

# **Committee for the Future** in the Parliament of Finland

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PARLIAMENT  
OF FINLAND

# Committee tasks

1. developing futures policy dialogue with the Government and society at large
2. evaluating and reacting to Government futures reports
3. organising and coordinating Technology Assessment in the Parliament
4. following research and development in futures studies and foresight
5. serving as a parliamentary think tank



# History of the Committee

- **1986:** 133 MPs presented an initiative to create a futures research unit
- **early 1990s:** the Parliament called on the Government to provide a futures report
- **1992:** a majority of MPs approved a legislative motion that the Government should submit a report on long-term trends
- **1993:** Parliament appointed a temporary Committee for the Future
- **2000:** permanent status for the Committee



# Dialogue between the Parliament and the Government

- once every term, the Government issues a report on long-term future prospects
- the report is prepared in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), adopted by the Government and submitted to Parliament
- regional Future Forums are organised jointly by the PMO and Parliament
- implementation is monitored by the PMO



# Reports on the future

- **1993:** Finland and its relationship to changes in its operating environment
- **1996:** The future of Finland and Europe
- **1997:** Finland's economy
- **2001:** Regional development
- **2005:** Finland's demographic trends, population policy and preparation for changes in the age structure
- **2010:** Long-term climate and energy policy



# Foresight methods used

## ***Futures mapping methods***

*Multi-phase scenario building - vision, megatrends, weak signals, scenarios, strategy: The Future of work (2000)*

*Argument Delphi method: Gerontechnology (2001), Energy 2010 (2001), Human genome and stem cells (2003), Futures of the Finnish health care system (2006)*

*Morphological Matrixes: Gerontechnology (2001)*

*Scenarios of visionaries: Finnish information society (2004), Future of Democracy (2006), Russia 2030 (2010),*

*Voyages of Exploration into Biopolicy(2010)*

## ***Decision models***

*Weighted decision trees: Gerontechnology (2001)*

## ***Participatory foresight:***

*Futures workshops: especially in Knowledge management (2001), Regional innovation systems - many local seminars (2002-2005), Russia 2017 – scenarios based on many small papers of experts (2007)*



# Technology assessment

- the Committee functions as a parliamentary body for assessing technological development and its consequences for society using the results of scientific research and technology
- TA generally encompasses broader sectors of science and technology, such as biotechnology, mass communications, transport, energy etc.



# Main projects in 2003–07

1. Challenges of the Finnish Information Society
2. The Futures of the Finnish Health Care
3. Regional Innovative Environments
4. Democracy and the Futures
5. Russia 2017





# Projects in 2007–11

1. Metropolises and new general education
2. Taboos of the welfare state model
3. Forests and the future of using them
4. Opportunities and risks of nanotechnology
5. RFID (radio-frequency identification)
6. 10 challenges of the future for Finland



# Challenges

- **policy effectiveness:** many reports – what is the impact on policy and society?
- **peer support:** the committee sometimes seen as second tier
- **public recognition:** committee not particularly well known nor highly valued
- **added value:** finding a role, complementing the work of other actors
- **ability to rise above daily politics:** can MPs open the horizons in thinking?



# Think futures

[parliament.fi/FutureCommittee](https://parliament.fi/FutureCommittee)



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