

**NB: Unofficial translation, legally binding only in Finnish and Swedish.
Ministry of Justice, Finland**

Act on Political Parties

(10/1969; amendments up to 683/2010 included)

Section 1

Political party (16.7.2010/683)

For the purposes of this Act, a political party means an association entered in the Party Register maintained by the Ministry of Justice.

Section 2

Entering of an association in the Party Register as a political party (16.7.2010/683)

An association may upon written application be entered in the Party Register as a political party if

- (1) its main object is to influence state matters,
- (2) it has signed support cards of at least 5,000 citizens entitled to vote in parliamentary elections,
- (3) the rules and regulations of the association guarantee that democratic principles are abided by in decision-making and in the activities of the association, and
- (4) the association has drafted a party programme, which takes up the goals and principles followed in the national activities, whose final objective is mentioned in the rules and regulations.

Member, local, parallel or support associations of an association can not be entered in the Party Register as political parties.

Entering of an association in the Party Register as a political party is free of charge.

Section 3

Application for entering an association in the Party Register (16.7.2010/683)

The application for entering an association in the Party Register must include:

- (1) an extract from the Register of Associations,
- (2) a certified copy of the rules and regulations in force,
- (3) the party programme, and
- (4) a list of the citizens supporting the party, compiled by use of support cards conforming to the model approved by the Ministry of Justice.

The support card must include:

- (1) personal data of the supporter,
- (2) the supporter's assurance that he or she is entitled to vote in parliamentary elections,
- (3) a date that cannot date back more than one year, and
- (4) personal signature of the supporter.

Section 4

Name of a political party (16.7.2010/683)

When an association has been entered in the Party Register as a political party, the abbreviation "r.p.", for the Finnish words "rekisteröity puolue" or the Swedish words "registrerat parti" (registered party) is added to its name.

Abbreviations or words relating to the registration of an association may not be used in connection to the name of a political party.

Section 5

Notification of an amendment to the rules and regulations of a political party (16.7.2010/683)

Amendments to the rules and regulations or the party programme of a political party shall be notified to the Ministry of Justice. An amendment of rules and regulations does not enter into force until it is entered in the Party Register.

Amendments to the rules and regulations of a political party shall be entered in the Party Register, if the rules and regulations even after the amendment comply with the requirements laid down by this Act.

Section 6

Deletion of a political party from the Party Register (16.7.2010/683)

A political party that fails to gain a parliamentary seat in two consecutive parliamentary elections is deleted from the Party Register. The same applies if a political party ceases to be a registered association.

A party may also apply for deletion from the Register.

Section 7

Enforceability of a decision (16.7.2010/683)

A decision by the Ministry of Justice to enter a political party in the Party Register or to delete a party from the Register must be complied with notwithstanding an appeal, until the appeal has been resolved.

Section 7 a (16.7.2010/680)

Residence of a board member (16.7.2010/683)

Only a person with residence in Finland may be a member of the board of a political party.

Section 8 (16.7.2010/683)

Financial support to a political party and a party association

A political party and a party association may accept financial support in accordance with the provisions laid down below. For the purposes of this Act, *a party association* means an association that belongs to a political party or its member association according to their rules and regulations.

Contributions received in form of money, goods, services or other performances are deemed to constitute financial support to a political party or a party association. However, the following are not regarded as financial support:

- 1) ordinary voluntary work and free services;
- 2) such market-valued contributions that relate to the ordinary organisational activities or management of the property of a political party or a party association;
- 3) contributions that a political party and a party association receive from each other;
- 4) income from permanent, market-based business activities carried out by a political party or a party association on the general market;
- 5) income from investment activities carried out by a political party or a party association;
- 6) party subsidy referred to in section 9 or other corresponding subsidy granted by virtue of law, state budget or municipal budget.

Contributions received during the campaign period are deemed to constitute election funding of a political party or a party association. For the purposes of this Act, a campaign period means the period starting six months before the election day and ending two weeks after the election day.

Section 8 a (16.7.2010/683)

Financial support to an entity affiliated with a political party

For the purposes of this Act, *an entity affiliated with a political party* (an affiliated entity) means such a corporation and foundation as well as such a trust of a corporation or a foundation that a political party, with the consent of the corporation or foundation in question, reports to the National Audit Office of Finland to be an entity affiliated with the political party.

