

Sesión 5. El estado del arte en materia de comisiones de futuro parlamentarias en el mundo. Experiencias exitosas.

Presentación 3, Timo Harakka. Miembro del Parlamento de Finlandia, ex Ministro de Transporte y Comunicaciones, Vicepresidente del Comité para el Futuro del Parlamento de Finlandia (intervención en video)

Timo Harakka: on behalf of the Finnish Committee for the Future, I apologise that our committee was unable to participate in the conference, either in person or virtually in real time.

However, we are grateful for the opportunity to attend this conference in the form of a video greeting.

In my presentation, I have been asked to share experiences regarding Finland's Foresight system and, in particular, the related collaboration with various stakeholders.

I have also been asked to discuss how this Finnish model was created and how other countries, for example in Latin America, could create something similar.

When describing our committee, I often emphasise that in Finland, even future has a history.

Finland has long traditions in foresight and futures research.

The Finnish Government's Committee for the Future was established 30 years ago.

Around the same time, the Futures Research Centre was founded at the Turku School of Economics.

The foundation for all this was laid by a non-governmental organisation, the Finnish Society for Future Studies.

It was founded as early as 1980 by stakeholders and individuals interested in futures research and in foresight from the government, the corporate world, universities and NGOs alike.

So, it's not just about the Committee for the Future, but also about scientific futures research, teaching futures studies and having extensive public discussion and engagement, where various associations have played a significant role.

Later on, conferences organised by universities also contributed to the Finnish Futures Research to international expertise.

In addition, Finnish cities and regions have also started looking to the future from their own local perspectives.

This activity has been reinforced by law, which means that local and regional foresight is virtually mandatory in Finland.

Within the State Administration, several ministries have developed foresight methods to assess, above all, the development of future jobs and the corresponding education needs. Finland has always been renowned for its education system.

As a small country, its most important competitive advantage is expertise, which is why expertise has always been consciously and systematically developed.

A significant player in Finnish foresight has also been the Finnish Innovation Fund, CITRA, established in 1967 in honour of the 50th anniversary of Finland's independence.

Creating a successful Finland for tomorrow was defined as its mission, and this too was mandated by law.

Over the years, CITRA has become a sort of a super think tank, leading future oriented discussions aimed at the renewal of society.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Parliament of Finland's Committee for the Future is often referred to as a Finnish Future Innovation, and indeed in its own way it is, as it's the world's first committee for the future.

However, the real innovation that took place in Finland in the early 90s was the government's report on the future.

The Committee for the Future is actually the conjoined twin of the flip side of the government report.

One would not exist without the other. Let me explain why.

In 1993, the Parliament decided to require the government to produce a report on Finland's

long-term future, and whenever the government in Finland provides a report, then one of the committees must prepare the Parliament's report to it.

Therefore, it was decided that a Committee for the Future would be established to respond to the report on the future.

This process was successful, and the report on the future became a permanent obligation for every government, and responding to it became a central task for the Parliamentary Committee.

In other words, foresight was institutionalised.

The report on the future plays a significant role in strengthening Finland's national foresight system and future policy.

And when we talk about the report, we mean the ensign continues a long-term process in which the government and the Parliament engage in dialogue on Finland's long-term future. Since the first World Summit of the Committees of the Future held in Helsinki in 2022, we've had discussions with other countries' committees for the future on many occasions. Sometimes the situation is such that the first challenge of a Committee for the Future is to come up with a task for itself.

I have left the secret to the success of the finishing of my main line in getting started by defining the task first.

Based on Finland's experience, the government's future reports and the Parliament's responses to them provide an excellent framework for national future policy.

Nowadays, a Committee for the Future also prepares the Parliament's response to the government's Agenda 2030 report, because sustainable development is almost as extensive and multidisciplinary a theme as the future itself.

Thus, the finished model emerges in which the government and the Parliament engage in slow but continuous dialogue on Finland's long-term future and sustainable development.

The preparation of the government's future report and Agenda 2030 report takes about a year, and the government invites hundreds of stakeholders to participate in the process. Similarly, the Committee for the Future itself also castles up to 200 specialists while drafting its report. All of this takes approximately six months.

Also worth benchmarking is Finland's parliamentary model, which is based on expert hearings.

It's one of the core functions of evidence-based decision-making, through which, once again, the involvement of as many as hundreds of stakeholders and the best possible information are ensured in the work and decision-making process.

So essentially, it's not just about Finland's national foresight system, or ecosystem as it's called these days, but more broadly about the decision-making model and culture that's based on evidence.

Foresight information is utilised in the same way and within the same process as any other scientific information.

Behind all of this is the underlying need to ensure the high level of expertise of Finnish society.

Dear colleagues, As politicians, we all know, however, that from time to time, situations arise where urgent tasks accumulate for the government, and in recent years, international crises have easily received a detection from long-term visioning to short-term survival patterns.

And when it feels like we do not even know what will happen next week, then what is the point of spending time contemplating what will happen in 2030 or 50 years?

Well, the government resolved this by initiating a joint and continuous foresight effort amongst the ministries, where all the ministries carry out futures work together at the same time, in order to form a shared vision and understanding of the challenges and opportunities in witness-operating environments.

At the same time, the Committee for the Future contributes to certain discussions that the joint and continuous foresight effort between all the ministries, as described earlier, forms the first part of the future report issued once per parliament to determine.

Following this extensive analysis of the operating environment, the government can choose

the most important future things and create a more politically guided and selective second part of the future report.

So, instead of one, two future reports are now prepared during each parliamentary term.

So, the first part of the two-part model involves continuous official foresight work, while the second part reflects the specific choices of each government.

Our approach to examining the future must be both systematic and continuous. However, since we do not live in a linear world, we must incorporate new and hopefully even surprising elements into force.

Ladies and gentlemen, with over 30 years of future history behind us, I wish the first regional conference of parliamentary committees of the future success, and I hope that we will meet again in the future.

In this regard, I'd also like to relay a proposal from the Finnish Parliamentary Committee for the Future.

At the Second World Summit of the Committees of the Future, held in Uruguay in March of 2023, it was agreed that the Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU, would convene the third summit.

Activating the IPU in this matter is bound to be beneficial for the development and promotion of global future policy.

However, our proposal is that the first regional conference of parliamentary committees of the future, now convened, could assist the IPU and jointly make a proposal on where and when the third world summit of the committees of the future should be held.

It is better for the committees themselves to be active in this matter, and since Latin America, Chile for example, has a future history almost as long as Finland's, the first regional conference of the parliamentary committees of the future would be the perfect place to make this proposal.

So once again, dear colleagues, I thank you for your invitation and wish you a successful rest of the summit of the Nordic region.