



Ministry of the Interior
Finland

Migration | Ministry of the Interior Publications 25/2018

International Migration 2017–2018 – Report for Finland

Ministry of the Interior publications 25/2018

International Migration 2017–2018 - Report for Finland

Ministry of the Interior, Helsinki 2018

Ministry of the Interior

ISBN: 978-952-324-236-4

Layout: Government Administration Unit, Publications

Helsinki 2018

Description sheet

| | | | |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| Published by | Ministry of the Interior | 28.11.2018 | |
| Authors | Immigration Department | | |
| Title of publication | International Migration 2017–2018 - Report for Finland | | |
| Series and publication number | Ministry of the Interior Publications 25/2018 | | |
| Register number | SMDno-2018-492 | Subject | Migration |
| ISBN PDF | 978-952-324-236-4 | ISSN (PDF) | 2341-8532 |
| Website address (URN) | http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-236-4 | | |
| Pages | 90 | Language | English |
| Keywords | Migration, immigration, emigration, statistics (data), OECD | | |
| <p>Abstract</p> <p>Commissioned by the OECD, a national report by Finland covering 2017 and early 2018 provides a concise summary of Finland's policies regarding migration, key legal amendments, an extensive media review and up-to-date statistics. The report is largely based on OECD Guidelines. The international mobility of retirees is the special focus of the report this year.</p> <p>During the reporting period, many new developments took place in migration policy. For example, the role of the Finnish Immigration Service was strengthened. Asylum processes were developed, inter alia, by making voluntary return more attractive. Also, a particular focus was put on labour migration and integration of immigrants. According to statistics, the immigrant population has increased steady.</p> <p>Migration was a theme that came up often in the media. In domestic news, the most common topic was the realisation of asylum seekers' rights.</p> <p>The report was compiled by the Immigration Department of the Ministry of the Interior. Several other ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the Ministry of Education and Culture, contributed to the re-port in accordance with their areas of responsibility. The report has been delivered to the OECD in English and is, for this reason, published only in English in Finland.</p> | | | |
| Publisher | Ministry of the Interior | | |
| Distributed by/ publication sales | Online version: julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi Publication sales: julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi | | |

Kuvailulehti

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|--------------|
| Julkaisija | Sisäministeriö | 28.11.2018 | |
| Tekijät | Maahanmuutto-osasto | | |
| Julkaisun nimi | Suomen muuttoliikeraportti 2017–2018 | | |
| Julkaisusarjan nimi ja numero | Sisäministeriön julkaisu 25/2018 | | |
| Diaari/hankenumero | SMDno-2018-492 | Teema | Maahanmuutto |
| ISBN PDF | 978-952-324-236-4 | ISSN PDF | 2341-8532 |
| URN-osoite | http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-236-4 | | |
| Sivumäärä | 90 | Kieli | englanti |
| Asiasanat | muuttoliike, maahanmuutto, maastamuutto, tilastot, OECD | | |
| Tiivistelmä | | | |
| <p>OECD:lle vuosittain toimeksiantona laadittava Suomen kansallinen raportti esittelee tiivistetysti vuodelta 2017 ja vuoden 2018 alkupuolelta muuttoliikkeeseen liittyviä poliittisia linjauksia, keskeisiä lakimuutoksia, kattavan mediakatsauksen sekä ajankohtaisia tilastoja. Raportin aiheet perustuvat pääosin OECD:n ohjeistukseen. Tänä vuonna erityisenä teemana raportissa on eläkeläisten maahan- ja maastamuutto.</p> <p>Raportointi ajanjaksolla maahanmuuttopolitiikassa tapahtui paljon uudistuksia ja valmisteltiin uutta lainsäädäntöä. Esimerkiksi Maahanmuuttoviraston roolia vahvistettiin. Turvapaikkaprosessia kehitettiin mm. lisäämällä vapaaehtoisen paluun houkuttelevuutta. Lisäksi edistettiin työvoiman maahanmuuttoa sekä maahanmuuttajien integraatiota. Tilastot näyttävät, että maahanmuuttajien määrä on kasvanut tasaisesti Suomessa.</p> <p>Maahanmuutto oli usein esillä mediassa. Kotimaan uutisissa eniten kiinnitettiin huomiota turvapaikanhakijoiden oikeuksien toteutumiseen.</p> <p>Raportti on koottu sisäministeriön maahanmuutto-osastolla. Useat muut ministeriöt sekä virastot, kuten työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö, oikeusministeriö, sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö sekä opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, ovat olleet mukana tuottamassa aineistoa omien vastualueidensa mukaisesti. Raportti on toimitettu OECD:lle englanninkielellä ja tästä syystä julkaistaan myös Suomessa ainoastaan englanniksi.</p> | | | |
| Kustantaja | Sisäministeriö | | |
| Julkaisun jakaja/myynti | Sähköinen versio: julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi Julkaisumyynti: julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi | | |

Presentationsblad

| | | | |
|--|--|-----------------|-----------|
| Utgivare | Inrikesministeriet | 28.11.2018 | |
| Författare | Migrationsavdelningen | | |
| Publikationens titel | Finlands rapport om migration 2017–2018 | | |
| Publikationsseriens namn och nummer | Inrikesministeriets publikation 25/2018 | | |
| Diarie-/ projektnummer | SMDno-2018-492 | Tema | Migration |
| ISBN PDF | 978-952-324-236-4 | ISSN PDF | 2341-8532 |
| URN-adress | http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-236-4 | | |
| Sidantal | 90 | Språk | engelska |
| Nyckelord | migration, invandring, utvandring, statistik, OECD | | |
| Referat | <p>Finland har fått i uppdrag att årligen utarbeta en nationell rapport till OECD. Rapporten för 2017 och början av 2018 är en kortfattad presentation av politiska riktlinjer i anslutning till migrationen, viktiga lagändringar, en omfattande medieöversikt och aktuell statistik. Rapportens teman baserar sig i huvudsak på OECD:s anvisningar. In- och utvandring av pensionärer är ett särskilt tema i rapporten i år.</p> <p>Under rapporteringsperioden skedde många reformer inom migrationspolitiken och ny lagstiftning bereddes. Till exempel Migrationsverkets roll förstärktes. Asylprocessen utvecklades bl.a. genom att göra frivillig återresa mer lockande. Dessutom främjades invandringen av arbetskraft och integrationen av invandrare. Statistiken visar att antalet invandrare har ökat i jämn takt i Finland.</p> <p>Migrationen figurerade ofta i medierna. I inrikesnyheter fästes mest uppmärksamhet vid tillgodoseendet av asylsökandes rättigheter.</p> <p>Rapporten har sammanställts vid inrikesministeriets migrationsavdelning. Flera andra ministerier och ämbetsverk, t.ex. arbets- och näringsministeriet, justitieministeriet, social- och hälsovårdsministeriet och undervisnings- och kulturministeriet har varit med om att producera material i enlighet med deras ansvarsområden. Rapporten har sänts till OECD på engelska och därför publiceras den endast på engelska också i Finland.</p> | | |
| Förläggare | Inrikesministeriet | | |
| Distribution/ beställningar | Elektronisk version: julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi Beställningar: julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi | | |

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1 SUMMARY

Commissioned by the OECD, a national report by Finland covering the years 2017 and 2018 provides a concise summary in the different administrative fields of Finland's policies regarding migration, key legal amendments and administrative processes, a summary of the media commentary and up-to-date statistics.

During the reporting period, many new developments took place in migration and integration policy. For example, the role of the Finnish Immigration Service was strengthened through the implementation of the transfer of duties from the Police and border Guard. In addition, many legislative instruments were implemented promoting legal migration. Asylum processes were developed by making voluntary return more attractive. Progress was also made in integration policy.

In 2018, a new Government Migration Policy Programme to strengthen Labour Migration was accepted. In addition, many new legislative projects were under way. The government prepared, inter alia, to accelerate the implementation of deportation decisions and the handling of subsequent applications for asylum. The Government also prepared changes to the Nationality Act.

Migration was a theme that came up frequently in the media. The most popular topic was news of the international migration situation. In domestic news, the most common topic was the realisation of asylum seekers' rights. The second most common theme was the security threat associated with migration, with the integration of migrants in third place. The media also focused attention on racism against migrants.

The recent trends regarding the international mobility of retirees in and out the country is the special focus of the report this year. The number of pension recipients whose pensions were paid by a foreign country was higher than the number of pension recipients who resided abroad and received pensions from Finland. However, the number of immigrants and emigrants above retirement age was very low. Finland does not have any special visa for pensioners.

The immigrant population has increased steady. In 2017, immigration accounted for the whole population growth in Finland. Migration statistics also show that labour migration from outside the EU/EEA increased. Work was the main ground for a first residence permit among Indians and Ukrainians. In addition, an increasing number of Iraqis applied for a first residence permit. Iraqis received a positive decision in 73% of the cases.

More Finnish citizenships were granted than the year before. In particular, the number of Russians who received positive decisions on their citizenship applications increased. The number of citizens who have a dual citizenship increased significantly in 2017. The percentage of the positive decisions on asylum applications was also higher. The number of subsequent applications for asylum rose during 2017 and 2018.

On the other hand, fewer non-EU/EEA-citizen applied for a residence permit for studies. The number of registration applications from EU-citizens also decreased in 2017. Especially the number of Estonians' applications was lower than the year before. The number of decisions on asylum applications fell considerably compared to the previous year. In addition, the number of asylum seekers from Iraq has fallen after peaking in 2015.

The police report that asylum seekers are clearly less willing to return voluntarily. However, the number of persons staying in the country without a residence permit has remained relatively low.

For further information:

Finnish Immigration Service: www.migri.fi and statistics.migri.fi

Statistics Finland: www.stat.fi

2 MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION POLICY

2.1 Policy programmes

Finland's migration policy is based on the current Government Programme (19 May 2015), the Government migration policy (11 September 2015) and the Government action plan on asylum policy (8 December 2015). The drafting of Finnish migration policy and related legislation is based on the provisions on fundamental rights laid down in the Constitution of Finland, on EU legislation, and in international human rights and other treaties ratified by Finland.

The Strategic Programme of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government¹ indicates several targets for the development of migration policy and the public atmosphere. It emphasizes, for instance, the importance of labour migration, which among other things, enhances employment in Finland, boosts public finances and improves the dependency ratio of the economy.

The Strategic Programme also highlights the management of the migration process: "Procedures will be reviewed to speed up the processing of asylum applications, to ensure swift decisions and returns, and to prevent possible abuses." The Government wants to encourage open debate on migration policy, but will not tolerate racism. It is important to promote a tolerant and humane national discussion culture.

¹ Government Programme: http://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10184/1427398/Ratkaisujen+Suomi_EN_YH-DISTETTY_netiti.pdf/8d2e1a66-e24a-4073-8303-ee3127fbfcac

Ministerial working group on migration

The Government set up a ministerial working group on migration in September 2015. Chaired by Minister of the Interior, Kai Mykkänen, the working group compiles and maintains situational awareness of the asylum seeker situation and monitors implementation of the national integration programme. In December 2016, the ministerial working group adopted an Action Plan for the Prevention and Management of Illegal Stay.² The plan focuses on the illegal residence in Finland of asylum seekers who have received a negative decision.

The ministerial working group has discussed and formulated policies on labour migration and actions relevant to integration policy.³

Government 's action plan on asylum policy⁴

The Government published an action plan on asylum policy in December 2015. The action plan contains eight (8) different themes and 80 different actions of how to better manage migration. Prime Minister Sipilä's Government, under the coordination of the Ministry of the Interior, has focused on enhancing and speeding up the asylum procedure, in particular. This can be achieved through close cooperation between the authorities and by effective processes during the different stages of the asylum procedure. The actions referred to in the plan are implemented by the different ministries.

The Government Integration Programme⁵

Every four (4) years the Government adopts the Government Integration Programme. The Government Integration Programme for 2016–2019 was approved on 8 September 2016. It includes areas of focus, objectives, measures, responsibilities and resources for integration. The goal of the Government Integration Programme is to promote equality and to ensure that the skills of immigrants benefit Finnish society. An effective initial integration phase and cooperation between authorities and other actors will help ensure a smooth transition for immigrants into the education system or working life.

The Government Integration Programme has four (4) focus areas, all of which are based on the Government Programme. The focus areas include a total of nearly 70 measures. Also contained within each focus area are measures to meet the integration challenge posed by the increased number of asylum seekers.

² Government Programme: https://www.poliisi.fi/tietoa_poliisista/julkaisut/julkaisu/laittoman_maahantulon_ja_maassa_oleskelun_vastainen_toimintaohjelma_2017-2020?docID=58035

³ Source: The Ministry of the Interior

⁴ Government action plan on asylum policy: http://vnk.fi/documents/10184/1058456/Hallituksen_turvapaikka-poliittinen_toimintasuunnitelma_08122015+EN.pdf/3e555cc4-ab01-46af-9cd4-138b2ac5bad0

⁵ Government Programme: https://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/1410877/2132296/Valtion_kotouttamisohjelma_vuosille_2016-2019.pdf/70415e54-52cd-4acb-bd76-d411f0dc5b94

Work in Finland — Government Migration Policy Programme to Strengthen Labour Migration⁶

The Government approved the Migration Policy Programme to Strengthen Labour Migration on 4 January 2018. The Programme aims to raise awareness of and promote the Government's migration policy. The purpose of the policy is to support migration that strengthens employment and public finances, improves the dependency ratio and enhances the internationalisation of the economy. The Programme lays down Finland's migration policy guidelines that promote particularly labour migration, integration to support this, and good relations between people from different groups. Finland needs migrants to address the labour shortage in different sectors, to improve the weakening of the dependency ratio caused by the ageing of the population, and to attract more international talent and entrepreneurs to Finland.

The Migration Policy Programme complements the programmes and guidelines that have already been adopted by Prime Minister Sipilä's Government. The programme is implemented in cooperation with different administrative sectors. The implementation of the Programme is monitored by the ministerial working group on migration.

Talent Boost – International talents boosting growth programme⁷

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment launched the International talents boosting growth agenda in autumn 2016 to link together migration, innovation and industrial and business policies, and to harness the potential of international talents to support the growth and internationalisation of companies. It was decided in the Government's mid-term policy review session in April 2017 that the International talents boosting growth agenda be expanded into an intersectoral Talent Boost programme for the Government.

Migration brings to Finland international talents that can be harnessed to create new jobs and spur entrepreneurship and innovations. They can also promote business growth and internationalisation. Companies can make use of international talents especially in sales and marketing, product development, target market analyses, and also in creating better customer relations and building new partner networks. International talents can be harnessed to promote new business, reinforce competitiveness in both domestic and international markets, bridge skills gaps in the domestic market, attract new investments into Finland, and create new jobs. The purpose of the Talent Boost programme is to develop measures to transform international talents into added value in Finnish business and industry.

6 Government Programme: <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/160518/05%202018%20SM%20Work%20in%20Finland.pdf>

7 More information: <https://tem.fi/en/talent-boost-en>

The Talent Boost programme aims to integrate international talents efficiently into companies to support growth and internationalisation. Another goal is to attract capable international talents to Finland and harness their skills and networks to attract investments. The Talent Boost programme also aims to promote the participation and commitment of international talents in professional networks, innovation communities and start-ups. Other objectives are to link international talents to the processes and services that foster growth and internationalisation and help companies to identify the added value in the skills and networks of international talents. The aim is that companies find international talents through business services.

The Talent Boost programme measures include targeted country branding, ensuring necessary services and developing business ecosystems, and innovation platforms and labour markets so that they are open to international talents and encourage entrepreneurship. The programme will also implement the internationalisation strategy for higher education and research and enable transactions with the authorities, also in English. Employment and growth are supported by amending the Aliens' Act (301/2004) so that special residence permits for start-up entrepreneurs can be granted to growth and innovation companies.⁸

The Government Programme for Expatriated Finns for 2017-2021⁹

The Government Programme for Expatriated Finns for 2017-2021 was accepted on 28 September 2017. The third policy programme for expatriate Finns presents fresh perspectives on the relationship between expatriate Finns and their country of origin, together with models for how that relationship might be further strengthened in the future.

From the expatriate Finns' perspective, the main objectives of the programme are developing the Finnish Schools and other school conditions of expatriate Finnish children and young persons, providing support for organisational activities arranged by expatriate Finns, encouraging voter turnout among expatriate Finns, and safeguarding the operations of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. The policy programme for expatriate Finns supports Finland's overall immigration strategy, in which the emphasis is on immigration, employment and integration.

The programme is implemented in cooperation with different administrative sectors. The main responsibility for the implementation of the programme rests with the Ministry of the Justice, Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of the Social Affairs and Health.

⁸ Source: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland

⁹ Government Programme: http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/160817/SM_12_2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

2.2 New legislation and administrative processes

During 2017-2018 the Sipilä Government has implemented many legislative reforms. The role of the Finnish Immigration Service as the authority responsible for asylum matters was strengthened. New types of residence permits were also created for seasonal workers, growth and start-up entrepreneurs. In addition, the asylum procedure and other processes were developed by the Finnish Immigration Service. The processes relating to the integration of immigrants were also developed. More information on the most important legislative amendments and administrative changes given mentioned below.

2.2.1 Role of the Finnish Immigration Service was strengthened

The Finnish Immigration Service's position as the authority responsible for immigration matters was strengthened in 2017. From the beginning of the year, all permit matters for foreign nationals were concentrated in the Finnish Immigration Service. The following tasks were transferred from the Police to the Finnish Immigration Service:

- Decisions on new fixed-term residence permits (so-called extended permits)
- Decisions on permanent residence permits
- Decisions on first residence permit applications made in Finland by family members of Finnish citizens
- Registration of EU citizens' right of residence (incl. family members)
- Reception of residence permit applications made in Finland
- Reception of citizenship applications and declarations
- Reception of applications for an alien's passport and refugee travel documents and decisions on those applications which have previously been the responsibility of the Police.¹⁰

The transfer of permit matters had a significant impact on the Finnish Immigration Service's workload. In addition of a total of 75 permanent employees transferred to the agency at the same time, the Finnish Immigration Service recruited fixed-term personnel from the beginning of and over the course of the year when it was noticed that the increase in the workload was higher than expected.