Contributions received in form of money, goods, services or other performances are deemed to constitute financial support to an affiliated entity. However, the following are not regarded as financial support:

- 1) ordinary voluntary work and free services;
- 2) such market-valued contributions that relate to the basic activities or to the management of the property of an affiliated entity;
- 3) contributions that entities affiliated with the same political party receive from each other;

- 4) income from permanent, market-based business activities carried out by an affiliated entity on the general market;
- 5) income from investment activities carried out by an affiliated entity;
- 6) subsidy granted to an affiliated entity by virtue of law, state budget or municipal budget.

Section 8 b (16.7.2010/683)

Limitations on financial support

A political party, a party association or an affiliated entity may not accept any financial support unless the donor can be identified. However, this does not apply to contributions received as a result of ordinary fund-raising activities.

A political party, a party association or an affiliated entity may not accept financial support from the same donor in excess of 30,000 euros per calendar year. This does not, however, apply to financial support donated by an affiliated entity to the political party or party association in question, nor does it apply to financial support received by bequest.

A political party, a party association or an affiliated entity may accept foreign financial support only from private individuals and such international corporations and foundations that represent the same ideology as the party.

A political party, a party association or an affiliated entity may not accept financial support from the state, a municipality, a joint municipal board, an unincorporated state enterprise or a municipal corporation, or an association, institution or foundation governed by public law, or a corporation under government or municipal control as referred to in Chapter 1, section 5 of the Accounting Act (1336/1997 *Kirjanpitolaki*). This does not, however, apply to the use of premises or ordinary hospitality.

A political party, a party association or an affiliated entity must ensure that the name of the payer of such an advertisement that is a part of an election campaign or meant to support a campaign is disclosed in the said advertisement. The name of a private individual may not, however, be disclosed without his or her express consent, if the value of the advertisement paid by him or her is under 1,500 euros.

Section 8 c (16.7.2010/683)

Up-to-date disclosure

A disclosure containing information on the value of the financial support received by a political party, a party association and an affiliated entity and on the donor of the financial support must be filed with the National Audit Office of Finland, if the value of an individual contribution or the total value of several contributions from the same donor is at least 1,500 euros per calendar year (*an up-to-date disclosure*). The disclosure must be supplemented whenever the value of financial support from the same donor, consisting of new contributions, after filing or supplementing a disclosure exceeds the amount specified above. Contributions are to be reported in gross amounts. The value of contributions provided in forms other than money is to be estimated and reported as cash amounts.

Liability for filing a disclosure rests with the political party. The disclosure must be filed not later than on the 15th day of the calendar month following the month when the contribution was received.

Further provisions on filing a disclosure will be given by the National Audit Office of Finland.

Section 9 (16.7.2010/683)

Party subsidy

Within the limits of the Budget, a political party represented in the Parliament may be granted discretionary government transfer (*party subsidy*) to finance the party's public activities specified in its rules and regulations and the party programme. Party subsidy is allocated to the parties in accordance with the number of parliamentary seats each party has gained in the latest parliamentary elections. If, during the period between parliamentary elections and before the publication of the Budget every budgetary year, at least half of a certain party's parliamentary representatives have notified the Speaker of the Parliament that they cease to represent the party in question in the Parliament, the allocation of the subsidy shall be adjusted to correspond with the changed situation. Part of the party subsidy may be allocated for supporting the activities of some other association.

In addition to the parties referred to in subsection 1, party subsidy is also granted to a political party, which a representative elected as a candidate for a joint list or a constituency association in the last parliamentary elections has notified to the Speaker of the Parliament as the party he or she wishes to represent, and which continues the political activities of the voter group that formed the joint list or established the constituency association. However, this requires that the party in question has not been entered in the Party Register before the statutory date provided in the Election Act (714/1998 *Vaalilaki*), by which the Ministry of Justice for the purposes of the above mentioned elections must notify the constituency electoral committees of the parties entered in the Party Register. Party subsidy is allocated, as appropriate, in accordance with the allocation grounds laid down in subsection 1.

Party subsidy is granted by the Government upon application. Party subsidy is paid by the Prime Minister's Office.

The granting, payment and use of the party subsidy are in other respects governed by the provisions of the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers (688/2001 *Valtionavustuslaki*).

