child between the ages 12 and 17 can only be changed by a decision made by the child and their parents.

Sources: <https://www.infofinland.fi/en/education/comprehensive-education>

<https://okm.fi/en/freedom-of-religion>

<https://www.infofinland.fi/en/information-about-finland/cultures-and-religions-in-finland#:~:text=Finland%20has%20freedom%20of%20religion,a%20child's%20religion%20in%20Finland>