Most of the new employees were recruited to the Immigration Unit, where the bulk of the decisions on residence permit applications are made. The number of personnel at the

¹⁰ EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 25. http://emn.fi/files/1812/Maahanmuutto_ja_turva-paikka_FL_EN_SCREEN.pdf.

Immigration Unit tripled during the year, from just over 70 to approximately 250 employees. The Finnish Immigration Service opened nine (9) service points for the reception of applications and other customer service. Meanwhile, the number of personnel at the Asylum Unit decreased when the fixed-term employment contracts of the employees hired in 2016 to handle applications for asylum ended. However, the total number of personnel at the agency was on the rise in 2017: it grew from 800 to 900 during the year and the upward trend continues.¹¹

The role of Finnish Immigration Service was further strengthened through the merger of the State reception centres into the Finnish Immigration Service from the beginning of 2017. The merger was an administrative change the aim of which was to reduce overlap in administration and achieve financial savings in the long term.¹²

2.2.2 Implementation of legislative instruments promoting legal migration

The Seasonal Workers Act was enacted in 2017, providing that in the future, a permit is also required for short-term seasonal work lasting up to three months. The legislative change implemented the EU Seasonal Work Directive in Finland.¹³

In addition, the so-called *ICT Act* was also enacted in 2017. It applies to the transfer of persons employed by multinational corporations from outside the EU to the EU, and from one Member State to another, while remaining in the service of the same employer. The Act implemented the EU ICT Directive (Intra-Corporate Transferees directive) in Finland.¹⁴

Also, a new type of residence permit was created for *growth or start-up entrepreneurs* with a legislative amendment entered into force in April 2018. The legislative amendments made it easier for entrepreneurs and experts to move to Finland. Their application process for an extended permit was simplified and the validity period of a first residence permit for specialists was extended. The aim was to make it possible for growth entrepreneurs to get a residence permit as quickly as possible and thereby to promote economic growth and employment.¹⁵

The residence permit for growth and start-up entrepreneurs are issued by the Finnish Immigration Service but the applicant should obtain a business assessment from the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation, Tekes, before applying for a residence permit. Tekes would

11 Ibid

12 Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 37.

13 Source: Ministry of the Interior

14 Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 18.

15 Source: Ministry of the Interior

assess if the company's business model shows potential for rapid international growth. The residence permit would be issued for two years, after which it could be renewed. It would take no longer than a few weeks to issue a residence permit.¹⁶

In September 2018, the Parliament accepted the government proposal on the implementation of Directive (EU) 2016/801 (recast) of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing. In the same context, the Parliament also issued provisions on granting a residence permit on the basis of an au-pair placement which wasn't, however, connected to the aforementioned Directive.¹⁷

2.2.3 Voluntary return was made more attractive

The VAPA project of the Finnish Immigration Service ran from June 2017 until April 2018. The project developed and increased the effectiveness of guidance and counselling on voluntary return given at reception centres. The project hired 15 voluntary return advisers providing rejected asylum seekers with guidance on voluntary return.

In April 2018 the project was replaced by a new project, VAPA 2, which will run until April 2019. The new project continues the work started by VAPA. A new feature in the VAPA 2 project is providing rejected asylum seekers with personal counselling regarding the grounds for the negative decision. This counselling is piloted in three reception centres in Southern Finland. The aim of the project is to provide all rejected asylum seekers with a realistic picture of the possibilities of voluntary return and the disadvantages of remaining in Finland irregularly. Both projects received funding from the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).¹⁸

The amounts of assistance for voluntary return were increased under a Decree of the Ministry of the Interior, which entered into force on 25 September 2017. The aim was to increase the attractiveness of voluntary return. The amount of in-cash assistance increased for example for those returning to Iraq or Afghanistan. In addition, the amount of in-kind assistance was increased for all returnees regardless of the country of return.¹⁹

16 Source: Ministry of the Interior

17 Source: Ministry of the Interior

18 Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 55; Updated information from the Finnish Immigration Service.

19 Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 55.

2.2.4 Asylum procedure and process were developed

Concerning asylum procedure and process, *the numerous amendments prepared in the previous year entered into force and were implemented in practice in 2017*. In accordance with the transfer of initial tasks in the asylum process from the Police and the Border Guard, the Finnish Immigration Service assumed responsibility for establishing an asylum seeker's identity, entry into the country and travel route, and serving positive decisions. This part of the process was officially transferred from the Border Guard to The Finnish Immigration service on 1 January 2017.²⁰

Appeals in matters related to international protection were decentralised to four (4) administrative courts. The legislative amendment prepared in 2016 was approved in January 2017 and entered into force on 1 February 2017. From February 2017, the Administrative Courts of Eastern Finland, Northern Finland and Turku, in addition to that of Helsinki, have had competent jurisdiction to resolve complaints about matters related to international protection.²¹

The quality control of asylum decision-making was developed through a project called 'Laava' launched at the Asylum Unit of the Finnish Immigration Service in February. The aim is to develop a systematic method for assessing the quality of asylum decision-making and for compiling related statistics. The project will provide information on the challenges related to the quality of decisions.²²

The acquisition of country information through fact-finding missions was developed with the help of a project called 'Fakta' which was launched by the Finnish Immigration Service with AMIF support. The project will continue until 2020. It aims to develop effective and resource-efficient practices for planning and implementing fact-finding missions. Further aims include providing more varied and detailed country of origin information in response to the information needs related to the processing of asylum applications.²³

The Finnish Immigration Service began to look into *the use of information available in social media* in the asylum process. In August, the Asylum Unit of the Finnish Immigration Service launched a project called 'Flow 2', which examines the possibility of using information gathered from social media in establishing an asylum seeker's identity and background. The project receives funding from the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).²⁴

²⁰ Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 32.

²¹ Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 33.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

A legislative amendment *on residence requirements and children's residence requirements* entered into force on 1 February 2017. The residence requirement means that an asylum seeker who has been issued with a negative asylum decision is ordered for a limited period of time to reside in a specific reception centre and to report there on a regular basis if this is deemed necessary for investigating their right to enter or reside in Finland or for ensuring their removal from the country. The residence requirement for asylum seekers is a milder alternative to detention. The residence requirement does not have to fulfil the same prerequisites as detention if the residence requirement is imposed for an adult asylum seeker.

If the residence requirement is imposed for children, the prerequisites for detention and certain other conditions²⁵ have to be fulfilled. The aim is to reduce the need to place children in detention. Asylum seekers subject to residence requirements could be exempted, for compelling personal reasons, from some of the said requirements on a temporary basis.²⁶

In 2017, the Finnish Immigration Service's development efforts related to *unaccompanied minors* applying for asylum were still influenced by the large number of asylum seekers in 2015 as well as the large number of new employees hired in 2016 and their training needs. The Finnish Immigration Service *increased the training* related to minors provided for the senior advisers of the Asylum Unit. In addition, *regional unaccompanied minor liaison officers were appointed for all offices* of the Finnish Immigration Service in order to improve guidance and communication in matters relating to unaccompanied minors.²⁷

The Finnish Immigration Service also revised its practices regarding age assessment. At the end of the year the Finnish Immigration Service *updated its guidance regarding age assessment*. The update included e.g. changing the Finnish Immigration Service's interview practices in relation to age assessment, so that the applicant and his or her representative are now heard before changing the applicant's status from minor to adult on the basis of age assessment. Finally, it may be noted that the *carrying out of medical age assessments was transferred* from the University of Helsinki to the National Institute for Health and Welfare from 1 January 2017.²⁸

25 Ulkomaalaislain 120 b § mukaan asumisvelvollisuus voidaan määrätä 15 vuotta täyttäneelle ilman huoltajaa olevalle kansainvälistä suojelua hakeneelle lapselle, jota koskeva päätös maasta poistamisesta on tullut täytäntöönpanokelpoiseksi.

26 Source: Ministry of the Interior

27 Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 40.

28 Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p 41. http://emn.fi/files/1812/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_FI_EN_SCREEN.pdf.

The reception system was enhanced with the *reception centre monitoring programme* launched at the beginning of 2016. The programme has made monitoring of the reception centres more systematic. The first report published in September 2017 indicated that reception centres have mostly operated in an appropriate manner. Also *a model for the prevention and control of asylum seekers' problematic behaviour* was created in 2017. A three-stage model was introduced, according to which reception centres will operate in relation to customers who behave in a challenging manner or who cause disturbances.²⁹

In addition, *the introduction of a payment card* was being prepared in 2017. The payment card is meant to be used for paying financial benefits to asylum seekers. A further aim of the card is to improve asylum seekers' opportunities to engage in gainful employment and earn their own livelihood. The Reception Services were also improved with the help of the projects funded by the EU. For example, The National Institute for Health and Welfare and the Finnish Immigration Service launched a project called Terttu in 2017 to develop the initial health examination of asylum seekers. The project receives funding from the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).³⁰

Because the number of asylum seekers was significantly lower than previous years the *overall reception capacity was reduced 30 %* in 2017. At the end of 2017, Finland had 56 reception centres which was 70 centres less than the previous year.³¹

2.2.5 Other work processes of the Finnish Immigration Service were also streamlined

The Finnish Immigration service carried on its efforts towards *more effective work processes by continuing its "Smart Digital Agency" -project*, where the possibilities of using *robotics and automation* in the Service's various processes are identified, including in asylum decision making. In 2017, automation was *infused in the appointment system for asylum interviews*. Also *the development of customer service based on robotics was launched*. In addition, *simulation and scenario services* were developed and a "leading by knowledge" development project was initiated to support the leadership in the management of the agency. *The UMA-system was also improved with new functionalities*.³²

Migration statistics and statistical services were further developed by the Finnish Immigration Service in 2017. A new statistical service for everyone interested in migration statistics was

29 Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 37.

30 Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, pp 38. http://emn.fi/files/1812/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_FI_EN_SCREEN.pdf.

31 Source: The Finnish Immigration Service.

32 Ibid.

opened. The service includes statistics on applications and decisions concerning residence permits, international protection and citizenship as well as statistics on removal from the country. The service is available in Finnish, Swedish and English at the address <http://tilastot.migri.fi/#decisions>. The new service allows users to limit their searches and examine statistics more closely than before. The Finnish Immigration Service also introduced *a statistical tool developed for internal resource planning through EU funding (AMIF)*. The purpose of the statistical tool is to increase the efficiency of the decision-making process by, for example, identifying delays in job queues more quickly and transferring work from a busy section to a section where the queues are shorter. The tool also helps in reacting more rapidly to unexpected situations, such as a sudden increase in the number of applications.³³

2.2.6 Study for the assessment of the legal aid board

In relation to the amendments made to the legal aid provided to asylum applicants by Government Decree 761/2016, which entered into force on 15 September 2016, the Ministry of Justice has launched a study for the assessment of the legal aid board. The study was commissioned after the immigration ministerial group paid attention to the need for having evidence-based results on the role of asylum seekers as clients of public legal aid and on the impact of changes in the legal environment on the availability and quality of legal aid for asylum seekers.

The study has two scopes, one focusing on people's experience with the availability, quality and usefulness of public legal aid (legal aid offices and private assistants), and the other on the financial and debt counselling services in relation to the needs of the assistance. The project supports the strategic planning of legal aid services and the assessment of changes in legal aid legislation.

The study is part of the government's analysis, assessment and research activities and conducted by the University of Helsinki, Migration Institute of Finland and Owl Group Oy. The first report of the study is due for release in late 2018, focusing on the legal aid services in cases involving asylum applicants.³⁴

³³ Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, pp 25-26.

³⁴ Source: The Ministry of Justice

2.2.7 Education and training for immigrants have been reformed and improved

Due to a rapid increase in the number of asylum seekers in 2015, a steering group set by the Ministry of Education and Culture assessed in 2016 and 2017 the need to reform the education system and the need to take other support measures. The steering group proposed a total of 99 measures to expedite the educational tracks and integration of immigrants. As many as 74 of these proposed measures have been implemented or are currently being implemented. The most significant structural reforms that have been implemented are the following:

- Basic education as well as reading and writing training for adult immigrants were reformed at the beginning of 2018. The changes have helped to remove educational dead-ends and increase flexible educational opportunities. The reformed basic education for adults enables a more individual tailoring of studies at different stages and a smooth transition to the subsequent education. The new reading and writing training provided by liberal adult education institutions gives, for example, parents who care for their children at home an opportunity to receive training in reading and writing and in Finnish/Swedish when their goal is not to complete the basic education syllabus.
- The intake of students into vocational education and training has been increased since 2016, and access to education and training has been facilitated from the beginning of 2018 by making the language skill requirements more flexible. The boundaries between integration training and vocational education and training have been lowered to help immigrants learn language and vocational skills simultaneously.
- The Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland project (SIMHE) started in 2016, and it was expanded in 2017. The higher education institutions taking part in the project are responsible for further developing guidance and advisory services as well as services for identifying prior learning for both highly-educated immigrants and immigrants eligible for higher education.

During 2016 and 2018, measures were also taken to increase the number of student places, provide teachers with further training, produce more teaching and learning material and make necessary assessments. The aim is to evaluate the progress of these reforms by the end of October 2018 and, if necessary, to launch additional measures.

Measures have been taken to attract more international experts to Finland by means of education. For example, municipalities and other education providers have increased the number of international schools and day-cares as well as teaching in English. The aim is to make it easier for families to settle in Finland. Measures will also be taken to improve and diversify the language skills and resources of Finns. The Government has decided that as from 2020 all children will be able to study a foreign language during their first school year. The demand for instruction provided in English is growing, and particularly various language shower activities and other solutions applicable to children's experiences and physical activities are popular.

To encourage international studies, the Government has also decided to make the residence permit process easier and smoother for foreign students and researchers.

The Meaningful in Finland Action Plan, published in 2016, has helped to foster a more positive climate of attitudes. The integration of immigrants into Finnish society has been promoted in the fields of culture, sports and youth work mainly by supporting the basic activities of various organisations and assisting special projects. Measures have also been taken to support municipalities' efforts to promote the integration of immigrants. For this purpose, funding has been allocated to projects particularly in the fields of sports and youth work.³⁵

2.2.8 Active participation in the CEAS and EU-level solidarity measures

Finland has actively supported and contributed in reforming the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and it remains a priority to Finland.

Finland also took part in the *implementation of EU-level solidarity measures*. The EU relocation scheme came to an end in September 2017. Finland received a total of 1,981 asylum seekers under the scheme. The last of these asylum seekers arrived in Finland in December 2017. Finland fulfilled its obligation.³⁶

The Finnish Immigration Service also continued to support the asylum systems of Italy and Greece through active participation in EASO's operations.³⁷

Finland continued resettling refugees from third countries in cooperation with the UNHCR and in accordance with Finland's yearly agreed refugee quota of 750 persons. In 2017

35 Source: The Ministry of the Education and Culture

36 Op. cit. EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p. 33.

37 Source: The Finnish Immigration Service.

Finland resettled 530 Syrians and 120 Congolese refugees as well as 100 emergency and urgent cases without limitations on region or nationality. Through this, Finland also fulfilled its EU commitments on resettlement. Finland decided to take 1035 Syrians from Turkey as part of the 1:1 scheme between EU and Turkey on the basis of the EU-Turkey declaration. By the end of its implementation in early January 2018, Finland had received a total of 986 Syrians from Turkey under this scheme. The cultural pre-orientation of quota refugees was successfully continued in cooperation with the IOM.³⁸

2.3 Legislation under preparation

Work is currently underway on a number of legislative projects related to migration. The key legislative projects are presented below.

2.3.1 Reform of the integration act

As of 2021 a major administrative reform will take place in Finland, creating 18 regions. These regions are self-governing bodies with regional elections for selecting decision-makers. Among the areas of responsibility of the regions are social and health care services and employment services, which will be realized through the organizer-producer model in which the region is organizationally responsible. In connection with this administrative reform, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment prepared a proposal on reforming the Integration Act. Amendments to the Integration Act have been proposed under which the general responsibility for and the coordination of the planning, developing and monitoring migrants' integration in the regions would be transferred to the county. Among other things, the county would coordinate the planning of integration together with the municipalities in its area and organise services that promote integration as part of other county-level services. A county could also procure integration services from different providers.

The new legislation would not change the municipalities' general obligation to see to the planning and development of services promoting integration in their areas. Some of the migration-related compensation paid by the central government to municipalities for receiving refugees would be transferred to the counties, however.

The government proposal on the reformation of the integration Act was submitted to Parliament in July 2018. The proposal is currently under discussion in the relevant committees in Parliament.³⁹

³⁸ Source: The Ministry of the Interior/ EMN Annual Report on Migration and Asylum 2017, p 35.

³⁹ Source: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland

2.3.2 Fine or imprisonment for violating the prohibition to enter the country

On account of the government's measures on immigration as approved on 11 September 2015 and the entries in the programme of measures regarding the asylum policy published on 8 December 2015, the Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior and the authorities under its branch of administration, has prepared a draft for a government proposal on the amendment of Chapter 17 of the Criminal Code and Section 185 of the Aliens Act.

The proposal concerns the addition to the Criminal Code of a new provision on violating the prohibition to enter the country, the penalty for which would be a fine or at most one year of imprisonment. The new penal provision would bring all violations of the prohibition to enter the country under a uniform scale of penalties and add specificity to the statutory definition of acts punishable as violations of the prohibition to enter the country.