Section 9 a (16.7.2010/683)

Accounting

The provisions of the Accounting Act (*Kirjanpitolaki* 1336/1997) on the obligation to keep books, on financial statements and on annual reports apply to a political party and an association referred to in the party subsidy decision. In connection with the financial statement, they must also present an account of the use of the party subsidy referred to in section 9 and the information included in the up-to-date disclosures as well as election campaign costs and funding as provided in section 9 b.

A corporation and foundation that a political party has reported to be an affiliated entity and such a corporation and foundation, the trust of which has been reported to be an affiliated entity, must in addition to the information required by the Accounting Act present an itemised list of the financial support it has received. The itemised list must contain information on the received financial support

in total as well as grouped into contributions from private individuals, companies, and other instances.

Further provisions on drawing up an account and presenting the information may be given by a Government decree.

Section 9 b (16.7.2010/683)

Information on election campaign costs and funding to be disclosed

A political party and an association referred to in a party subsidy decision shall for each general election provide an itemised list of the election campaign costs incurred during the campaign period and election campaign funding as follows:

1) the total election campaign costs accompanied by an itemised list of promotional expenditure for advertisements in newspapers, free newspapers, periodicals, radio, television and data networks, and other communications media; outdoor advertising; the production of self-published campaign newsletters, brochures, and other printed material; campaign planning; the organization of rallies; contributions received for the election campaign; expenditure incurred by personnel hired for the campaign and by premises acquired for the campaign; and other expenditure;

2) the total election funding accompanied by an itemised list of the loans taken out; party subsidy referred to in section 9 and other financial support granted by virtue of law or state budget or municipal budget; election funding; and all other sources of funding. Election funding must be grouped into contributions from private individuals, companies, and other sources.

Each individual campaign contribution and its donor must be mentioned separately, if the value of a contribution is at least 1,500 euros. All campaign contributions received from the same donor are to be added up and reported as a single campaign contribution item. Contributions are to be reported in gross amounts. The value of contributions provided in forms other than money is to be estimated and the contributions reported as cash amounts. The name of a private individual may not be disclosed without his or her express consent if the amount donated is under 1,500 euros.

If a contribution includes a contribution passed on from a third party, the value of which is at least 1,500 euros, the donor of such a passed-on contribution must also be disclosed by the recipient of the contribution.

A political party and an association referred to in the party subsidy decision may before the election day file an advance disclosure with the National Audit Office containing an estimate of campaign funding and costs.

Further provisions on drawing up the itemised lists will be given by the National Audit Office of Finland.

Section 9 c (16.7.2010/683)

Audit

A political party receiving a subsidy referred to above in section 9 must appoint an auditor or an audit firm referred to in the Auditing Act (459/2007 *Tilintarkastuslaki*) or a CPFA auditor or a CPFA corporation referred to in the Act on Chartered Public Finance Auditors (467/1999 *Laki*

julkishallinnon ja -talouden tilintarkastajista). The same applies to an association referred to in a party subsidy decision as well as to a corporation and a foundation that a political party has reported to be an affiliated entity and to such a corporation and a foundation, the trust of which has been reported to be an affiliated entity. An audit firm and a CPFA corporation must notify the political party of the name of the responsible auditor.

In addition to the requirements laid down in the Auditing Act, the auditor of a political party and some other association referred to in the party subsidy decision that receive the subsidy must in the auditor's report state the following:

- 1) whether the use and reporting of the use of party subsidy have been conducted in compliance with the provisions of this Act and the conditions of the party subsidy decision;
- 2) whether the provisions of this Act on financial support and the limitations on it as well as the provisions on disclosing the election campaign costs and funding have been complied with.

The auditor of an affiliated entity and such a corporation and foundation, the trust of which is an affiliated entity, must in addition to the requirements laid down in the Accounting Act issue a statement on whether the provisions of this Act on financial support and the limitations on it have been complied with in the activities of the said entity.

Section 9 d (16.7.2010/683)

Submitting financial statement documents

A political party must submit the auditor's report and the financial statement of the party and an association referred to in a party subsidy decision including their supplements and the accounts and information referred to in section 9 a(1) to the National Audit Office of Finland and the Ministry of Justice. To this end, an association referred to in a party subsidy decision must submit the above mentioned documents and information to the political party. The documents and information of a political party must be submitted within three months of the approval of the financial statement of the party. The documents and information of an association referred to in a party subsidy decision must be submitted within one month of the approval of the financial statement of the association.

