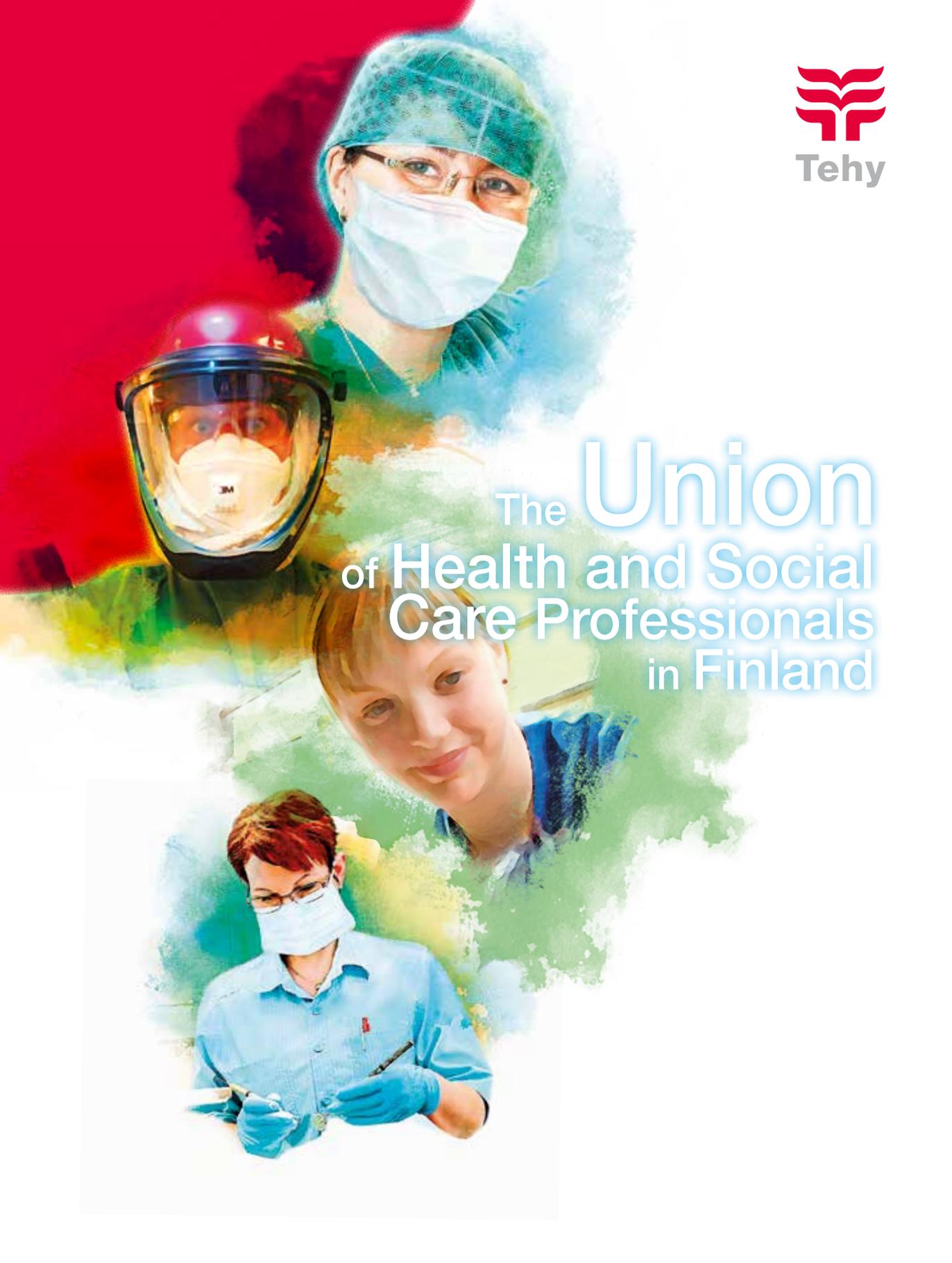




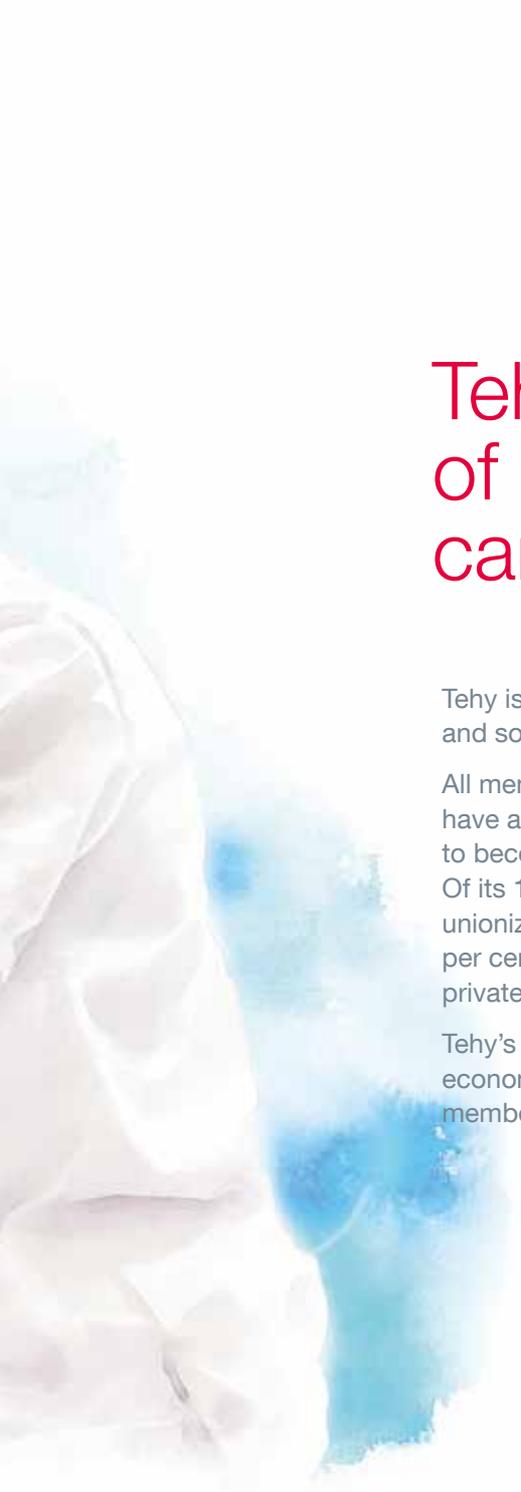
The **Union**  
of Health and Social  
Care Professionals  
in Finland





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# Tehy – the voice of health and social care professionals

Tehy is the largest trade union in Finland for health and social care professionals.

All members of Tehy are qualified professionals who have a degree in health or social care or are studying to become a qualified health or social care professional. Of its 160 000 members, 20 000 are students. The unionization rate in the health care sector is over 90 per cent. Tehy members work both in the public and private sectors.

Tehy's main goal is to supervise and improve the economical, professional and social interests of its members.

## **Tehy:**

- Negotiates collective agreements
- Gives guidance and support in work-related matters
- Offers legal aid to members and takes disputes to court, if necessary
- Provides education and training
- Gathers statistics and research data to support the work of representing the interests of its members

# Finland — Land of Aurora Borealis, Santa Claus, and sauna



Located in Northern Europe, Finland is a Nordic country that is full of interesting contrasts such as the four seasons, Midnight Sun and winter darkness, and urban vivacity and rural peacefulness. Aply known as the Land of a Thousand Lakes, forests cover about 75 per cent of the country and bodies of water cover almost ten per cent.

Finland represents the traditions of the Nordic welfare state model. Equality between men and women has been emphasized in the Finnish model and the welfare system has played a crucial role in that. Tax revenues are essential for funding Finnish welfare and society.