The government proposal was submitted to Parliament in September 2018 (HE 146/2018 vp). The proposal is currently under discussion in the relevant committees in Parliament.⁴⁰

2.3.3 Accelerated implementation of deportation decisions

The Government Programme states that procedures will be reviewed to speed up the removal from the country of those who have committed aggravated offences, those who pose a danger to public security, and any recidivists. Under the current rules, deportation decisions cannot be implemented before they have gained legal force. This means that if a deportee has appealed the decision to the administrative court, he or she may remain in Finland whilst awaiting the decision of the administrative court.

The government's draft proposal proposes amending the provisions applying to the enforceability of deportation decisions to enable certain decisions on deportation related to public order and safety to be enforced within 30 days of notification unless the administrative court has prohibited enforcement. The proposed regulation would apply to third-country nationals as well as to EU citizens.

In order to ensure the legal protection of deportees, it is proposed to issue provisions on the time limits allowed to submit an application to suspend/prohibit the enforcement of a deportation decision and the time for making a decision in respect of such an application. Deportees would have 30 days of having received the decision to submit an application

⁴⁰ Source: The Ministry of Justice

to the administrative court to suspend or prohibit deportation. The deadline would be the same length as the time provided to appeal. Correspondingly, the administrative court would have 30 days to make a decision in respect of this application.

The government proposal was submitted to Parliament in March 2018. The proposal is currently under discussion in relevant committees in Parliament.⁴¹

2.3.4 Accelerating the processing of subsequent applications

The project examines amendments to national laws enabled by the provisions on subsequent applications in the EU Directive on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (2013/32/EU) and prepares proposals for the relevant legislative amendments. In connection with this project, the amendments to the Aliens Act necessitated by the Court of Justice of the European Union decision C-550/12 will also be made.

The objective of the project is to investigate changes to the processing of subsequent applications and enforcement of the Finnish Immigration Service's decisions enabled by the Directive on common procedures, and on this basis, draft proposals for amending the Aliens Act. In connection with this project, the amendments to the Aliens Act necessitated by the decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union in case C- 550/12 (A and S v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie, 12 April 2018) will also be made.

Any needs to amend the provisions on the confiscation of asylum seekers' travel documents will also be examined in this context. The provisions will be drafted in cooperation between the Ministry of the Interior Police Department, the Finnish Immigration Service and the National Police Board.

A government bill on this matter is to be submitted to Parliament during the autumn session 2018. The objective is to adopt the amendments during the current government term.⁴²

2.3.5 Amendment to the Nationality Act

According to the Action Plan on Asylum Policy adopted by Prime Minister Sipilä's Government, participation in the activities of any organisation classified by the UN and the EU as a terrorist organisation as well as travelling abroad to commit a terrorist offence and the funding of such travel will be criminalised. Subsequently, the possibility of annulling the

41 Source: The Ministry of Interior

42 Source: The Ministry of Interior

Finnish nationality of individuals possessing dual nationality who participate in acts of terrorism will be provided for.

The project is drafting an amendment to the Nationality Act containing a proposal on the annulment of the Finnish nationality of individuals possessing dual nationality who are guilty of certain offences.

The proposed amendment will be submitted to Parliament during the autumn session 2018. The objective is the adopting of the amendments during the current government term.⁴³

2.3.6 Project to reform the Register of Aliens and to bring it into line with the EU's Data Protection Directive

This project seeks to clarify, assess and implement any amendments of legislation which are required to bring the legislation on the Register of Aliens in line to better address the changes that have taken place in the operational environment and to meet the requirements set for modern register legislation. Furthermore, the amendments of legislation necessitated by the entry into force of the EU's Data Protection Directive is to be implemented.

The act on the register of aliens (1270/1997), the register regulations on the reception of people seeking international protection and on the identification and helping of victims of human trafficking (746/2011), and the act on detained aliens and detention units (116/2002) will be replaced with a new act which regulates the processing of personal data in the field of immigration administration. The objective is that provisions for the processing of personal data in the field of immigration administration will be laid down in a single act meeting the requirements of a modern act on personal data, which will supplement the EU's Data Protection Directive and the act on data protection that will supersede the Personal Data Act in 2018.

A government proposal will be issued over the course of 2018.⁴⁴

43 Source: The Ministry of Interior

44 Source: The Ministry of Interior

2.3.7 Providing for the security of the Finnish Immigration Service

The purpose of the act is to protect the employees of the Finnish Immigration Service from different risk factors, provide them with safe working conditions and protect the agency's property. The act would contain provisions on the powers of security officers working on security duties in the facilities used by the Finnish Immigration Service. These powers would be related to the checking of identities, security checks, bodily searches, confiscation of objects, barring entrance, removing a person from the premises and apprehending a person.

The powers would be valid within the facilities used by the Finnish Immigration Service. The act would not be applied to a reception centre maintained by the Finnish Immigration Service or the accommodation facilities of a registration centre for asylum seekers.

The government bill was passed by Parliament in June 2018. The bill is waiting for ratification by the President.⁴⁵

2.4 Integration policy

2.4.1 The Government Integration Programme

The Government Integration Programme for 2016–2019 was approved on 8 September 2016. The implementation of programme has progressed well. The programme includes areas of focus, objectives, measures, responsibilities and resources for integration. The Government Integration Programme has four (4) focus areas, all of which are based on the Government Programme. The focus areas include a total of nearly 70 measures. Also contained within each focus area are measures to meet the integration challenge posed by the increased number of asylum seekers. The focus areas are as follows:

1. Using the cultural strengths of immigrants to promote Finnish innovation

The aim is to use the skills of trained immigrants and those who graduate from Finnish institutes of higher education, and to promote career advancement in Finnish labour markets, business growth, and internationalisation.

⁴⁵ Source: The Ministry of Interior

2. Enhancing integration through cross-sectoral measures

The conditions for integration are established in the early stages.

The aim is to equip people with the resources needed for continued training and working life, to improve the status of immigrants in the labour market, to ensure the provision of multi-profession support to immigrant families, and to support immigrant participation in leisure activities.

3. Increasing cooperation between the State and municipalities in the reception of beneficiaries of international protection

The aim is that the asylum seekers who have received a residence permit will be settled in municipalities within two months after receiving notification of the residence permit, that quota refugees are settled in municipalities swiftly after being selected and that the integration process begins immediately.

4. Promoting a humane national discussion culture that rejects racism

The objective is that public discussion about immigration will be open and constructive, thereby respecting human dignity. Official forums will also be created for dialogue between authorities and immigrants.

In meeting the objectives set out in the Integration Programme, The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment launched the International talents boosting growth agenda in autumn 2016 to link together migration, innovation and industrial and business policies and to harness the potential of international talents to support the growth and internationalisation of companies. The purpose of the Talent Boost programme is to develop measures to transform international talents into added value in Finnish business and industry.

In addition, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Education and Culture have worked together to promote the recognition of migrants' competence and to direct them to the appropriate education, training and employment pathways. A reform has been carried out to improve the working life relevance of integration training for migrants, among other things by adding more vocational content and on-the-job learning periods to the training and enabling more flexible combinations of integration training with vocational education and training.

A project called TRUST, which focuses on resolving challenges associated with the asylum seeker situation, is being funded by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and implemented by the Ministry of Justice in collaboration with the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO), other authorities, and NGOs. The project develops operating models for promoting good relations at the regional and local levels. In keeping with the project plan,

the project has been implemented in seven municipalities with reception centres. Its actions have included providing training on good relations for authorities, voluntary actors and asylum seekers, preparing training material and a manual on good relations policy for reception centres, and testing conflict resolution methods, for instance in Forssa.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is developing a monitoring system for integration and ethnic relations, the first results of which will be published in late 2018 and in 2019.⁴⁶

2.4.2 An investment fund for the employment of immigrants was established

The Social impact bond model (SIB) combines flexible training and work. A KOTO-SIB experiment implemented between 2016 and 2019 is intended to help immigrants find employment as soon as possible. At first the target group of the trial comprised people who have been granted a residence permit on the basis of international protection and who have registered as unemployed job seekers at the Employment and Economic Development Office (TE office). The target group was enlarged in autumn 2017 to all immigrants because there were not a sufficient number of participants. The estimated number of those who received a residence permit was higher when the model was planned.

The target is that, after completing a study period of four (4) to six (6) months in length, focusing on Finnish and social studies, 2,500 immigrants would find employment over a period of three (3) years. The TE office will direct its customers to participate in the SIB experiment.

The project administrator, hired by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment through competitive tendering, has established an investment fund for the experiment. In other words, the experiment is not financed by means of public funds. After the experiment ends, the investors are paid profit if the state has accumulated savings from the experiment. Savings are gained from the accumulated taxes paid by those participating in the trial and from the labour market support left unpaid. The efficiency of the project will be assessed and the profit will be paid to the investors starting from 2020. Of the verified efficiency, 50% will be paid to the fund.

By the end of June 2018 there have been 826 who have started in the trial and 257 who have found a job. In addition, 158 have been trained for at least 70 days. The trial has mostly been carried out in the capital area and western coast in 2017. Gradually the trial

⁴⁶ Source: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

has spread to other areas during the year 2018. The jobs available are mainly on following areas: manufacturing, hotel and catering industry, transport, logistics and warehousing, cleaning and construction.⁴⁷

2.4.3 Other examples of integration projects

KOTONA SUOMESSA (Home in Finland) – Promoting Integration and Participation of Immigrants as part of the European Social Fund Programme. A comprehensive development project called Kotona Suomessa (Home in Finland) is underway 2015–2020 as part of the new ESF framework. The project aims at developing high-quality integration services for the initial and later phases of the integration process. The project is divided into the two (2) following sub-projects:

1. **The Good Path -subproject** aims at strengthening the effectiveness of regional and local integration services everywhere in Finland. The subproject also aims at extending the work of the Centre of Expertise in Integration of Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment nationally. In the subproject there are seven (7) employees, Regional Coordinators, who work in different ELY –centres (Centre for Economy, Traffic and Environment) around the country. Their main duties are spreading information on integration, promoting networks of experts working in the field of integration, identifying good practises and disseminating research-based information on integration. They also develop cooperation between various administrative sectors across municipal, regional and occupational borders. The subproject also produces electronic teaching material: webinars and videos on integration.
2. **The Good Start -subproject** supports the work of the Home in Finland -pilot projects across the country and draws up their results at the national level. Eight (8) of the pilot projects aim at improving the services provided in the early stage of the integration process. By utilizing the results and experiences gained in the pilot projects The Good Start -subproject has drawn up a service model for the initial stage of integration. The service model consists of guidance and counselling, assessment of vocational and language skills and studies on Finnish society in immigrants' native languages. In addition to the pilot projects concentrating on the initial stage of the integration process, there are eight (8) pilot projects for immigrants who

47 Source: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

have completed the integration training but are still unemployed and nine (9) pilot projects for those who have been unemployed for a longer period of time and/or have not taken part in integration training. Experiences gained from the pilot projects will be used to design service models for immigrants' services. The Good Start -sub-project will also develop guidelines for organising orientation studies on the Finnish society for newcomers. It will also produce multilingual video material. The aim of this is to ensure that information on Finnish society will be available for all immigrants, regardless of where in Finland they live.

The on-going **Sylvia project** supports municipalities in the reception of persons entitled to international protection. The project is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and operates on a national level at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. The project aims at promoting the reception of refugees in municipalities by providing the municipalities economic assistance for receiving refugees. The economic assistance provided by the project also supports municipalities to develop the reception and integration processes and services targeted to persons entitled to international protection. The project also provides information and training for municipalities concerning the reception and integration of refugees.⁴⁸

2.4.4 The highest number of asylum seekers issued with residence permit moved to Uusimaa

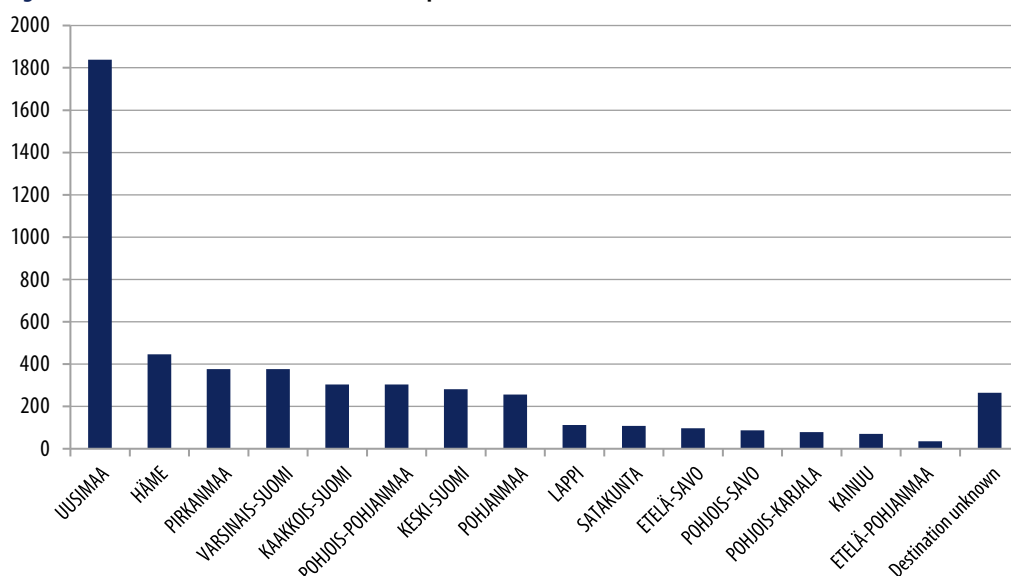
As a large number of asylum seekers entered the country in 2015, intensified measures for directing those who had been issued with residence permits to municipalities were required. The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres) concluded agreements on receiving refugees with 105 new municipalities in 2016, and two out of three Finnish municipalities now have such agreements in place. This way, 4,259 placements in municipalities were obtained.

The increased number of placements in municipalities was promoted by close cooperation and the provision of more precise instructions between the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the ELY Centres, and the Finnish Immigration Service. Additionally, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment's Sylvia project, which grants municipalities EU funding for receiving refugees, has played a role in this increase. The payment of compensation to municipalities for receiving refugees was also automated.

48 Source: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland

In 2017, a total of 5,034 asylum seekers issued with residence permits moved from a reception centre to a municipality. The figure below shows the distribution of asylum seekers with residence permits in the areas of the different ELY Centres. The highest number (1,838) of asylum seekers issued with residence permits moved to Uusimaa. The second highest number moved to Häme.⁴⁹

Figure 1 Moves to ELY-Centre areas from reception centres in 2017



Source: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

2.5 Pensions and other social services for immigrants

2.5.1 Foreign nationals working in Finland are insured under Finnish earnings-related pension legislation

All salaried work and self-employment between the ages of 17 and 68 in Finland must be insured for earnings-related pension benefits. The insurance obligation starts from the beginning of the calendar month following the person's 17th birthday and continues until the end of the month of the person's 68th birthday. An employee temporarily posted abroad by a Finnish employer is also insured in Finland. Foreign nationals working in Finland are insured under Finnish earnings-related pension legislation, regardless of the employer's nationality. Insurance for temporary employment, however, is always provided in the employer's home country.

⁴⁹ Source: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

Pension provision for both foreign nationals working in Finland and Finnish nationals working abroad is governed by the EC Regulation on Social Security and bilateral social security agreements. The same goes for the payment of pensions abroad.

Pensions paid by EU and EEA member states and countries covered by social security agreements can be applied for on Finnish pension application forms submitted to the Finnish Centre for Pensions, which forwards the applications to the contact institutions in the relevant country/countries for processing. Similarly, persons living in EU and EEA member states and countries covered by social security agreements may apply for a Finnish earnings-related pension and national pension by sending their applications through the contact institution in their country to the Social Insurance Institution (Kela), which issues a decision on a national pension and forwards the application to the applicant's earnings-related pension institution, which issues decisions on earnings-related pensions.

If a person living in Finland wishes to apply for a pension paid by a foreign country other than EU and EEA member states and countries covered by social security agreements, they should apply directly to the relevant institution in that country. Similarly, persons living in countries other than EU and EEA member states and countries covered by social security agreements should apply for their Finnish pension themselves.⁵⁰

Finland did not have any special visa for pensioners.⁵¹

2.5.2 Many pensions were paid by a foreign country

In the end of the year 2017, pension was paid by a foreign country to 69 242 pension recipients. 60 080 of them received old age pension, 5 150 disability pensions and 6 682 survivor's pensions. One person may receive pensions under several different pension acts and several different pension benefits simultaneously. Altogether 55 618 pension recipients were paid pensions from Sweden. The second biggest group was pension recipients whose pensions were paid from Estonia (3 994). The third biggest group were pension recipients whose pension were paid from Germany (2 550). 52% of the pension recipients whose pensions were paid by a foreign country were males and 47% were females.

Altogether 59 414 pension recipient residing abroad were paid pension from Finland. Old age pensions were paid the most (36 523 pension recipients). Pension recipients who were paid survivor's pensions were the second biggest (4 740), and disability pensions the third

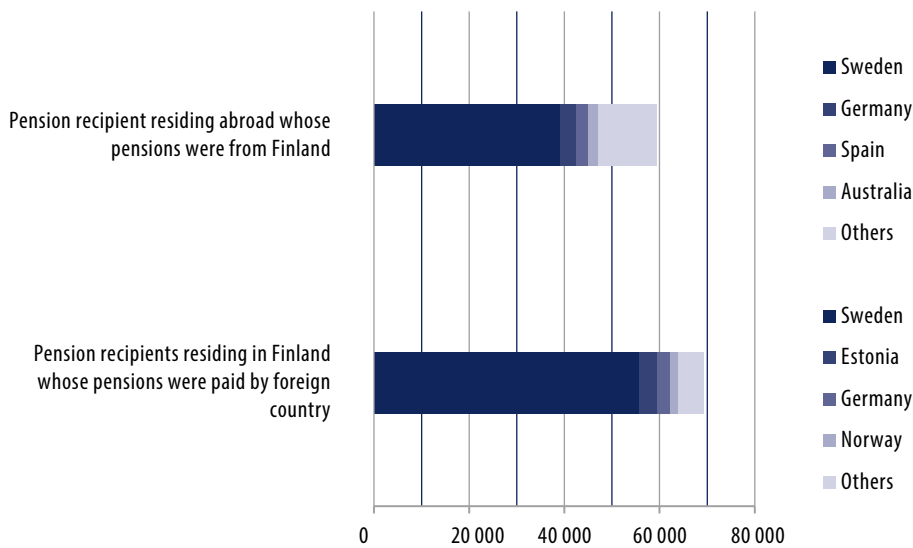
⁵⁰ Source: Finnish Centre for Pension

⁵¹ Source: The Ministry of Interior

biggest group (2 753). The most pension recipients residing abroad whose pensions were paid from Finland were in Sweden (39 112). The second biggest group were pension recipients residing in Germany (3 258) and the third pension recipients residing in Spain (2 697). The percentage of females (60%) was considerably higher than the percentage of males (40%) among pension recipients residing abroad.

