

Act on the Delimitation of the Territorial Waters of Finland, No. 463
(as amended by Act No 144/1965, Act No 332/1966 and Act No 981/1995)
adopted in Helsinki on 18 August 1956(1)

Section 1 (Act No 144/1965)

The territorial waters of Finland shall comprise the part of the sea immediately adjacent to the land territory of the State, which is limited in the east, in the archipelago of Vironlahti in the Gulf of Finland, by the state boundary between Finland and Russia as provided in the Paris Peace Treaty (Act No 690-691/1947) signed on 10 February 1947 and, near the archipelago of Haapasaari, by the state boundary between Finland and Russia as provided in the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Finland and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Delimitation of the Sea Territories and the Continental Shelf in the Gulf of Finland concluded on 20 May 1965; and in the west, in the archipelago of Tornio in the northern part of the Gulf of Bothnia, by the state boundary between Finland and Sweden as provided in the Agreement between Finland and Sweden on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf in the Southern and Northern Parts of the Gulf of Bothnia, in the Åland Sea and in the northernmost part of the Baltic Sea, concluded on 29 September 1972 and in the boundary lines review (rajan tarkistus) of 1981, in accordance with the Topographic Description of Boundaries (rajanselitys) signed in Tornio on 19 January 1811 after the Peace of Hamina. In the Åland Sea, to the south and to the north of the islet of Märket, the boundary between Finland and Sweden shall be the state boundary established in the aforementioned Description of Boundaries of 1811, as provided in the aforementioned Agreement of 1972, in the boundary lines review of 1981 and in the Agreement between Finland and Sweden on the Delimitation of the Boundary between Finland's Continental Shelf and Fishing Zone and Sweden's Exclusive Economic Zone in the Åland Sea and in the northern part of the Baltic Sea concluded on 2 June 1994 (Act No 983/1995). The outer limits of the territorial waters shall be equal to the international limits of the territorial waters. (Act No 981/1995)

A single island, rock or low-water elevation or a group of the aforesaid situated far out to sea may have separate territorial waters.

Section 2

The territorial waters shall consist of internal waters and external waters or the territorial sea.

Section 3 (Act No 981/1995)

The internal waters shall mean that part of the territorial waters the landward limits of which consist of the mean water line along the coast and, at river mouths, of a straight line across the mouth between the limit points situated on the mean water line of the banks, and the seaward outer limits of which consist of straight baselines, the points of which are located on the outermost landmarks, either on the mainland or on islands, rocks or low-water elevations.

Section 4 (Act No 981/1995)

The base points referred to in section 3 above shall be selected from among points located above the mean water level at a certain epoch, designated on the basis of long-term water level measurements. Even points below the said level may be used as base points, provided that they are at least periodically within sight and a lighthouse

or other installation permanently above the sea level has been built on them.

The base points and the location of the landward limits of the internal waters, referred to in section 3 above, shall be reviewed every thirty years.

Section 5 (Act No 981/1995)

The territorial sea shall mean a zone immediately adjacent to the internal waters, the outer limits of which shall be at a distance of twelve nautical miles from the outer limits of the internal waters, unless otherwise provided in this Act.

Section 5a (Act No 981/1995)

In the Gulf of Finland, the outer limits of the territorial sea shall consist of a line which runs at a distance of at least three nautical miles from the median line and every point of which is located north of channels customarily used for international navigation.

In the Gulf of Bothnia and in its southern and northern parts, in the Åland Sea and in the northern part of the Baltic Sea, no point of the outer limits of the territorial sea shall extend further than the boundary of Finland's fishing zone and continental shelf as provided in the Agreements between Finland and Sweden.

Section 6

[repealed by Act No 981/1995]

Section 7 (Act No 144/1965)

From the westernmost terminal point of the eastern state boundary, the outer limits of the territorial sea shall consist of a straight line drawn westward to the easternmost terminal point of the line delimiting the territorial sea of Finland, as provided in the Paris Peace Treaty signed on 10 February 1947, where it joins the latter line. (Act No 332/1966)

From the westernmost terminal point of the line delimiting the territorial sea of Finland, mentioned in subsection 1 above, the outer limits of the territorial sea shall consist of a line drawn to the west-southwest towards the outer limits referred to in section 5a, subsection 1, until it joins the latter. (Act No 981/1995)

In the Gulf of Bothnia, off the town of Tornio, the outer limits of the territorial sea shall, at point 2 defined in the Agreement between Finland and Sweden on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf in the Southern and Northern Parts of the Gulf of Bothnia, in the Åland Sea and in the northernmost part of the Baltic Sea concluded on 29 September 1972, depart from the state boundary between Finland and Sweden and shall be a line drawn to the south-southeast towards the outer limits referred to in section 5, until it joins the latter. (Act No 981/1995)

In the Åland Sea, to the north of the islet of Märket, the outer limits of the territorial sea shall, at point 10 defined in the Agreement between Finland and Sweden on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf in the Southern and Northern Parts of the Gulf of Bothnia, in the Åland Sea and in the northernmost part of the Baltic Sea concluded on 29 September 1972, depart from the state boundary between Finland and Sweden and shall be a line drawn to the north-northeast towards the outer limits referred to in section 5, until it joins the latter. (Act No 981/1995)

In the northern part of the Baltic Sea, surrounding Bogskär islands, the outer limits of the territorial sea shall in the west, at a point the distance of which from the base point located south of Bogskär lighthouse island is

twelve nautical miles, depart from the outer limits referred to in section 5 and shall be a straight line drawn to the southeast, joining the arc of a circle with a radius of three nautical miles and having the said base point as its centre. The outer limits of the territorial sea shall depart from the arc of the circle at a point where a straight line drawn at a distance of three nautical miles from the southern base points of Bogskär islands is tangent to the arc, and shall follow this line to the east-northeast towards the outer limits referred to in section 5, until it joins the latter. (Act No 981/1995)

In the Gulf of Bothnia, in Tornio archipelago, after the last base point on the Finnish territory, the following base point is on the Swedish territory.

Section 8 (Act No 981/1995)

The base points of the outer limits of the internal waters and their exact locations, as well as the location of the landward limits of the internal waters and the outer limits of the territorial sea, shall be given by Decree. The said Decree shall, where necessary, also contain further provisions on the implementation and application of this Act.

Endnotes

1 (Note - Note)

unofficial translation provided by the Permanent Mission of Finland through an e-mail dated 18 March 2003