## Facts about Finland & Finns

- Parliamentary Republic with a multi-party political system and a president as the head of state
- Independence declared on December 6th, 1917. Previously a grand duchy in the Russian empire for 108 years, and before that a part of Sweden for 600 years
- Total Area: 338,000 sq. km, making Finland the sixth largest country in Europe
- 5,52 million inhabitants, 17 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>
- Helsinki is the capital, approximately 1,3 million people live in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area
- Currency: Euro (€) since 2002
- GDP per capita: 42 504 euros (2018)
- Finnish (91,5 %) and Swedish (5,5 %) are official languages.
- Finland has freedom of religion. About 69,7 % of the population belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church
- The average number of children is 1,41 / woman
- Life expectancy is 78,9 years for men and 84,3 years for women
- Infant mortality rate is 2,4 deaths / 1 000 live births



# The voice of health care professionals across Finland

Tehy has 13 regional offices and 230 branches that cover the whole of Finland. The headquarters is in Helsinki. Branches connect all Tehy members who work for the same employer. Every health and social care workplace has a shop steward whose task is to help and support Tehy members when needed. They represent the interest of Tehy members at the local level.

Tehy's partnership organizations, that represent different professions, boost the professional identity of Tehy members.

Tehy handles economical interests of its members: negotiates and bargains the collective agreements on the terms and conditions of work. Partnership organizations cooperate with Tehy as specialists, for example in professional and educational matters.

In order to have the best possible representation of their interests, health and social care professionals should join both Tehy and the professional organization that reflects their professional identity.

## **Tehy for students**

Tehy organizes health and social care students in universities, universities of applied sciences and vocational colleges. There is a special student association for Tehy students. Students are entitled to membership benefits and the membership is free of charge.

Tehy went on strike in both 1983 and 1995. In 2007, around 15 000 Tehy professionals working in the public sector threatened to announce their resignation due to being dissatisfied with the pay suggestion of the employer. An understanding was reached before the resignations would have taken place, and Tehy members received a notable salary raise.