In the figure 2 below, four countries where was the highest number of above mentioned pension recipients are presented. As the figure shows, there were more pension recipients whose pensions were paid by a foreign country than pension recipients who resided abroad and received pensions from Finland.⁵²

Figure 2 Pension recipients residing abroad whose pensions were paid from Finland and pension recipients residing in Finland whose pensions were paid by a foreign country in 2017, top four countries



Source: the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

52 Source: Finnish Centre for Pension

2.5.3 Social and health care services depends on the type of residence permit

Immigrants' entitlement to social and health care services depends on the type of residence permit they hold. If an immigrant has a permanent place of residence he/she is entitled to services regardless of nationality.

Essential means of subsistence is guaranteed to all immigrants who need it. Emergency medical treatment is given to patients irrespective of place of residence.

Individuals seeking international protection and victims of human trafficking who do not have a municipal residence as intended by the Municipality of Residence Act are also entitled to health care and medical treatment.

In the reception phase, asylum seekers have the right to use reception services organised by reception centres operating under the Finnish Immigration Service. Asylum seekers have the right to urgent and essential social and health services and also access to any additional social services that social welfare professionals consider necessary. Asylum seeker children have the right to social and health services on the same grounds as if they were residents in that municipality. Asylum seekers in a particularly vulnerable situation will also receive the services they need.

Once the asylum seeker has been granted a residence permit to Finland, he/she will move to a municipality and will be registered as a resident in that municipality. He/she has the same right to public social and health services and Social Insurance Institution benefits as any other municipal resident.

Persons without a residence permit staying illegally in the country are entitled to emergency social and health services. Emergency health care also includes acute help to oral problems, mental health services, care for substance abuse and psychosocial support. The person will furthermore receive health care in situations where the disease otherwise would worsen, or the disability become more difficult. Persons staying illegally in the country must also be granted necessary care and livelihood. The municipalities must provide for food, medicines and temporary accommodation.

In 2017, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health gave instructions on the rights of asylum seekers to social and health services and how different actors must fulfil their obligations. In 2016, the Ministry commissioned a study on how municipalities have coped with arranging social and health services for the newly arrived. The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira) is currently following up on the situation concerning maternity and child health clinic services for asylum-seeker children. The Government's ongoing key project on addressing child and family services contains a specific section on children and families with a migrant background.

One very important issue is to identify mental health problems among the asylum seekers and to respond to their needs. Funding from the Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA) and from the EU has been directed to developing mental health services and low threshold activities for asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. Social and health professionals working in reception centres have been trained to identify mental health problems and to give first aid to persons in need.

Two central projects are worth to mention in this context: PALOMA, a national project on developing mental health actions for refugees, published a handbook for professionals in May 2018. The book offers an extensive information package about refugees' resources and risk factors relevant to mental health. It also includes recommendations targeted at different fields as well as methods and tools for decision-makers, supervisors and professionals for promoting refugees' mental health and preventing, identifying and treating problems. The PALOMA handbook contains an English summary.

A national project to develop the initial health checks of newly arrived asylum seekers (TERTTU -project) aims at piloting an indicator for traumatic experiences. The aim is to identify traumatic experiences better and offer services and help swiftly.⁵³

2.6 Non-discrimination and acceptance of diversity

2.6.1 Policy Programmes

Tackling discrimination is priority area in many policy fields of the Finnish government including non-discrimination, gender equality, national human rights and fundamental rights policy, integration policy and different minority policy areas targeting for example Sami people, Roma and other ethnic minorities, Disabled people, LGBTI groups and different age groups etc.

The Government published the second **National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human rights** in the beginning of 2017 and it will be in force until the end of 2019. The plan focuses on fundamental and human rights education, equality and non-discrimination, self-determination as well as fundamental rights and digitalisation. The Ministry of Justice co-ordinates implementation of the action plan.

Promoting a humane national discussion culture on immigration policy that will not tolerate racism is also one of the four key areas of the **government's Integration program for**

⁵³ Source: The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

2016–2019. The objective is a Finnish society where discussion on immigration is open and respectful of human dignity and where official forums are also created for dialogue between the authorities, and immigrants and different population groups engage in well-functioning interaction.

The Ministry of Education and Culture launched an **Action Plan Meaningful in Finland** to prevent hate speech and racism and to foster social inclusion (2016). The program has ten priority areas and 6 million euros for funding activities against hate speech and racism. The objectives cover e.g. improving the skills of teaching staff and other professionals who work with children and young people. As a part of the program a special funding instrument was established for supporting dialog between religious groups.

As of April 2017, Finland is part of an EU funded project called **PROXIMITY**. The objective of the project is to increase the capacities of local authorities, and especially municipal policing, to identify and intervene in hate crimes and other forms of intolerance. One goal is to identify best practices of awareness raising, training, specialised municipal services etc. at the local level in various European cities. Local police officers from three (3) Finnish municipalities have participated in joint trainings with other European colleagues in 2018. The trainings focused on hate crime recognition and sharing good practices on preventive collaboration with potential victim groups and tools for making effective interventions.

The police are active on social media, where virtual local police officers are active under their own names. The National Bureau of Investigation is responsible for the Net Tip service, which enables citizens to report to the police any suspected offence or unlawful material discovered on the Internet. The Net Tip service can be used for reporting any other suspicion, too, on an electronic form with five subject areas: narcotics, criminal fraud, racist or hate crimes, violent activity, and other security threat. The Net Tip service is available at most public discussion sites in the social media, through an icon with a link to the electronic form for reporting suspicious observations in different subject areas. The police have expanded and improved virtual police activities in order to combat hate speech and corresponding phenomena on the Internet. The Ministry of Justice also co-ordinates the implementation of EU level code of conduct of countering illegal hate speech online in Finland.

The EU approved a project titled AGAINST HATE, which has been running since December 2017. The Finnish Ministry of Justice heads the project with partners from Finnish and Slovakian CSOs. The objective of the project Against Hate is to develop the work against hate crime and hate speech. The project focuses on the development of hate crime reporting, on the enhancement of the capacity of the police, prosecutors and judges to act against hate crime and hate speech, and on the development of support services for victims of hate crime.

The national Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism (2016)⁵⁴ was prepared through extensive participation between the authorities (incl. of education), organisations and communities. The Ministry of the Interior coordinates the implementation. The plan recognises that many factors influence the extent of violent extremism in society. Shortcomings in social policy areas such as upbringing, education, equality, wellbeing, livelihood and social participation, and weak social cohesion provide growth potential for violent radicalisation and extremism. In accordance with international best practices the prevention of violent extremism refers to specific measures focused on groups and individuals which run the risk of becoming radicalised.

The Ministry of Justice, together with the Ministry of Employment and Economy, has been running an initiative called **TRUST – Good Relations in Finland** from 2016 onwards. The aim of the initiative has been to promote non-discrimination in municipalities and regions around Finland. The initial focus of the work was specifically on asylum seekers and municipalities with reception centres, but since 2017 the focus has been extended to involve other groups of migrants and ethnic minorities as well. The initiative has developed, trained and tested good practices in municipalities to strengthen and maintain good relations, multidirectional integration and mutual respect.

Among other things, a guide on promoting democratic participation and preventing hate speech and violent radicalism was published to support teachers' work in connection with this initiative. A website containing background information for teachers in Finnish and Swedish, and links to different materials related to combating hate speech and racism and preventing extremism has also been launched. A brochure on the prevention on violent radicalisation has additionally been sent to every comprehensive school.⁵⁵

2.6.2 The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO)

A community free from racism and discrimination is a human rights issue and a prerequisite for inclusion, integration and societal integrity. In order to create communities free from racism and discrimination, it is essential to also maintain open dialogue between various population groups and the authorities. For this, Finland has the **Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations** (ETNO), which is both a national and regional forum.

The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) is a broad-based consultative body established by the government and is mandated to: 1) promote interaction between ethnic minorities, public authorities, employer and employee unions, NGOs and political parties in

54 http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/74921/Toimenpideohjelman_final.pdf

55 Source: The Ministry of Justice

Parliament 2) monitor the state on ethnic relations, promote the participation of migrant and ethnic minorities, their sense of security and positive attitudes on diversity 3) provide expertise to all ministries on matters related to migration, integration and equality 4) partake in research related to the promotion of good relations 5) disseminate general information on good ethnic relations to society.

ETNO is coordinated under the auspices of Ministry of Justice. In addition to the national advisory board, ETNO has seven (7) regional advisory boards throughout the country coordinated by regional ELY-centres. In order to encourage constructive dialogue at the regional and local level, regional boards utilise local expertise especially from migrant, ethnic and/or religious communities in collaboration with local civil service actors from municipalities and regional government.

Under the new decree on ETNO (771/2015), on 11 February 2016 the government established a new advisory board for a four-year period, until 10 February 2020. ETNO's annual themes for 2018 and 2019 focus on mainstreaming a policy framework focusing on promoting local good relations between population groups and also ensuring the establishment of regional ETNO boards in the planned counties (preparations currently underway). ETNO organises one of the major annual forums on ethnic relations, the ETNO forum.

ETNO provides information and partakes in the capacity-building of migrant, ethnic and religious organisations. In addition, ETNO publishes reports on matters related to ethnic relations. ETNO established an official expert group on religious and cultural dialogue (*Uskonnollinen ja kulttuurinen vuoropuhelu asiantuntijatyöryhmä*) in the spring of 2018. The expert group is mandated to look into and make recommendations on the sense of belonging amongst youth with multicultural backgrounds. The expert group is to conduct its duties for a period of one (1) year after which it will present its proposals in the spring of 2019. The expert group is comprised of religious and civil society organisations as well as research institutions. ETNO has a number of Good Will Ambassadors who use their expertise and well-established public profiles to further good ethnic relations around the country.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Source: The Ministry of Justice

2.6.3 National system for monitoring on discrimination

Finland has continued the implementation of the national system for monitoring of discrimination. The main elements of implementation are: 1) Collection of timely data on discrimination (studies, statistics, reports by equality bodies, information collected by NGOs and social partners etc.) and publishing it on a specific website under the national equality portal (www.equality.fi), 2) publishing an annual discrimination study, and 3) publishing thematic policy briefs on discrimination data for more effective dissemination of data. The monitoring system consists of an executive expert group and an annual expert forum. The system also aims at enhancing dialogue and cooperation between different actors collecting equality data in Finland.

The Ministry of Justice guides other authorities on equality planning and the assessment of equality impacts. An Equality Plan covering all grounds of discrimination is obligatory for all employers that regularly employ more than 30 persons, for organisers of education, and for authorities. Equality planning is a platform to promote equality and non-discrimination, including measures to tackle racism, xenophobia and related intolerance. The Ministry of Justice has also published an online material on equality impact assessment⁵⁷ and it continues to train State and local actors on equality planning and other related topics. The aim is to expand and reinforce organizations' expertise on equality planning.⁵⁸

57 <http://yhdenvertaisuus.finlex.fi/en/>

58 Source: The Ministry of Justice

3 MIGRATION AND CO-OPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Finnish development policy is guided by the Government Report on Development Policy adopted in February 2016. Finland's development co-operation has different channels: bilateral co-operation between states, multilateral co-operation with international organisations and financial institutions, NGOs' development co-operation, private sector co-operation and humanitarian aid.

The main responsibility for Finland's development policy rests with the Foreign Ministry. Many other government ministries also have a role in development policy, because developing countries are affected by many decisions made at the national, EU and international level in other fields. Coherence between the various policy sectors is a key principle in development policy.

The foundation for these activities is laid by the UN's Agenda2030 for Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015. **The main objective of Finland's development co-operation is the elimination of extreme poverty and reducing poverty and inequality,** aims which Finland strives to achieve in collaboration with other countries.

Finland seeks to influence the underlying reasons and background factors of migration flows through the development co-operation. Some of the activities target countries of origin or transit directly and strive to stabilise fragile situations. In other respects, the activities aim for long-term preventive effects.

In particular, Finland's development co-operation focuses on the following four (4) priority areas, which influence the underlying causes of migration over the long term:

3. Strengthening women and girls' status and rights
4. Creation of more jobs, industries and welfare by developing countries' domestic economies
5. Strengthening democracy and the functional capacity of societies
6. Improving food security and the availability of water and energy, and promoting more sustainable use of natural resources.

The geographic focus of Finland's long-term bilateral development co-operation has been in eastern and southern Africa, where it has contributed to promoting stability. In addition, Finland engages in co-operation with fragile states or countries affected by conflict in Asia and certain Middle East regions. The majority of migrants arriving in Finland in 2015–2016 came as asylum seekers from countries affected by conflict, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria and Eritrea, of which Iraq and Syria were middle income countries before the conflicts erupted.

Among other things, Finland's development co-operation funding has been used to support the Middle East countries and regions facing the consequences of the situation in Syria and Iraq, and countries directly affected by the unrest in the Horn of Africa and/or accommodating large numbers of refugees, including Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. Afghanistan is another target country for Finland's development co-operation. In these countries, Finland supports the valuable work carried out by different development actors, including NGOs. The activities of many NGOs extend to fragile countries in which Finland cannot engage in intergovernmental development co-operation.

A significant volume of Finland's support for refugees, countries of transit and countries of origin is also channelled through the EU, international organisations and multilateral development funding institutions. Many multilateral actors play a key role in resolving such issues as the major migration-related challenges of the Middle East.

In 2018, Finland's development cooperation appropriations total EUR 886 million and represent 0.38% of the gross national income (GNI). In 2017, a total of EUR 935 million was reserved for development and cooperation (0.41 per cent of GNI).⁵⁹

59 Source: The Ministry for Foreign Affairs

4 INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE

The media review examines press coverage relating to migration in Finland in 2017–2018. The review relies on Meltwater media monitoring, in which keywords related to migration were used to search for news items.⁶⁰ To ensure national coverage, the review includes not only the Finnish Broadcasting Company’s website but also the largest broadsheets from around Finland.

In Southern Finland, Helsingin Sanomat, which is published in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, was selected for inclusion in the review, as were Turun Sanomat based in Turku in Southwest Finland and Aamulehti in the Tampere region. The review also included Kaleva from the Oulu region and Karjalainen published in Eastern Finland.

The review was based on over 16 000 articles related to migration published between 1 January 2017 and 13 June 2018. The majority of them discussed the international migration situation. In the coverage of the migration situation in Finland, the realisation of asylum seekers’ rights was the most common topic. The second most common theme was the security threat associated with migration, with the integration of migrants in the third and racism faced by migrants in the fourth place.

In particular, the review focuses on domestic debate on migration policy.

⁶⁰ The following keywords were used in the search: maahanmuut*, migratio*, immigratio*, turvapaik*. pakolai*, flykting* and asyl*

4.1 The US and the EU prominent in international coverage

A large share of the news items relevant to migration focused on the international migration situation. News related to the United States were particularly prominent. In spring 2017, the ban on entry imposed by the United States on the citizens of some Muslim countries made headlines. The theme was discussed extensively in all media.⁶¹ The news often also referred to the criticism levelled by the US President at Germany's refugee policy.⁶² In particular, it was underlined in reports about the meeting between the German Chancellor and the US President in March 2017.

International news also frequently referred to the European Union's common migration policy, including the burden-sharing related to receiving refugees between the Member States. In particular, this topic attracted a lot of interest in late spring 2018 as the EU countries were preparing for a forthcoming summit. Helsingin Sanomat, for example, reported on the great divide between the EU countries created by the issue of whether the EU should put in place a permanent instrument of shared responsibility for processing asylum seekers or stop the influx of asylum seekers completely.⁶³ As the summit approached, the debate on camps to be set up on the EU's external borders also became more heated. Such newspapers as Kaleva found in their editorials that these camps could not be a permanent solution.⁶⁴

Of individual EU Member States, Germany was under the closest scrutiny. The migration policy debate in this country was a particular object of interest in autumn 2017, as a Bundestag election was held in the country. Aamulehti, for example, reported in September that the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany party (Afd), which emerged as the third largest party in the Bundestag election, wanted to go back to permanent border control and close the EU's external borders completely.⁶⁵ Karjalainen, on the other hand, reported in January 2018 that the parties participating in government negotiations in

61 Ks. esim. Aamulehti 6 March 2017: Trump julkaisi uuden määräyksen maahantulokiellosta – "Olisimme voittaneet oikeudessa". <https://www.aamulehti.fi/maailma/trumpin-uusi-maarays-maahantulokiellosta-voimaan-ensi-viikolla-rak-pois-listasta-24323649/>. (Cited 4. September 2018).