A corporation or a foundation reported to be an affiliated entity must submit the auditor's report and the financial statement including their supplements, an itemised list referred to in section 9 a(2), and a statement referred to in section 9 c(3) to the National Audit Office of Finland within three months of the approval of the financial statement of the corporation or foundation. Such a corporation or foundation, a trust of which has been reported to be an affiliated entity, must submit the corresponding documents within three months of the approval of the financial statement of the corporation or foundation.

Further provisions on submitting the documents and information will be given by the National Audit Office of Finland.

Section 9 e (16.7.2010/683)

Supervision

The Ministry of Justice supervises the use of party subsidy referred to in section 9 and monitors compliance with this Act and other provisions and regulations issued by virtue of this Act in those respects that the supervision does not fall within the duties of the National Audit Office of Finland. The Act on Discretionary Government Transfers is applied to the supervision of the use of the party subsidy.

The National Audit Office of Finland supervises whether a political party, an affiliated entity and an association referred to in a party subsidy decision (*a supervised entity*) comply with the provisions on financial support, disclosure of election campaign costs and funding as well as drawing up and submitting these documents and information. In this duty, the National Audit Office may inspect the accountancy and use of funds of the supervised entity and, if necessary, urge the supervised entity to fulfil its obligations arising from this Act.

The National Audit Office of Finland may, on pain of a penalty payment, require a supervised entity to fulfil its obligations, if the required documents or information have not, despite the Office's reminder to do so, been submitted, corrected or completed, or if their correctness and sufficiency have not been accounted for, and if the neglect is substantial when assessed as a whole. The penalty payment will be enforced by the penalty payment board referred to in section 15 of the Act on the National Audit Office of Finland (676/2000 *Laki valtionalouden tarkastusvirastosta*). A decision to impose or enforce a penalty payment may be appealed to the Supreme Administrative Court as provided in the Administrative Judicial Procedure Act (586/1996 *Hallintolainkäyttölaki*).

Further provisions on the supervision carried out by the National Audit Office of Finland are laid down in the Act on the National Audit Office of Finland.

The National Audit Office of Finland must give an annual report to the Parliament on its activities in monitoring the compliance with this Act.

Section 9 f (16.7.2010/683)

Party funding register and public access

The National Audit Office of Finland maintains a register of party funding disclosures, in which the information in the disclosures referred to in section 8 c and in the itemised lists referred to in section 9 a (2) and 9 b as well as the information in the documents referred to in section 9 d(1) is stored. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 16(3) of the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999 *Laki viranomaisten toiminnan julkisuudesta*), every individual has the right to obtain copies of the register entries and information via public data networks.

Storage of the up-to-date disclosures, advance disclosures and other information in the party funding register and access to the register are in other respects governed by the provisions of the Archives Act (831/1994 *Arkistolaki*) and the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999 *Laki viranomaisten toiminnan julkisuudesta*).

Section 10 (16.7.2010/683)
Requirement of impartiality

Authorities of the state, of a municipality or of a joint municipal board as well as corporations or institutions governed by them must treat all political parties equally and following uniform criteria.

Yleisradio Oy (Finnish Broadcasting Company) may, when it applies the provisions in subsection 1, take into account aspects relating to public service programming.

Section 11 (16.7.2010/683)
Claim for recovery

The Government plenary session may order payment of a party subsidy referred to in section 9 to be discontinued or a subsidy already paid or a part thereof to be recovered as provided in the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers. Payment may, however, be ordered to be discontinued or a subsidy already paid to be recovered in total or partially also from a political party that in essential parts fails to fulfil an obligation laid down by this Act. If the instance failing to fulfil an obligation is some other association referred to in a party subsidy decision, the discontinuation of payment or recovery of the subsidy may only apply to that part of the subsidy that has been allocated to the said association.

Section 12 (16.7.2010/683)
Further provisions

Further provisions on the implementation of this Act shall be given by a Government Decree.

Section 13
Transitional provision and entry into force (16.7.2010/683)

This Act enters into force on 1 February 1969.