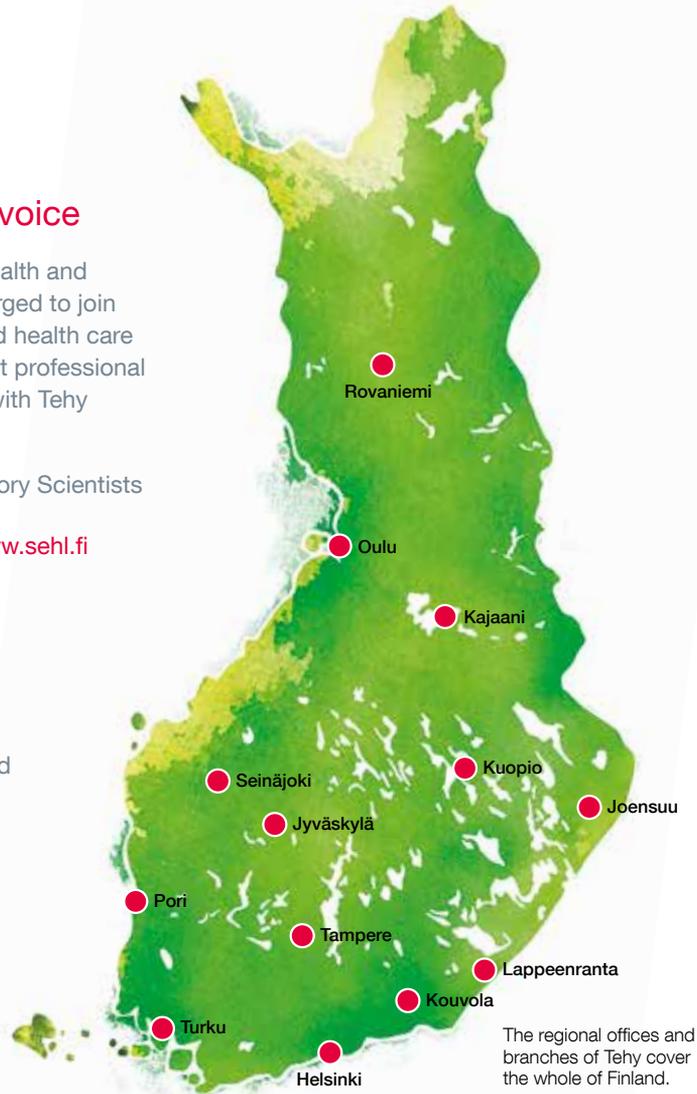
## Joining forces for a stronger voice

Tehy was established in 1982 when six health and social care professional organizations merged to join forces. This created the biggest social and health care trade union in Finland. Now there are eight professional organizations that work closely together with Tehy as partnership organizations:

- The Association of Biomedical Laboratory Scientists in Finland [www.bioanalytytikkoliitto.fi](http://www.bioanalytytikkoliitto.fi)
- The Finnish Paramedic Association [www.sehl.fi](http://www.sehl.fi)
- The Federation of Finnish Midwives [www.suomenkatiloliitto.fi](http://www.suomenkatiloliitto.fi)
- The Finnish Association of Child Care and Nursery Nurses [www.slal.fi](http://www.slal.fi)
- The Finnish Federation of Practical Mental Health Nurses [www.smthl.net](http://www.smthl.net)
- The Society of Radiographers in Finland [www.suomenrontgenhoitajaliitto.fi](http://www.suomenrontgenhoitajaliitto.fi)
- The Finnish Nurses Association [www.nurses.fi](http://www.nurses.fi)
- The Finnish Federation of Oral Health Care Professionals [www.stal.fi](http://www.stal.fi)

## Facts about Tehy and its members (in 2016):

- 160 000 members in total
- 91,7 % of members are women
- The average age is 43 years
- 72 % work in the municipal sector, 18 % in the private sector
- 80,8 % of Tehy members working in municipal sector work full-time and 82,1 % work with permanent contracts
- The biggest professional member groups are: registered nurses, practical nurses and public health nurses
- The average salary of a registered nurse working in the municipal sector is about 3 055 euros, a little bit more than in the private sector.
- The unemployment rate of health and social care professionals is less than 2 %
- Tehy negotiates 10 collective agreements (1 in the municipal sector, 1 in state sector and 8 in the private sector)



# Universal right to social welfare and health care services



## More information

Health care: [www.stm.fi](http://www.stm.fi) and [www.thl.fi](http://www.thl.fi)

Legislation: [www.finlex.fi](http://www.finlex.fi)

Statistics: [www.tilastokeskus.fi](http://www.tilastokeskus.fi)

Professional practice rights: [www.valvira.fi](http://www.valvira.fi)

According to the Constitution of Finland, public authorities must guarantee adequate social, medical and health services and promote the health of the population. Finland's social welfare and health care system is founded on government-subsidized municipal services. Private health care services complement public health care service provision. Private-sector

service providers account for just over a quarter of all social welfare and health care services. However, the share of private care, especially in the social services sector, is on the increase. They is of the opinion that health and social care services should be provided largely as public services and private services could be used to complement these.