62 Kaleva 3 March 2017: Trump saa vieraakseen Merkelin – johtajien tähänastiset kontaktit ovat olleet vähäiset. <https://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/ulkomaat/trump-saa-vieraakseen-merkelin-johtajien-tahanastiset-kontaktit-ovat-olleet-vahaisia/753395/>. (Cited 4. September 2018)

63 Helsingin Sanomat 13 April 2018: EU kaipaa yhteisvastuuta muuttopaineen alla. <https://www.hs.fi/paivanlehti/13042018/art-2000005639341.html>. (Cited 4. September 2018)

64 Kaleva 10 June 2018: Koontileiri ei ole pysyvä ratkaisu <http://www.kaleva.fi/mielipide/paakirjoitukset/koontileiri-ei-ole-pysyva-ratkaisu/796146/>. (Cited 4. September 2018)

65 Aamulehti 25 September 2017: Tällainen on Saksan vaaleissa voiton ottanut oikeistopopulistinen Afd: Markka takaisin ja pysyvät rajatarkastukset käyttöön. <https://www.aamulehti.fi/ulkomaat/tallainen-on-saksan-vaaleissa-historiallisen-voiton-ottanut-oikeistopopulistinen-afd-markka-takaisin-ja-pysyvat-rajatarkastukset-kayttoon-2004156-56>. (Cited 4. September 2018)

Germany wished to restrict immigration.⁶⁶ The second most prominent EU country in the headlines was Sweden. These articles discussed such topics as the anti-migration climate spreading in Sweden.⁶⁷

4.2 Debate on asylum seekers' rights in Finland

The main focus of news about domestic migration issues was on asylum seekers' legal protection in the asylum process. In spring 2017, the media reported on demonstrations against the forced return of asylum seekers who had been refused asylum, which were organised around the country. A demonstration by asylum seekers in the city centre, which continued for more than six months, received attention in Helsinki.⁶⁸ Demonstrations against return flights at Helsinki-Vantaa airport⁶⁹ and in Jyväskylä⁷⁰ also made headlines, and the media reported on the poor security situation in Iraq⁷¹ and Afghanistan.⁷²

Those protesting against forced returns found that Finland violated asylum seekers' human rights.⁷³ According to them, persons who had been refused asylum could not be returned to Iraq and Afghanistan because of the poor security situation in these countries.⁷⁴

66 Karjalainen 12 Januari 2018: Saksan hallitustunnustelijat haluavat rajoittaa maahanmuuttoa ja uudistaa euroaluetta – Merkel lupaa Euroopalle uutta alkua. <https://www.karjalainen.fi/uutiset/uutis-alueet/ulkomaat/item/168659-saksan-hallitustunnustelijat-haluavat-rajottaa-maahanmuuttoa-ja-uudistaa-euroaluetta>. (Cited 4. September 2018)

67 esim. Helsingin Sanomat 28 December 2017: Vuodet, joina Ruotsi muuttui – Näin "humanitaarinen suurvälta" avasi ensin sydämensä ja sulki sitten rajansa. <https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005504051.html>. (Cited 4. September 2018)

68 Yle.fi 2 Februari 2017: Turvapaikanhakijien mielenosoitus pakolaispolitiikkaa vastaan jatkuu kolmatta päivää Helsingissä <http://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9456170/> Yle.fi 13 July 2017: Yksittäinen uhka vai kokonaisarvio? Kysymme, miksi kertaalleen puretut mielenosoitukset saavat jälleen jatkua. <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9721718>. (Cited 4. September 2018)

69 Helsingin Sanomat 7 September 2017: Poliisi kyllästyi toistuviin mielenosoituksiin Helsinki-Vantaalla ja siirsi afgaanimpiesten palautuslennot Lappeenrantaan: Vaarantaa jo yleistä turvallisuutta. <http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005357744.html>. (Cited 4 September 2018)

70 Aamulehti: Kaupunginvaltuutettu vastaanottokeskuksen pihalla: "Ystävänä tuntee perheen, jota pakkopalautus koskee." <https://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/jyvaskylan-vastaanottokeskuksen-silminnakija-ystavani-tuntee-perheen-jota-pakkopalautus-koskee-200370834>. (Cited 4. September 2018)

71 Yle.fi 15 October 2017: Suomesta turvapaikkaa hakenut irakilainen jalkapalloilija: "Isäni kuoli minun takiani." <https://yle.fi/urheilu/3-9880451>. (Cited 4 September 2018)

72 Yle.fi 8 Februari 2017: Afganistan on kaaoksessa, mutta EU:n kriisinhallintaoperaatio lopetettiin. <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9447871>. (Cited 4 September 2018)

73 Helsingin Sanomat 4 April 2017: Kansalaistorille kokoontuu tänään mielenosoittajia kello 12 vastustamaan pakkopalautuksia Afganistaniin – "Hallituksen kädet tahrautuvat vereen." <https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005155205.html>. (Cited 4 September 2018)

74 Helsingin Sanomat 17 Februari 2017: Maahanmuuttovirasto tapasi hämmentyneitä mielenosoittajia Rautatienatorilla – Ylijohtaja Vuorio: turvapaikkapäätöksissä on varmasti tehty myös virheitä. <https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005092013.html>. (Cited 4 September 2018)

The authorities participated actively in the media debate on the forced returns of asylum seekers who had been refused asylum. In its statements, the Finnish Immigration Service emphasised that the decisions were made on a case-by-case basis and in compliance with Finnish law.⁷⁵ The decisions can also be appealed to the Administrative Court and the Supreme Administrative Court. According to the Finnish Immigration Service, asylum seekers are not returned to countries in which their lives are at risk.⁷⁶ It was also pointed out that, according to the Finnish Immigration Service's country information reports, the security situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia does not preclude returns.⁷⁷

The Finnish Broadcasting Company, in particular, reported in spring 2018 on the forced returns of asylum seekers who had been refused asylum. In broadsheets, on the other hand, the number of articles discussing the returns of asylum seekers declined clearly. It is possible that the situation was momentarily influenced by the terrorist attack in Turku in autumn 2017, where the perpetrator had been refused asylum.⁷⁸

The media also commonly asked if asylum seekers' legal protection was realised. Helsingin Sanomat, for example, reported that a lawyer assisting asylum seekers came to work under the influence of alcohol.⁷⁹ Reportedly, there were also shortcomings in the interpretation services for asylum interviews.⁸⁰ The media additionally drew attention to cases of individual asylum seekers who, regardless of grounds discussed in the news reports, had

75 Helsingin Sanomat 18 Februari 2017: Maahanmuuttovirasto hajottaa irakilaisperheen – "Uhkauksien ja kiristykseen kohde on ollut ensisijaisesti isäsi, joten pelkosi ei ole objektiivisesti perusteltua. <https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005093265.html>. (Cited 4 September 2018)

76 Helsingin Sanomat 23. April 2017: Maahanmuuttoviraston ylijohtaja mielipidesivulla: Ketään ei palauteta alueelle, jossa uhkaa kuolemanrangaistus, kidutus tai vaino. <https://www.hs.fi/mielipide/art-2000005181153.html>. (Cited 4 September 2018)

77 Karjalainen 17 Januari 2017. <https://www.karjalainen.fi/uutiset/uutis-alueet/kotimaa/item/128061-maahanmuuttovirasto-ei-muuta-kriisimaiden-turvapaikkalinjaa>. (Cited 4 September 2018)

78 Turun Sanomat 21 August 2017: KRP:n päällikkö vahvisti Ylelle: Turun terroriteon pääepäily oli saanut kielteisen turvapaikkapäätöksen. <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3624994/KRPn+paallikko+vahvisti+Ylelle+Turun+terroriteon+paaepailty+oli+saanut+kielteisen+turvapaikkapaatoksen>. (Cited 21 August 2017)

79 Helsingin Sanomat 29 July 2017: Lakimiehet välttelevät asiakkaita ja hoitavat asioita jopa humalassa – HS:n selvityksen perusteella turvapaikanhakijoiden oikesuavussa on vakavia ongelmia. <http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005307363.html>. (Cited 5 September 2018)

80 Helsingin Sanomat 27 April 2017: Suomeen paennut nigerialaisnainen kertoo poikajoukon polttaneen hänen tyttöstävänsä hengiltä – veivätkö tulkkaukset turvapaikan? <http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005228942.html>

been refused asylum.⁸¹ The Finnish Immigration Service's information about the security situation in Afghanistan⁸² and Iraq⁸³ was also called into question.

In defence of the realisation of asylum seekers' legal protection in Finland it was noted that, according to the Finnish Immigration Service's statistics, the Administrative Court only repealed 3.6% of the agency's decisions due to an incorrect interpretation of the law or a procedural error.⁸⁴ It was reported that the Ministry of Justice would launch a report on the realisation of asylum seekers' legal protection in autumn 2017.⁸⁵ The Finnish Immigration Service's fact-finding missions to Afghanistan and Iraq also attracted attention. Kaleva reported that the agency was undertaking these missions in order to gather more accurate country information.⁸⁶

In winter 2017, decisions to refuse asylum to applicants read out in churches made the news.⁸⁷ It was also reported that the church was assisting applicants who had been refused asylum and who were staying in the country illegally.⁸⁸ The church's actions sparked a debate on the role of the church as a defender of asylum seekers' rights. The proponents of the church's actions justified their views by the freedom of speech of church employees and the need to defend those in the most vulnerable position.⁸⁹

81 Aamulehti 6 April 2017: Eroottisia välineitä myynyt mogadishulainen ei saa turvapaikkaa al-Shabaab-pelosta huolimatta. <http://www.aamulehti.fi/kotimaa/eroottisia-valineita-myynt-mogadishulainen-ei-saa-turvapaikka-al-shabaab-pelosta-huolimatta-24396784/>

82 Helsingin Sanomat 4 April 2017: Onko Afganistan turvallinen maa, lähettääkö Suomi ihmisiä kuolemaan? Tämän takia palautuslennot nousivat puheenaiheeksi. <http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005156330.html>. (Cited 5 September 2018)

83 Karjalainen 14 April 2017: Suomen Irak-lähettiläs: "Palautettujen kohtaloa vaikea seurata". <https://www.karjalainen.fi/uutiset/uutis-alueet/kotimaa/item/139038-suomen-irak-lahettilas-palautettujen-kohtaloa-vaikea-seurata>. (Cited 5 September 2018)

84 Helsingin Sanomat 17 January 2017: Migri: Uudet maaraportit Irakista, Afganistanista ja somaliasta eivät muuta turvapaikkakäytäntöjä. <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005048443.html>. (Cited 5 September 2018)

85 Helsingin Sanomat 11 August 2017: Turvapaikanhakijoiden oikeusavusta tehdään selvitys, lupaa oikeusministeri Häkkänen – HS:n selvityksen mukaan osa lakimiehistä huijaa turvapaikanhakijoita ja rahastaa valtiota. <http://www.hs.fi/ilta/11082017/art-2000005322215.html>. (Cited 5 September 2017)

86 Karjalainen 7 September 2017: Migri tekee tiedonhankintamatkat Bagdadiin ja Kabuliin – aiemmin on arvosteltu sitä, ettei maatieto perustu kokemuksiin. <https://www.karjalainen.fi/uutiset/uutis-alueet/kotimaa/item/154503-migri-tekee-tiedonhankintamatkat-bagdadiin-ja-kabuliin-aiemmin-on-arvosteltu-sita-ettei-maatieto-perustu-kokemuksiin-paikan-paalta>. (Cited 5 September 2018)

87 Helsingin Sanomat 7 September 2017: Kirkoissa luetaan kohta ääneen turvapaikkapäätöksiä – "Emme kommentoi, kerromme vain." <http://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005116322.html>. (Cited 5 September 2018)

88 Kaleva 19 May 2017: Pääministeri Sipilä: Olisin valmis nostamaan kiintiöpakolaisten määrää. <http://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/arkkipiispa-makinen-kirkko-auttaa-paperittomia/760390/>. (Cited 5 September 2018)

89 Helsingin Sanomat 21 April 2017: Saavatko papit ja piispat tukea julkisesti turvapaikanhakijoita? Päivi Räsänen milestä kirkon pitäisi keskittyä valistamaan pakolaisia Jeesuksesta. <https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000005180578.html> (Cited 5 September 2018)

According to those who opposed the church's activities, politics has no place in religious services. They also wanted the church to obey the law.⁹⁰ Additionally, it was pointed out that only some asylum decisions had been selected for reading out in church.⁹¹ The attitude of the church towards asylum seekers was also a topic of discussion in autumn 2017 and winter 2018, as the Bishop of Helsinki⁹² and the Archbishop of the Finnish Evangelic-Lutheran church were elected.⁹³

The debate on the right of those illegally residing in the country to health services was also active.⁹⁴ In this context, especially the decision made by the City of Helsinki to also offer health services to illegal residents in the future attracted attention.⁹⁵ In the discussion on asylum seekers' rights, the right to family reunification⁹⁶ and the right to asylum of those who have converted to Christianity⁹⁷ were also brought up to some extent.

90 Kaleva 14 March 2017: Poliitiikka ei kuulu Jumalanpalvelukseen. <http://www.kaleva.fi/mielipide/vieras/politiikka-ei-kuulu-jumalanpalvelukseen/754263/>. (Cited 5 September 2018)

91 Helsingin Sanomat 21 April 2017: Saavatko papit ja piispat tukea julkisesti turvapaikanhakijoita? Päivi Räsänen mielestä kirkon pitäisi keskittyä valistamaan pakolaisia Jeesuksesta. <https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000005180578.html> (Cited 5 September 2018)

92 Helsingin Sanomat 13 February 2017: Räväkkä tv-koomikko haluaa Helsingin piispaksi: liberaalin pidetty kirkkoherra Teemu Laajasalo onkin "kaappikonservatiivi". <https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005085782.html>. (Cited 5 September 2018)

93 Turun Sanomat 14 January 2018: Jyrkkä ei ja ehdoton kyllä on arkkipiispaehdokkaiden akseli arvokysymyksissä. <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3800666/Jyrkka+ei+ja+ehdoton+kylla+on+arkkipiispaehdokkaiden+akseli+arvokysymyksissa>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

94 Aamulehti 20 May 2017: Paperiton ihminen hakeutuu vain harvoin kunnallisten terveyspalveluiden ääreen. <https://www.aamulehti.fi/kotimaa/paperiton-ihminen-hakeutuu-vain-harvoin-kunnallisten-terveyspalveluiden-aa-reen-200151291/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

95 Aamulehti 30 November 2017: Helsingin kaupungin valtuusto hyväksyi laajemmat terveyspalvelut paperittomille. <https://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/helsingin-kaupunginvaltuusto-hyvaksyi-laajemmat-terveyspalvelut-paperittomille-200570502/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

96 Turun Sanomat 11 November 2017: Perheenyhdistämisen tuloajoihin saattaa tulla alueellisia eroja, asian selvittely alkuvaiheessa. <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3686655/Uutissuomalainen+Perheenyhdistamisen+tuloajoihin+saattaa+tulla+alueellisia+eroja+asian+selvittely+alkuvaiheessa>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

97 Helsingin Sanomat 24 October 2017: Satoja turvapaikanhakijoita on liittynyt helluntaiseurakuntiin viime vuosina – Helluntaikirkon johtaja: "Olemme joutuneet laittamaan jos nyt ei jarrun, niin ainakin kytkimen." <https://www.hs.fi/paivanlehti/24102017/art-2000005419330.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

4.3 Security threats associated with migration also brought up

The second most common theme in the debate on the migration situation in Finland was the security threats associated with migration. In spring 2017, the media followed a demonstration titled Finland first, which opposed immigration in general and which was organised simultaneously with a demonstration against returning asylum seekers. Demonstrators on both sides camped in Helsinki city centre for several months.⁹⁸

In August 2017, knife attacks in Turku, in which the perpetrator was suspected of murders committed as acts of terror, made headlines.⁹⁹ The perpetrator had attacked a number of passers-by in Turku with a knife. Two of the victims died from their injuries.¹⁰⁰ The knife attacks in Turku sparked a debate on the threat of terrorism, in particular in connection with persons who have been refused asylum.¹⁰¹ Among other things, participants in this discussion demanded that persons who have been refused asylum be taken into custody¹⁰² and that specific return centres be set up.¹⁰³ Amendments to the surveillance legislation were also proposed.¹⁰⁴

In the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Turku, the media also made the point that not all migrants are associated with the threat of terrorism. The fact that the person suspected of the terrorist attack in Turku had been refused asylum was frequently cited in the news.¹⁰⁵ News of persons with a migrant background who, during the knife attack, had gone to the

98 Helsingin Sanomat 2 July 2017: Suomi ensin -leiri purettiin, mutta tukea löytyy nyt eduskunnasta asti <https://www.hs.fi/nyt/art-2000005276588.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

99 Aamulehti 20 August 2017: Turun joukkopuukottajaksi epäiltyä kuulusteltu – esitetään vangittavaksi maanantaina. <https://www.aamulehti.fi/kotimaa/turun-joukkopuukottajaksi-epailtya-kuulusteltu-esitetaan-vangittavaksi-maanantaina-200338893/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

100 Helsingin Sanomat 19 August 2017: Krp: Turun puukottaja valikoi uhreikseen naisia – loukkaantuneet Suomen, Italian, Ruotsin ja Britannian kansalaisia <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005332896.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

101 Aamulehti 21 August 2017: Yle: Terroristiepäilty oli saanut kielteisen turvapaikkapäätöksen Suomesta. <https://www.aamulehti.fi/kotimaa/yle-terroristiepailty-oli-saanut-kielteisen-turvapaikkapaatoksen-suomesta-200340803/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

102 Karjalainen 28 August 2017: Halla-aho: Olisi ihanteellista, että turvapaikanhakijat eivät voisi liikkua vapaasti. <https://www.karjalainen.fi/uutiset/uutis-alueet/kotimaa/item/153465-halla-aho-olisi-ihanteellista-etta-turvapaikanhakijat-eivat-voisi-liikkua-vapaasti>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

103 Helsingin Sanomat 24 August 2017: Keskustelu vankilasaarista sai Halla-ahon muljauttelemaan – Näihin giffeihin tiivistyy tämän hetken poliittinen keskustelu. <https://www.hs.fi/nyt/art-2000005338741.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

104 Helsingin Sanomat 21 August 2017: Sipilä vetosi kaikkiin puolueisiin: Tiedustelulainsäädäntö tulee saada ajan tasalle – Oikeusministeri Häkkänen STT:lle: Laki käsiteltävä kiireellisenä. <http://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005334301.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

105 Turun Sanomat 21 August 2017: KRP:n päällikkö vahvisti Ylelle: Turun terroriteon pääepäilty oli saanut kielteisen turvapaikkapäätöksen. <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3624994/KRPn+paallikko+vahvisti+Ylelle+Turun+terroriteon+paaepailty+oli+saanut+kielteisen+turvapaikkapaatoksen>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

aid of victims were also published. These included reports of an Iraqi who had arrived in Finland as a quota refugee and who was injured in the neck as he tried to stop the attacker in Turku.¹⁰⁶

Following the knife attack in Turku, government measures for preventing security threats associated with migration received attention in the media. For example, the articles related that as a consequence of the attack in Turku, the Government decided to increase appropriations for internal security and to speed up the asylum process, and appropriations for the police and the Finnish Security Intelligence Service were also increased. Threat assessments of persons having been refused asylum were proposed. The Government was also planning amendments to terrorism-related legislation and the Nationality Act.¹⁰⁷

Terrorism as a security threat associated with migration emerged again clearly in the news in May 2018 as the suspect in Turku knife attacks went on trial.¹⁰⁸ The media reported on details of the terrorism-related act contained in the pre-trial investigation material collected by the police. For example, it was reported that the suspect admired the extremist organisation ISIS and uploaded a video with his personal manifesto to the organisation's communication channels.¹⁰⁹ In the news coverage of spring 2018, it was also noted that the knife attack in Turku increased by one half the number of terrorism-related tips received by the police from citizens.¹¹⁰ It was also reported that the Ministry of the Interior was commissioning a study on the incidence of radical Islam in Finland.¹¹¹

Other offences committed by asylum seekers were also commonly reported on as one of the security threats associated with migration. In 2017, for instance, a trial in progress in

106 Helsingin Sanomat 20 August 2017: Hasan juoksi Turun puukottajan perään ja sai itse puukosta kaulaan – "Hänen silmissään näkyi vain tyhjyyttä". <http://www.hs.fi/paivanlehti/21082017/art-2000005333757.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

107 Helsingin Sanomat 31 August 2017: Hallitus vahvistaa terrorismin torjuntaa – "Kielteisen turvapaikkapäätöksen saaneista tehdään uhka-arvio ja heidät otetaan tarvittaessa välittömästi säilöön". <http://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005348143.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

108 Helsingin Sanomat 9 May 2018: Lapsuudenystävän mukaan Bouanane joutui uzbekistanilaisen aivopesemäksi: "Olen melko varma, että tämä mies on se syy". <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005672996.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

109 Helsingin Sanomat 6 May 2018: Asiantuntija: Turun puukottajan kömpelö ja epäuskottava propagandavideo ei kelvannut terroristijärjestölle – "Isis olisi aiheuttanut itselleen enemmän vahinkoa" <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005669282.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

110 Kaleva 23 March 2018: Poliisille puolen vuoden aikana yli tuhat vihjettä väkivaltaisesta ääriajattelusta — Joka kolmas vinkki johti toimenpiteisiin <http://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/poliisille-puolen-vuoden-aikana-yli-tuhat-vihjetta-vakivaltaisesta-aaiajattelusta-joka-kolmas-vinkki-johti-toimenpiteisiin/788518/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

111 Turun Sanomat 30 January 2018: Radikaalin islamin uhka Suomessa tutkitaan – ministeriö selvittää myös propagandan määrän <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3820771/Radikaalin+islamin+uhka+Suomessa+tutkitaan++ministerio+selvittaa+myos+propagandan+maaran>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

Tampere, where two asylum seekers were accused of a mass murder in Iraq, made headlines.¹¹² There were also reports of a human smuggling offence investigated by the police, in which asylum seekers had been smuggled in a boat from Russia through the Saimaa canal.¹¹³ Individual cases of rape¹¹⁴ and other offences¹¹⁵ where the suspects were asylum seekers were also covered. The frequency of news about other individual offences committed by asylum seekers clearly dropped in 2018.

4.4 Employment, education and training made headlines in the context of integration

The integration of migrants was the third most prominent topic in migration news. The importance of employment as well as education and training for immigrants' integration was stressed in the debate. In particular, dropping the labour market test applied to labour migration was prominent in articles about migrants' employment. The labour market test means that the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment will not support the issuing of work permits to workers coming from outside the European Economic Area if the authorities estimate that labour is also available within Europe.¹¹⁶

Proponents of dropping the labour market test felt that reducing the bureaucracy associated with residence permits for work would promote the employment of immigrants. It was also felt that Finland needs foreign labour, as the working-age population will decline in the next decade. As the birth rate is also low, Finland should take active measures to attract skilled workers from abroad.¹¹⁷ Opponents of the reform pointed out that dropping the labour market test would promote cheap labour and the grey market.¹¹⁸ The backdrop

112 Aamulehti 11 May 2017: Joukkomurhaoikeudenkäynnin puolustus vaati kaikkia todistajanlausuntoja hylättäväksi – "Edesvastuutonta". <https://www.aamulehti.fi/kotimaa/joukkomurhaoikeudenkaynnin-puolustus-vaati-kaikkia-todistajanlausuntoja-hylattavaksi-edesvastuutonta-200131996/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

113 Helsingin Sanomat 3 October 2017: Moottoriveneeseen piilotettuja ihmisiä salakuljetettiin Suomeen Saimaan kanavassa, matkan hinta jopa 10 000 euroa – Näin ihmisalakuljetus pyöri "ostopalveluna". <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005393022.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

114 Turun Sanomat 27 January 2017: Keskisuomalainen: Turvapaikanhakija vangittiin raiskauksista Jyväskylässä. <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3350527/Keskisuomalainen+Turvapaikanhakija+vangittiin+raiskauksista+Jyvaskylassa>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

115 Karjalainen 19 April 2017: Savon Sanomat: Turvapaikanhakijat suunnittelivat laajaa rikossarjaa - puhetta oli jopa raiskauksista. <http://www.karjalainen.fi/uutiset/uutis-alueet/kotimaa/item/139642-savon-sanomat-turvapaikanhakijat-suunnittelivat-laajaa-rikossarjaa-puhetta-oli-jopa-raiskauksista>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

116 Helsingin Sanomat 22 April 2018: Sipilä väläytti Ylellä rajoituksia työsuhteiden ketjutukselle – pääministerin mukaan myös työperäisen maahanmuuton tarveharkinnasta pitäisi luopua. <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005651831.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

117 <https://www.hs.fi/paakirjoitukset/art-2000005393607.html>

118 <https://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/tyoministeri-lindstrom-ei-aio-helpottaa-tyoperaista-maahanmuuttoa-lapin-pitaisi-ottaa-mallia-telakoista-ja-autoteollisuudesta-200741550/>

to this discussion was the drafting of the Government’s Migration Policy Programme, in the context of which the Government decided that the labour market test would not be dropped.¹¹⁹

The media also reported on a Government project in which the employment of migrants would be promoted by private funding. Turun Sanomat, for example, reported that the European Union is keeping a close eye on the success of the Finnish Government’s project.¹²⁰ It was also noted that the European Investment Fund invested EUR 10 million in the experiment.¹²¹

News topics related to migrants’ education and training included a proposal to drop the language proficiency requirement in vocational education and training for migrants.¹²² It was felt that this reform would make it easier for migrants to move forward. Dropping the language proficiency requirement in full was not supported, however, as immigrants with no language skills were believed to need an extremely high volume of support in their studies.¹²³

In news concerning migrants’ education and training, developing the teaching of Finnish as a second language also made headlines.¹²⁴ It was felt that teaching Finnish as a second language would improve the students’ equal opportunities regardless of their native language.¹²⁵ To a lesser extent, establishing degree programmes intended for students with a migrant background at higher education institutions was also discussed.¹²⁶

119 Helsingin Sanomat 4 January 2018: Suomi jatkaa ulkomaisen työvoiman tarveharkintaa – Lupajärjestelmää varaudutaan kuitenkin tarvittaessa muuttamaan. <https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005513134.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

120 <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3533971/Suomi+kokeilee+ensimmaisena+Euroopassa+maahanmuuttajien+nopeaa+tyollistymista+yksityisella+paaomalla>

121 Turun Sanomat 2 June 2017: Suomi kokeilee ensimmäisenä Euroopassa maahanmuuttajien nopeaa työllistymistä yksityisellä pääomalla. <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3533971/Suomi+kokeilee+ensimmaisena+Euroopassa+maahanmuuttajien+nopeaa+tyollistymista+yksityisella+paaomalla>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

122 Kaleva 15 October 2017: Maahanmuuttajat halutaan nopeammin töihin: Ammattikouluun ei pian enää vaadita kielikoetta. <http://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/maahanmuuttajat-halutaan-nopeammin-toihin-ammattikouluun-ei-pian-ena-vaadita-kielikoetta/773187/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

123 Karjalainen 28 January 2017: Maahanmuuttajien kielitaitovaatimuksen lievennys saa koulutuksen ammattilaisilta kannatusta. <https://www.karjalainen.fi/uutiset/uutis-alueet/kotimaa/item/133133-maahanmuuttajien-kielitaitovaatimuksen-lievennys-saa-koulutuksen-ammattilaisilta-kannatusta>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

124 Turun Sanomat 3 October 2017: Pakolaisten pitäisi saada oppinsa Suomesta nopeammin ja samalla tavalla. <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3676878/Pakolaisten+pitaisi+saada+oppinsa+Suomesta+nopeammin+ja+samalla+tavalla>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

125 Helsingin Sanomat 4 May 2018: Kaikille sama mahdollisuus oppimiseen Helsingissä <https://www.hs.fi/paivanlehti/04052018/art-2000005665723.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

126 Turun Sanomat 14 May 2018: Oulun yliopisto aloittaa maahanmuuttajille suunnatun valmistavan opettajakoulutuksen. <http://www.ts.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/3947700/Oulun+yliopisto+aloittaa+maahanmuuttajille+suunnatun+valmistavan+opettajakoulutuksen>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

4.5 Racism in headlines

Racism was the fourth most common topic in news coverage related to migration. In spring 2017, the media reported on racism which targeted demonstrations opposing the forced returns of asylum seekers organised around Finland. Helsingin Sanomat described an incident where an attempt was made to burn a tent belonging to demonstrating asylum seekers.¹²⁷ Aamulehti, on the other hand, reported that an asylum seeker had been sprayed with mace in a demonstration organised in Helsinki city centre.¹²⁸ A petrol bomb attack against a demonstration of asylum seekers in Oulu was also covered.¹²⁹

The media also frequently covered news about hate speech on the Internet. In April 2018, Helsingin Sanomat reported that a journalist at a local paper had been targeted by an online hate speech campaign after writing an article about an Afghan man who had assisted the victims of the terrorist attack in Turku.¹³⁰ A police officers' Facebook group, in which racist comments were rife, made headlines.¹³¹ Individual sentences for hate speech handed down by courts also received attention.¹³²

In the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Turku in September 2017, concerns over racism potentially becoming more wide-spread were expressed in the media. For example, Helsingin Sanomat published an article in which the Minister of the Interior was asked about protecting asylum seekers from enraged citizens.¹³³ Turun Sanomat and Aamulehti, on the other hand, reported that the level of preparedness at local reception centres had been

127 Helsingin Sanomat 24 March 2017: Tummiin pukeutunut pyöräilijä yritti polttaa turvapaikanhakijoiden teltan – tekoa tutkitaan tuhotyönä <http://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005139972.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

128 Aamulehti 20 March 2017: Turvapaikanhakijaa kaasutettiin Helsingissä – epäiltyä miestä ei ole tavoitettu <http://www.aamulehti.fi/kotimaa/turvapaikanhakijaa-kaasutettiin-helsingissa-epailtya-miestä-ei-ole-tavoitettu-24352670/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

129 Karjalainen 19 April 2017: Poliisi ottanut kiinni turvapaikanhakijoita kohti polttopulloja heittäneen - sanoo kuuluvansa Soldiers of Odin –järjestöön. <http://www.karjalainen.fi/uutiset/uutis-alueet/kotimaa/item/139635-poliisi-ottanut-kiinni-turvapaikanhakijoita-polttopulloilla-heittaneen-sanoo-kuuluvansa-soldiers-of-odin-jarjestoon>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

130 Helsingin Sanomat 3 April 2018: Rebekka Härkönen kirjoitti yhden jutun ja joutui pakenemaan kotikaupungistaan uhkausten vuoksi – Nyt hän kertoo, miksi nykylaki ei suojele vihapuheen uhreja tarpeeksi. <https://www.hs.fi/nyt/art-2000005627136.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

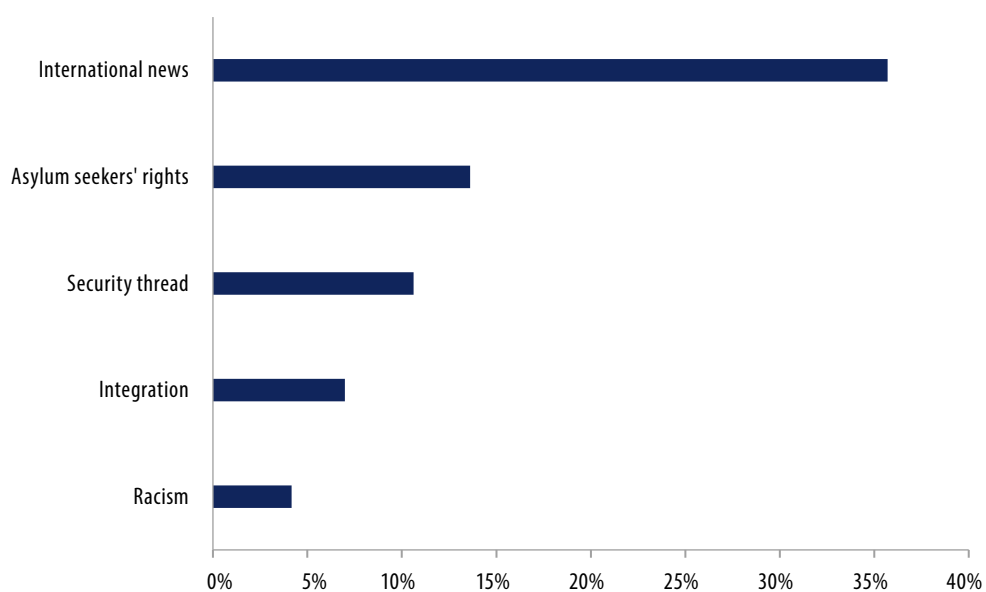
131 Helsingin Sanomat 3 June 2017: Long Play: Poliisien salaisessa Facebook-ryhmässä viljellään rasismia – poliisijohdaja Kolehmainen HS:lle: ”Toimitamme materiaalin viipymättä valtakunnansyyttäjänvirastoon”. <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005239062.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

132 Helsingin Sanomat 13 January 2017: Rasistiset Facebook-kirjoitukset toivat tuomion helsinkiläispoliitikolle – Sademiehelle sakot kiihottamisesta kansanryhmää vastaan. <http://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005043758.html>.

133 <http://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005332889.html>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

increased following the knife attack.¹³⁴ The media also noted that there were no signs of racism becoming more common.¹³⁵

Figure 3 Division of news by theme, five most common themes (%)



134 Aamulehti 21 August 2017: Tampereen vastaanottokeskus nosti valmiustasoaan Turun puukotuksen jälkeen - "Asukkaita pelottaa, miten isku vaikuttaa heidän turvallisuuteensa". <https://www.aamulehti.fi/kotimaa/tampereen-vastaanottokeskus-nosti-valmiustasoaan-turun-puukotuksen-jalkeen-asukkaita-pelottaa-miten-isku-vaikuttaa-heidan-turvallisuuteensa-200340511/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

135 Kaleva 27 August 2017: Koteihin majoitetut turvapaikanhakijat eivät ole saaneet uhkailuaaltoa. <http://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/koteihin-majoitetut-turvapaikanhakijat-eivat-ole-saaneet-uhkailuaaltoa/768912/>. (Cited 6 September 2018)

5 RECENT MIGRATION STATISTICS

5.1 Immigration and emigration

5.1.1 Immigration explains population growth in Finland

According to Statistics Finland's data¹³⁶ at the end of 2017, the population of Finland stood at 5 513 000. According to the data, population growth during the year exceeded almost 11 400 (-29 % from previous year). Net immigration accounted for the whole population growth for the year.

According to the vital statistics data¹³⁷, the number of births was lower than the number of deaths for a second year in a row. Since there was no natural population increase (births minus deaths), the population grew only as a result of international net migration, which was almost 15 000 persons.

Table 1 shows the migration movements in Finland in 2016 and 2017. A total of 31 800 people migrated to Finland in 2017, which was 9 % less than the previous year. A total of 17 000 persons emigrated from Finland to foreign countries during 2017, 6 % less than in 2016. During 2017, net immigration totalled 14 800 persons, 12 % less than in 2016.

Immigration from EU countries decreased by 6 per cent from the previous year. Immigration from other Nordic countries (Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark) rose only with 4 per cent from 2016.