## Health care professionals - members of Tehy

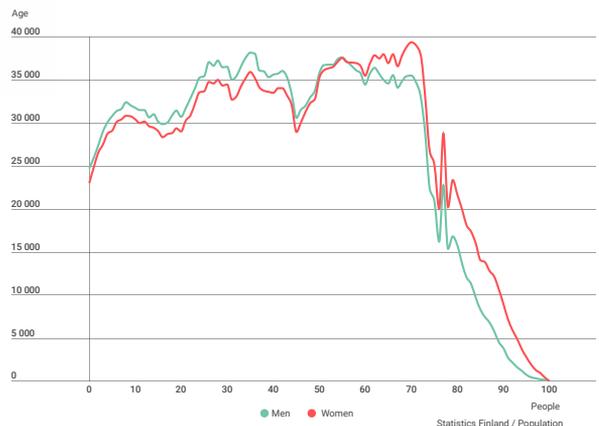
Certain health care professionals (e.g. nurses, dental hygienists, midwives, 17 titles in total) are required to have not just appropriate training but also a license to practice their profession in Finland. The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare (Valvira) grants, upon application, the right to practice as a licensed or authorized professional and authorizes the use of the occupational title of healthcare professional. A person practicing as a healthcare professional in Finland without a license may be sentenced to a fine or imprisonment. Valvira also maintains open registers of licensed health and social care professionals in Finland.

## Future of health care

The age structure in Finland is challenging as the population is aging rapidly. Aging population and increasing life expectancy increase the demand for quality care. Many diseases traditionally common among Finns have decreased, but new kinds of health problems have taken their place. Those are, for example, obesity, diabetes, allergies, dementia, musculo-skeletal diseases and mental disorders.

Finland's entire health care system will be overhauled in the next few years to meet the health care and social welfare challenges of the 21st century. The aim of the reform is to lower the boundaries between primary health care and specialized medical care. Interaction between health care and social welfare will be increased at the same time. Tehy works to safeguard the interests of its members in these structural changes.

## Population by age and gender 31.12.2018



# Strength stemming from cooperation

The trade union movement has a long tradition in Finland and union density is high in many fields. Most Finnish employees belong to a trade union and about 90 % are covered by a collective agreement negotiated by their unions. Most employers in Finland also belong to the employer's federation for their own industry. There is a freedom of association in Finland that applies to all workers, including employees working part-time or under short-term contracts.

The collective agreement specifies the minimum terms and conditions of an employment relationship. They form one of the most important membership benefits offered by trade unions. The negotiations are conducted by the trade union and the employer association. Finnish legislation does not stipulate a minimum salary. Instead, minimum salaries are specified in collective agreements. The generally applicable terms and conditions of the collective agreement must be applied to all industry employees regardless of whether they are trade union members.

## **Achievements of Trade Union movement over the years:**

- The eight-hour working day
- Maternity and parental leave
- The five-day working week
- Sick pay
- Overtime compensation
- Annual holidays
- Holiday bonus

There are about 80 trade unions and three major Confederations in Finland. They are affiliated to STTK, The Finnish Confederation of Professionals. [www.sttk.fi](http://www.sttk.fi)





## Maintaining the attractiveness of the social and health care sector

Tehy works in Finnish society to support the professional and educational position of its members, and has an impact on both the development of the health and social care sector and employment and educational politics. Tehy works to develop conditions in the workplace, as well as occupational safety and pension schemes, and is influential in preparations for new legislation and other reforms. Tehy is a politically pluralistic organization and cooperates actively with all the political parties in Finnish parliament.

### Our goal:

- Competitive and fair pay: wages need to correspond to job, responsibility and knowledge requirements.
- Organizational strength: Tehy is the most significant union of the health and social care profession.
- Trained and skilled professionals: Trained and skilled professionals produce high quality health and social services.

# Equal opportunities for men and women

Issues concerning equality in working life are at the core of Finnish equality policy. Equality in working life is promoted particularly in pay, working conditions, terms of employment, and career development. The Act on Equality between men and women prohibits discrimination based on gender and requires the promotion of gender equality. The law also applies to sexual minorities.

On average women are paid 84,2 % of what men earn in Finland. About half of the pay gap is because men and women work in different fields and with different tasks. But still, women earn roughly 10 % less than men even though they have the same training, are working in the same sector, have the same tasks and belong to the same age group.

Government and social partners are committed to furthering pay equality. However, in terms of pay equality we have fallen behind the set goals, and in the past few decades the progress has almost come to a standstill.