Table 1. Immigration, emigration and net migration in 2016 and 2017

| | Immigration to Finland | | | Emigration from Finland | | | Net Migration | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--------|----------|-------------------------|--------|----------|---------------|--------|----------|
| | 2016 | 2017 | change % | 2016 | 2017 | change % | 2016 | 2017 | change % |
| Total | 34 905 | 31 797 | -9 % | 18 082 | 16 973 | -6 % | 16 823 | 14 824 | -12 % |
| From/to EU28 countries | 12 913 | 12 192 | -6 % | 11 806 | 11 617 | -2 % | 1 107 | 575 | -48 % |
| From/to Nordic countries | 3 718 | 3 855 | 4 % | 4 575 | 3 917 | -14 % | -857 | -62 | 93 % |

Source: Statistics Finland

¹³⁶ Official Statistics of Finland (OSF): Population structure [e-publication].

ISSN=1797-5395. 2017. Helsinki: Statistics Finland [referred: 10.10.2018]. Access method: http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2017/vaerak_2017_2018-03-29_tie_001_en.html

¹³⁷ Statistics Finland, StatFin database. http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin__vrm__muuti/?rx-id=23828e26-795a-4550-9b13-baab0eda5902

5.1.2 Iraqi, Estonian and Syrian nationals accounted for the biggest groups moving to Finland in 2017

Table 2 shows the number of top 15 foreign nationalities immigrating to Finland in 2017.

In 2017, Syrian nationals accounted for the biggest change in numbers of people moving to Finland. The number of Syrians immigrating to Finland was 242 (14 %) more than in 2016.

In 2017, there were more Iraqis (2 570) than any other nationalities immigrating to Finland. Next came Estonians (2 176) and Syrians (1 958), followed in fourth place by Russians (1 549) and Afghans (879) in fifth place.

Until 2015, the top two immigrating nationalities remained the same. For many years Russians and Estonians have constituted the biggest share of the yearly inflow of foreign population to Finland. Over the past five (5) years, the number of Estonians migrating has decreased so that in 2017 only 2 176 Estonians moved permanently to Finland. Also the number of Russians decreased significantly from previous year, almost with 1 000 persons.

The immigration of Finnish nationals was higher than any of the individual foreign nationalities, 8 062 persons in 2017.

Table 2. Immigration to Finland in 2007-2017 by nationality

| Nationality | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Iraq | 358 | 520 | 907 | 1 057 | 719 | 584 | 910 | 776 | 754 | 3 235 | 2 570 |
| Estonia | 2 896 | 3 038 | 3 176 | 3 909 | 4 704 | 6 041 | 5 856 | 4 663 | 3 355 | 2 596 | 2 176 |
| Syrian Arab Republic | 19 | 26 | 13 | 21 | 46 | 150 | 173 | 570 | 578 | 1 716 | 1 958 |
| Russian Federation | 2 488 | 2 950 | 2 336 | 2 297 | 2 795 | 3 050 | 2 875 | 2 420 | 2 086 | 2 540 | 1 549 |
| Afghanistan | 242 | 219 | 226 | 321 | 373 | 593 | 627 | 515 | 394 | 1 864 | 879 |
| India | 534 | 623 | 612 | 486 | 573 | 572 | 676 | 826 | 821 | 676 | 730 |
| China | 727 | 963 | 771 | 566 | 763 | 748 | 807 | 696 | 732 | 768 | 711 |
| Viet Nam | 262 | 317 | 300 | 272 | 360 | 379 | 402 | 506 | 679 | 942 | 616 |
| Sweden | 741 | 884 | 836 | 671 | 674 | 593 | 624 | 604 | 547 | 579 | 584 |
| Ukraine | 196 | 249 | 236 | 203 | 271 | 333 | 368 | 445 | 502 | 517 | 545 |
| Somalia | 583 | 601 | 840 | 1 041 | 745 | 445 | 724 | 633 | 654 | 693 | 517 |
| Romania | 211 | 197 | 164 | 206 | 258 | 302 | 257 | 400 | 355 | 440 | 413 |
| Philippines | 156 | 226 | 207 | 178 | 225 | 290 | 345 | 485 | 379 | 416 | 409 |
| Thailand | 569 | 562 | 628 | 599 | 625 | 589 | 602 | 552 | 576 | 511 | 390 |
| United States | 289 | 301 | 278 | 290 | 316 | 287 | 311 | 371 | 352 | 381 | 375 |
| Other foreign nationalities | 7 233 | 8 230 | 6 557 | 6 095 | 6 969 | 8 378 | 8 316 | 9 185 | 8 650 | 9 400 | 9 313 |
| Finland | 8 525 | 9 208 | 8 612 | 7 424 | 9 065 | 7 944 | 8 068 | 7 860 | 7 332 | 7 631 | 8 062 |
| Total | 26 029 | 29 114 | 26 699 | 25 636 | 29 481 | 31 278 | 31 941 | 31 507 | 28 746 | 34 905 | 31 797 |

Source: Statistics Finland

5.1.3 More Finns emigrating than returning to the country

A total of 16 973 persons emigrated from Finland in 2017 (Table 3). Of these, 40 % (6 806) were foreign citizens. Estonians have been the largest group of foreign citizens emigrating from Finland in recent years and their numbers have been growing over the past seven years. They are also a large immigrating group.

The second largest group of people emigrating from Finland were Russians, but their number was much smaller than that of Estonians; 493 persons. The next biggest groups included Indians, Germans, and Swedish.

Table 3 shows that a total of 10 167 Finnish citizens left the country in 2017. In recent years more Finns have emigrated than have returned to the country. Most Finnish emigrants headed for other EU and OECD countries.

Table 3. Emigration from Finland in 2007-2017 by nationality

| Nationality | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Estonia | 585 | 548 | 620 | 369 | 490 | 665 | 788 | 1 177 | 1 387 | 1 483 | 1 704 |
| Russian Federation | 147 | 301 | 252 | 264 | 198 | 275 | 292 | 393 | 278 | 446 | 493 |
| India | 211 | 269 | 200 | 166 | 239 | 296 | 297 | 398 | 495 | 514 | 349 |
| Germany | 142 | 221 | 221 | 184 | 193 | 160 | 194 | 193 | 195 | 232 | 329 |
| Sweden | 392 | 444 | 523 | 464 | 405 | 381 | 392 | 430 | 361 | 390 | 306 |
| China | 83 | 278 | 195 | 149 | 135 | 240 | 224 | 206 | 233 | 289 | 267 |
| United Kingdom | 110 | 217 | 160 | 122 | 113 | 165 | 139 | 168 | 154 | 202 | 192 |
| Poland | 87 | 139 | 163 | 77 | 119 | 123 | 70 | 117 | 125 | 171 | 189 |
| United States | 151 | 245 | 153 | 144 | 145 | 180 | 197 | 230 | 157 | 203 | 175 |
| France | 96 | 122 | 150 | 95 | 106 | 110 | 95 | 146 | 167 | 137 | 163 |
| Italy | 55 | 80 | 72 | 61 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 96 | 100 | 113 | 150 |
| Spain | 37 | 62 | 72 | 49 | 47 | 43 | 74 | 112 | 137 | 119 | 150 |
| Hungary | 38 | 94 | 94 | 48 | 61 | 133 | 57 | 68 | 77 | 112 | 122 |
| Japan | 59 | 130 | 99 | 58 | 77 | 75 | 74 | 115 | 52 | 99 | 90 |
| Thailand | 42 | 47 | 28 | 30 | 46 | 43 | 39 | 43 | 49 | 60 | 72 |
| Other foreign nationalities | 878 | 1 299 | 1 035 | 843 | 907 | 1 283 | 1 248 | 1 579 | 2 710 | 2 909 | 2 055 |
| Finland | 9 330 | 9 161 | 8 114 | 8 782 | 9 326 | 9 619 | 9 658 | 10 015 | 9 628 | 10 603 | 10 167 |
| Total | 12 443 | 13 657 | 12 151 | 11 905 | 12 660 | 13 845 | 13 893 | 15 486 | 16 305 | 18 082 | 16 973 |

Source: Statistics Finland

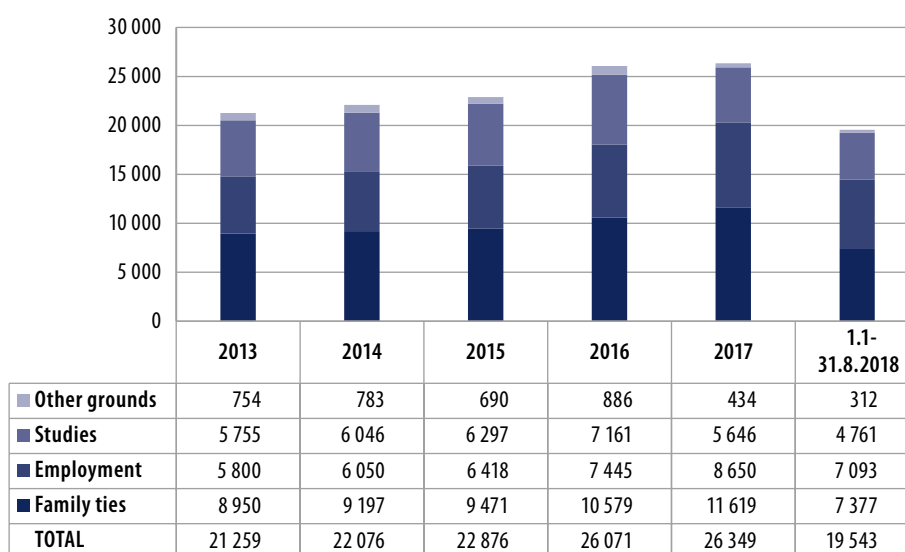
5.2 Residence permits of third-country nationals

5.2.1 Most common grounds in residence permit applications filed were family ties

According to the Finnish Immigration Service¹³⁸, a total of **26 349** persons (2016:26 066) applied for a first residence permit in 2017. Figure 4 shows that the most common grounds in the residence permit applications filed were family ties which accounted for a total of 11 619 applications, or 44% of all applications received. The second most common grounds was employment (8 650, 33%), and the third was studying (5 646, 21%).

Together 19 543 first residence permit applications were submitted by the end of August in 2018. The most common ground was family ties (7 377).

Figure 4. Applications for residence permits by application type in 2013–2018



Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

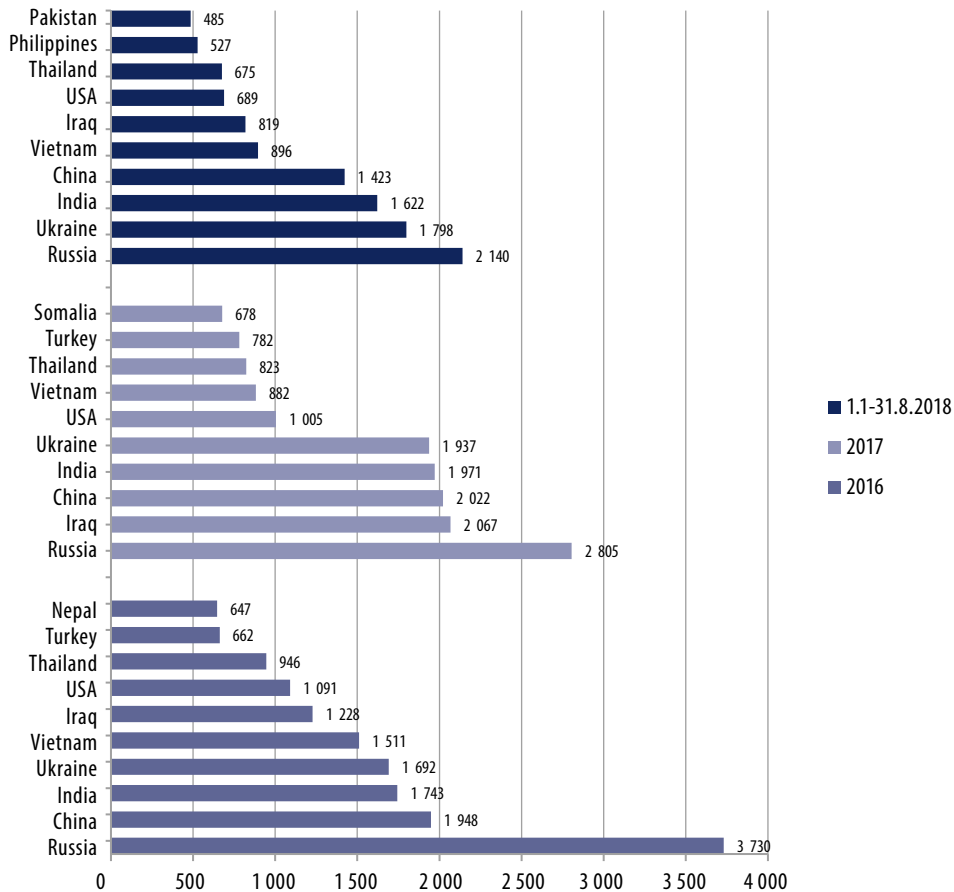
138 Finnish Immigration Service: statistics.migri.fi

5.2.2 The number of Iraqis' first residence permit applications significantly higher in 2017

In 2017, the majority of first residence permit applications were submitted by Russian (2 805), Iraqi (2 067) and Chinese (2 022) citizens (Figure 5). A year before, the top nationalities were Russian (3 730), Chinese (1 948) and Indian (1 743) citizens. The number of Iraqis' applications increased considerably compared to the previous year (68 %). Family ties were the most common grounds for Iraqis' applications (82 %).

By the end of the August in 2018, Russians have been the biggest applicant group. The number of Iraqis' applications has fallen compared to the previous year.

Figure 5 Applications for residence permits in 2017 and 2016, top 10 nationalities

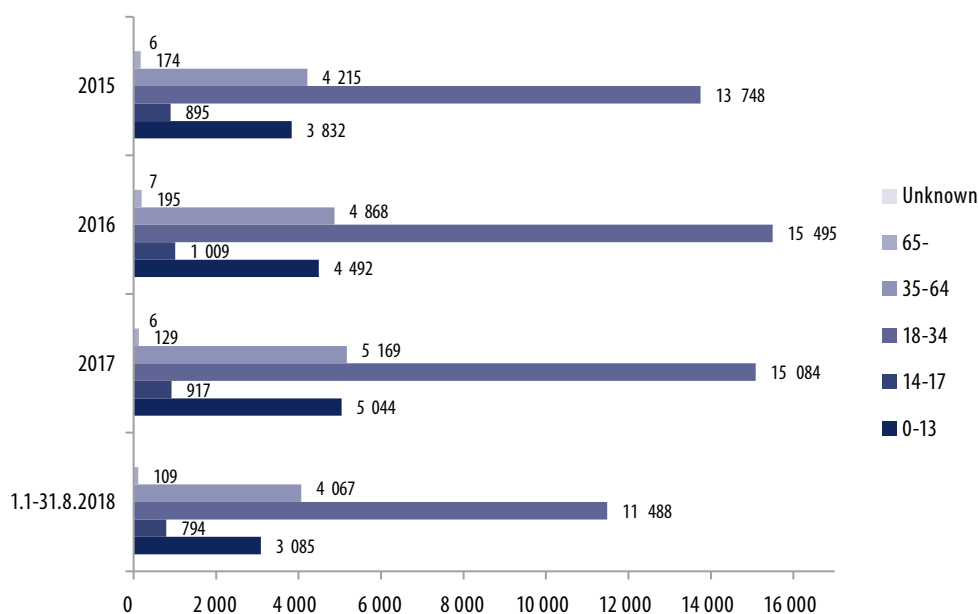


Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

5.2.3 Most of the residence permit applicants were 18-34 years old

Most of the residence permit applicants were 18-34 years old between 2017–2018. The second biggest age group was 35-64 and the third biggest 0-13. Only a very few (917) of the applicants were over 65 years old. The most common age groups were the same during the previous years.

Figure 6 Applications for residence permit 2015-2018, age groups



Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

5.2.4 The number of residence permits granted was almost the same as the previous year

The Finnish Immigration Service made altogether 25 145 decisions on first residence permit applications in 2017. The percentage of positive decisions was 85 % and a first residence permit was granted to 21 340 applicants. Most of the permits were granted on the grounds of family ties, employment or studying. The number of residence permits granted was almost the same as the previous year when a first residence permit was granted to 20 965 applicants.

Family ties accounted for 43% of all residence permits granted (9 089 people). The second largest group was those applying for a residence permit on the grounds of employment, which accounted for 32% of all residence permits granted (6 751 people), followed by residence permits approved on the grounds of studying 24% (5 194 people).

Table 4 shows the number of decisions for third-country nationals by permit type. A residence permit was approved for 85% of all applicants who received a decision in 2017. The ratio of favourable and unfavourable decisions varies by application type. For example, a student residence permit was granted to 90% of relevant applicants, while approximately 83% of relevant applicants were granted a residence permit on the basis of family ties.

Table 4. Decisions on applications for first residence permits in 2017

| Grounds for the application | positive | negative | TOTAL | Positive (%) |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|--------|--------------|
| Family ties | 9 089 | 1 883 | 10 972 | 83% |
| Employment | 6 751 | 1 140 | 7 891 | 85% |
| Studies | 5 194 | 573 | 5 767 | 90% |
| Other grounds | 306 | 209 | 515 | 59% |
| TOTAL | 21 340 | 3 805 | 25 145 | 85% |

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

Most decisions were made on Russians' applications (2 732). 88% of them were granted a first residence permit. This was followed by decisions (2 009) on applications submitted by Chinese citizens who received a positive decision in 94% of cases. The third biggest group was Indian citizens (1 934). Most of them (98%) were granted a first residence permit. Iraqis, whose number of applications increased considerably during 2017, received a positive decision in 73% of the cases.

By the end of August in 2018, 17 839 decisions on first residence permit applications were made and 83,5 % of the decisions were positive. Most of the residence permits were granted on the grounds of family ties (5 863). Employment was the second (5 062) and studying (3 782) the third most common grounds for a first residence permit.