The means taken to achieve equal pay include: contract policy, decreasing of the gender-based segregation of occupations, development of pay systems and support for women's career development.

Tehy is an equal opportunities pioneer and has, for example, initiated policies and created programs that support equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Narrowing the difference in pay between the sexes, safeguarding the services which give women the freedom to work, and improving the balance of work and family life are all core goals for Tehy.

## Did you know:

The gender equality index, released by the European Institute for Gender Equality EIGE, ranks Finland in 4th place in terms of gender equality in the EU (after Sweden, Denmark and France) (2019).





### Key milestones:

- Women's right to vote in 1906 (first country in Europe)
- Women's eligibility to stand for elective office in 1906 (first country in the world)
- Equal pay agreement of ILO ratified in 1962
- Equality Act in 1986
- First female president, Tarja Halonen, elected in 2000.

# Slowly turning into a multicultural society

Immigration to Finland is still very low, although growing. Only 4,5 % of the population in Finland is of foreign nationality. The biggest nationality groups come from the neighbouring countries Russia, Estonia and Sweden.

At the end of 2014, some 17 700 persons of foreign origin worked in health and social services. People of foreign origin accounted for some four per cent and people of foreign nationality for less than two per cent of the total number of health and social services personnel (in total 385 482 workers in 2014).

In the future, the immigration of the work force to Finland will most likely grow. Because migrant workers are more vulnerable to exploitation than domestic labour, Tehy works for the improvement of the migrant health care work force both nationally and globally. Ethical guidelines need to be applied to the mobility of health care personnel. Tehy emphasises that it is impossible to establish a two-tier labour market in public healthcare in Finland, where



migrant nurses work under poorer terms and conditions of employment than Finnish nationals.

A survey made for migrant workers by Tehy shows that language barrier and difficulties in recognition of qualifications were the biggest challenges to come across when seeking employment in Finland. Tehy works with employer organizations and recruitment companies in order to improve the position of migrant workers in Finland.



## An active influencer also outside of Finnish borders

Finland joined the European Union (EU) in 1995. More and more legislation, binding contracts and guiding principles are being drafted in the EU that directly affect Tehy members, such as a large part of the labour legislation. For this reason Tehy closely monitors all developments in the EU and keeps in touch with Finnish members of the European Parliament.

Tehy is also active in the social dialogue of the European hospital sector ever since its creation in 2006. The social dialogue refers to discussions, consultations,

negotiations and joint actions involving both employers and workers of the same industry. The social partners of the hospital sector have reached agreements on aging workforce, ethical recruitment and prevention of sharps injuries.

One aspect of the international activities of Tehy is cooperation in developing countries. This work mainly consists of equal opportunities, trade union rights, trade union organizing and negotiations. Tehy helps in creating trade union structures and improving the working conditions and salaries in, for example, Brazil, Nepal, Kosovo, The Philippines, Colombia and West Africa. Tehy works globally with the Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland (SASK) and Public Services International (PSI) with the financial support of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

### **Tehy co-operates with the following organizations:**

- Public Services International (PSI) [www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org)
- European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) [www.epsu.org](http://www.epsu.org)
- Nordic Public Services Unions (NOFS) [www.nofs.org](http://www.nofs.org)
- Finnish Public Services Unions' EU Working Party (FIPSU)
- Trade Union Solidarity Centre of Finland (SASK) [www.sask.fi](http://www.sask.fi)
- Finnwatch [www.finnwatch.org](http://www.finnwatch.org)

# New to Finland? Join Tehy

If you are a qualified health or social care professional and you are planning to move to Finland, or if you are already employed in Finland in a care occupation, contact Tehy. We will give you information on the representation of the interests of care personnel in Finland and on membership to Tehy.



## **Tehy**

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[facebook.com/tehy](https://facebook.com/tehy)  
[twitter.com/Tehy\\_ry](https://twitter.com/Tehy_ry)  
[youtube.com/TehyVideot](https://youtube.com/TehyVideot)