5.2.5 Work was the main ground for a first residence permit among Indians and Ukrainians

In 2017, the order of the top five nationalities who received the most positive decisions was the same as the previous year (Table 5). Family ties were the most common ground for Russians and Iraqis to receive a first residence permit. First residence permits granted to Chinese were based mostly on studies. Work was the main ground for first residence permits among Indians and Ukrainians.

Table 5. Decision on first residence permit applications, top 5 nationalities by total number of positive decisions in 2017

| Country | Ground for the first residence permit | | | | Positive decisions total |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|---------|--------|--------------------------|
| | Family ties* | Work | Studies | Others | |
| Russian Federation | 1 012 | 699 | 665 | 40 | 2 416 |
| China | 402 | 489 | 975 | 25 | 1 891 |
| India | 698 | 1 040 | 141 | 6 | 1 885 |
| Ukraine | 273 | 1 414 | 60 | 5 | 1 752 |
| Iraq | 1 107 | 95 | 15 | 6 | 1 223 |
| Others | 5 597 | 3 014 | 3 338 | 224 | 12 285 |
| Total | 9 089 | 6 751 | 5 194 | 306 | 21 340 |

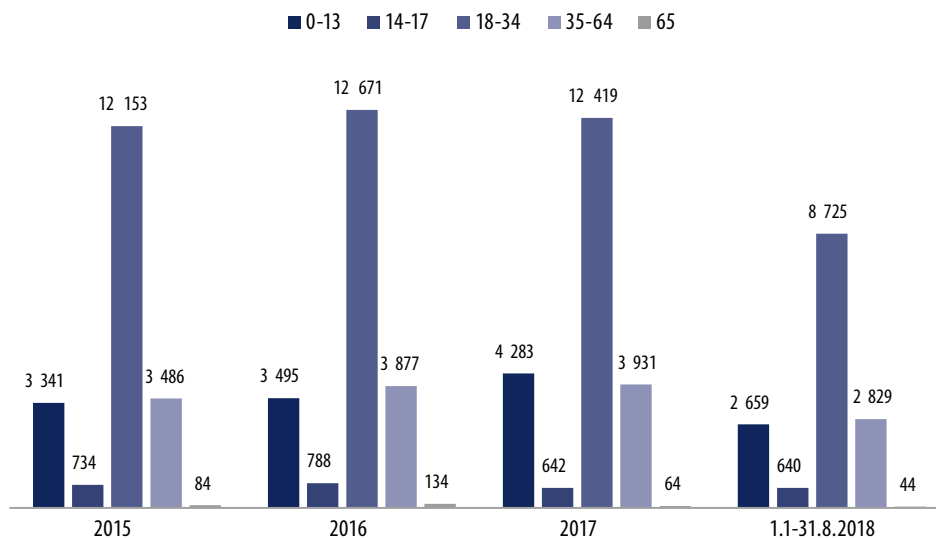
Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

During 2018, the top 5 nationalities have been the same as the last year. By the end of August 2018, most first residence permits have been granted to Russian citizens (1 731). Ukraine (1 528) has gone ahead of India (1 448) and China (1 205) among the top five nationalities. Iraq (731) has kept its fifth place. The most common grounds to receive residence permits have been the same as the previous year: most of the first residence permits granted to Russians (681) and Iraqis (643) were based on family ties. Employment was the most common ground to receive a first residence permit for Ukrainians (1 302) and Indians (743) and studies for Chinese (636).

5.2.6 Only a very few received a first residence permit after the age of 65

During the reporting period, most of the applicants who were granted a first residence permit were 18-34 years old. In 2017, the second most common age to receive a first residence permit was at the age of 0-13. By the end of August 2018, applicants who have received a first residence permit between the age of 35-64 have been the second biggest group. During the last few years, only a very few received a first residence permit after the age of 65.

Figure 7 Positive decisions for first residence permits in 2017, age groups



Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

5.3 Labour migration

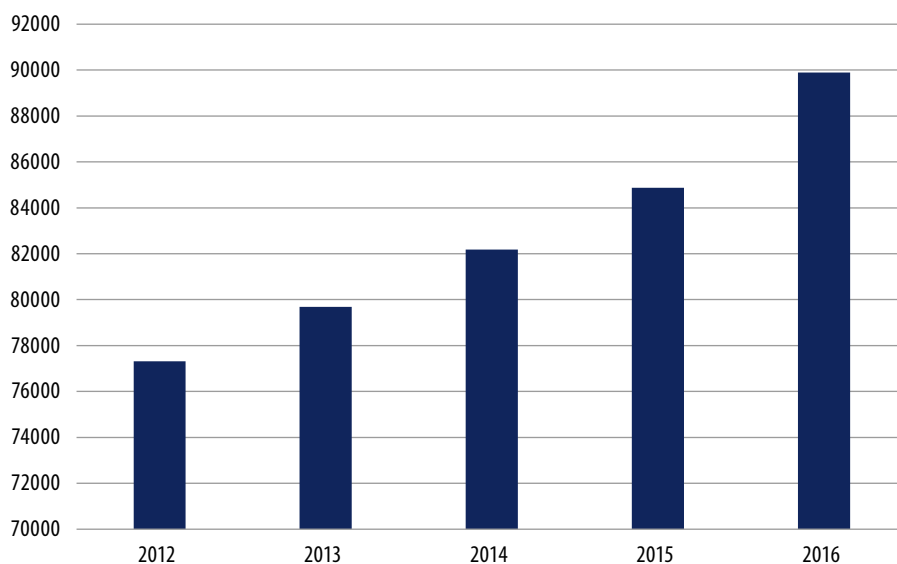
The Finnish labour migration concept is demand-driven, with employers determining and deciding whether there is a need for foreign workers. The role of the state is to ensure efficient and flexible residence permit procedures. A labour market test is applied to blue-collar jobs.

According to estimates there were 140 000 foreigners working in Finland in 2017. Of these, about 90 000 are living and working in Finland permanently and 50 000 are temporary foreign workers. The top nationalities of foreign labour force living permanently in Finland were Estonia, Russia, Sweden, China, Thailand and Germany. Temporary EU workers were mainly from Estonia and other EU countries close to Finland. Most of these workers were in the construction sector. Exact figures are not available because all foreign workers are not registered into the Finnish Population Information System which contains basic information about Finnish citizens and foreign citizens residing permanently in Finland. Foreigners are required by law to register in the Population Information System if they reside in Finland for over a year.

Finland does not apply quotas or a points-based system to labour migration. Instead, Finland applies the determination of the availability of labour on the market when issuing a workers' residence permit. This permit category is applied to blue-collar jobs. For employment in vacancies where higher skills are needed only salary threshold and high school education is applied. Also, some specific tasks are exempted from the labour market test, i.e. athletes, artists, seamen and company executives.

According to the Statistics Finland, the number of workers who have foreign citizenship has increased steadily over the previous years (Figure 8).

Figure 8 The number of workers who have foreign citizenship in 2012-2016



Source: The Statistics Finland

5.3.1 Labour migration from outside the EU/EEA increased

Labour migration from third countries can be followed by the number of residence permits. In 2017, altogether 16 682 residence permit applications were submitted on the ground of employment. The figure includes both first applications and extensions. The number of the residence permit applications for work increased clearly from the previous year when the corresponding figure was 14 798.

The number of residence permit applications without a labour market test increased in 2017 when altogether 2 502 specialists, 1 993 researchers, 431 professional athletes and coaches applied for a residence permit. The corresponding figures for 2016 were 1 995 specialists, 1 761 researchers, and 462 professional athletes and coaches. Most of the foreign specialists came from India and to the IT sector.

In 2017, altogether 15 509 first and extended residence permit applications for work were handled by the Finnish Immigration Service. 90 % of decisions (13 982) were positive. 5 963 of these were accepted after a labour market test. The largest nationalities whose residence permit required a labour market test were Ukrainians, Russians and Vietnamese.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

(sectors, inter alia, gardening, chefs and other kitchen personnel, services, agricultural workers, cleaning personnel).¹⁴⁰

According to the Government Programme and the Migration Strategy 2020, the residence permit system will be developed to promote labour migration and to reflect Finland's attractiveness as country of destination for skilled labour. The Government approved a new migration policy programme on 4 January 2018. The purpose of the programme is to promote particularly labour migration.¹⁴¹

5.3.2 Many seasonal workers arrive annually to pick berries

From the 1st of January 2017 Finland implemented the EU directive (2014/36/EU) for seasonal work. Now there is a three-phase permit system for seasonal workers. If the working period is up to three (3) months no residence permit is required for seasonal work. As earlier, each year roughly 14 000 berry pickers from countries with visa requirements arrive in Finland. Of these, about 9 000 worked at berry farms and the rest have picked wild berries under the so-called everyman's right. Most berry pickers in the farms come from Ukraine, and most wild berry pickers come from Thailand. They come with a tourist visa, which is a "seasonal work visa". If the working period is between three and six (6) months, a residence permit is required but without a labour market test. The number of seasonal workers in this category is estimated to be 600-800 persons. If the seasonal work is between six (6) and nine (9) months, a residence permit with a labour market test is needed. The number of seasonal workers in this category is estimated to be 200-300 persons.

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy has appointed the TE Office for North Ostrobothnia to be in charge of the provision of general advisory, guidance and information services to foreign berry pickers in cooperation with various government authorities. An email service responding to the queries of clients has been initiated for the advisory service.¹⁴²

140 Source: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland

141 Ibid

142 Ibid

5.3.3 Eures regulation

Finland's Public Employment Services is part of the European employment services (Eures) network, coordinated by the European Commission. Finland concentrates in Eures on ensuring that Finnish enterprises and employers get enough skilled labour and, on the other hand, on improving job opportunities for Finnish jobseekers in Europe.

On the basis of the new Eures regulation, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy started in 2017 to draft new legislation for opening the national Eures network to private actors. As in the Eures regulation, the overall goal is to boost the use of the Eures network and workers' mobility in the EU and EEA area. The new legislation is intended to come into force 13 May 2018.

The project "Labour Mobility in Europe" financed by European Social Fund continued to develop new measures for facilitating labour mobility. New services targeted to companies will include training in the country of origin; workplace language training in Finnish and/or Swedish; diversity training at the workplace and professional skills tests. These services have been put out to tender centrally. The project follows the usage and usability of these services in order to develop these products.

The project tests other activities or services related to recruitment (either before, during or after the recruitment). The project has special development themes that include the development of cooperation with HR companies; development of youth services; activities related to the settling-in of foreign workers and anticipation (demand surveys).¹⁴³

5.4 Foreign students

5.4.1 Fewer non-EU/EEA-citizens applied for residence for studies

In 2017, there were over 20 300 foreign students studying for a degree in Finnish higher education institutions. This figure accounts for 7% of all students taking a degree in Finland. Of international students, 4 728 were new, first-year students. The proportion of foreign students studying for the attainment of a degree has remained stable over the past few years. Around 77% of the foreign students came from outside the EU/ETA area. In 2017, the students most frequently came from Russia, Vietnam, China and Nepal.

143 Source: The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland

Table 6. Foreign degree students in Finnish institutes of higher education in 2017, top 10 nationalities

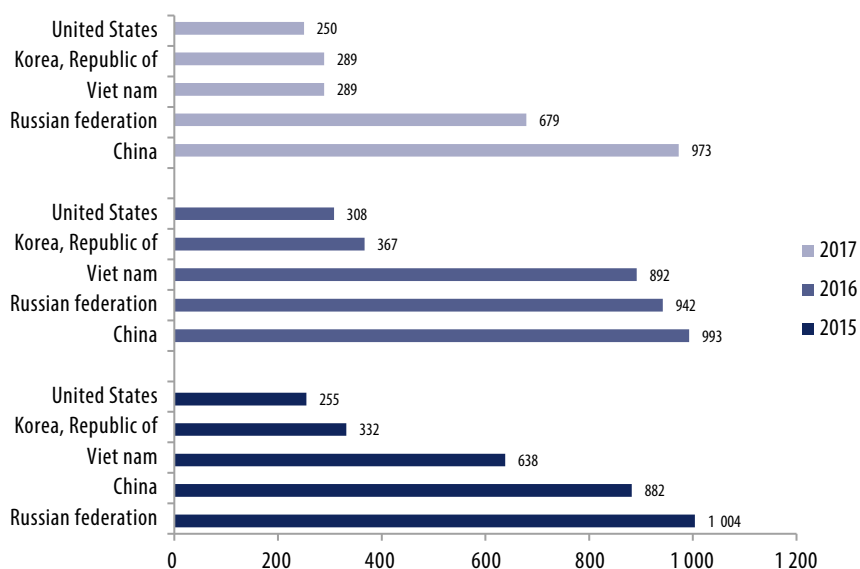
| Students in Finland | University of Applied Sciences | University | Total |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------|--------|
| Russia | 1 714 | 846 | 2 560 |
| Vietnam | 1 831 | 616 | 2 447 |
| China | 526 | 1 083 | 1 609 |
| Nepal | 801 | 309 | 1 110 |
| India | 104 | 666 | 770 |
| Estonia | 426 | 265 | 691 |
| Pakistan | 136 | 542 | 678 |
| Bangladesh | 193 | 424 | 617 |
| Germany | 244 | 373 | 617 |
| Iran | 73 | 491 | 564 |
| Other | 3 553 | 5 146 | 8 699 |
| Total | 9 601 | 10 761 | 20 362 |

Source: Statistics Finland

A foreign student who is a non-EU/EEA-citizen requires a residence permit if the period of study in Finland is longer than three months. According to the Finnish Immigration Service, a total of 5 646 foreign students from outside the EU/EAA applied for first residence permits in 2017. The number of applications decreased considerably from the previous year when the corresponding figure was 7 161.

In autumn 2017, higher education institutions introduced for the first time tuition fees for students coming from outside the EU countries. This may impact both the number of foreign students and the distribution of their country of origin.

In 2017, the most common nationalities who applied for a first residence permit for studies were Chinese (973), Russians (679) Vietnamese (289) and Koreans (289). The Chinese and Russians have been the top two nationalities for several years. However, the number of Russians' applications for studies has slightly decreased during the last three years (Figure 9).

Figure 9 The number of resident permit applications based on studies 2015-2017, top 5 nationalities

Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

By the end of the August in 2018, altogether 4 761 first residence permit applications were left for studies. The total number of residence permit applications for studies will probably be almost the same as the previous year. In 2018, the five top nationalities have been the same as the last year: The number of the Chinese applicants has been the highest (656). The second biggest group has been Russians (589) followed by Vietnamese (397). The biggest change compared to the previous year has been that South Koreans and Americans have been dropped out the top five most common nationalities. They have been replaced by applicants from Bangladesh (274) and Japan (225).

The Finnish Immigration Service treats all residence permit applications for studies as urgent and processes and decides upon them accordingly. In 2017 the average processing period was 30 days.

EU citizens who come to Finland to study for more than three (3) months are required to register their stay in Finland. In 2017, 801 EU citizens submitted registration applications based on studies. The number of registration applications decreased slightly compared to the previous year when 922 EU citizens applied for registration based on studies. In 2017 the main nationalities applying for registration were German (164), Italian (108) and French (89) students.

By the end of August 2018, altogether 740 EU citizens had applied for registration on their right of residence. The main nationalities were the same as the previous year.

5.4.2 The highest number of first residence permits for studies were granted to Chinese nationals

In 2017, altogether 5 767 decisions were made on residence permit applications submitted by foreign students outside the EU/ETA area. 90% (5 194) of the decisions were positive and 10 % (573) negative. As table 7 shows, the highest number of residence permits for studies were granted to Chinese nationals. The top three nationalities were the same as the year before.

Table 7. Decisions on first residence permit applications submitted by students outside the EU/ETA area, top 5 nationalities in 2017 by positive decisions

| | Positive | Negative | TOTAL |
|--------------------|----------|----------|-------|
| China | 975 | 8 | 983 |
| Russian Federation | 665 | 25 | 690 |
| Vietnam | 339 | 4 | 343 |
| Korea, Republic of | 297 | 0 | 297 |
| United States | 234 | 6 | 240 |
| Others | 2 684 | 530 | 3 214 |
| Total | 5 194 | 573 | 5 767 |

Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

Altogether 794 decisions were made on registration applications submitted by EU-citizens for studies. Almost all of these decisions were positive (98.4%). The top three nationalities among the students whose registration application was accepted were German (157), Italian (108) and French (84). The total number of decisions was a little bit lower than the previous year when altogether of 930 decisions were made.

By the end of August 2018, altogether 4 110 decisions have been made on the residence permit applications submitted by foreign students outside the EU/ETA area. 92% (3 782) of the decisions were positive and 8 % (328) negative. Most first residence permits based on studies were granted to Chinese (636). Russians (542) and Vietnamese (390) were the two second biggest groups. The fourth biggest group has been Japanese (220), followed by American (174) students. The number of residence permits based on studies granted to South Koreans has dropped and they weren't among the top 5 nationalities anymore.

The number of decisions on registration applications submitted by EU-citizens for studies were 682. The top three nationalities among the students whose registration applications were accepted have been the same as the previous year, 2017.

5.5 Free movement from EU countries

EU citizens (also citizens of Liechtenstein and Switzerland) and the Nordic countries' citizens do not require a residence permit for Finland and can freely reside and work in Finland for up to three months. If they stay longer, they have to register their right of residence before the end of the three-month period. Prior to 2016, the Police were responsible for registration, but the centralisation of permit matters has resulted in the Finnish Immigration Service currently being responsible for the registration of EU citizens.

According to Statistics Finland's preliminary data 7 867 people moved to Finland from other EU countries in 2017.

5.5.1 The number of Estonians' EU-registration applications decreased

The number registration applications from EU-citizens decreased in 2017, when altogether 8 357 applications were submitted. The number of applications was 1 741 fewer compared to the previous year. As table 8 shows, the highest number of applicants were Estonian nationals (2 427) followed by Germans (571) and Romanians (536). Especially the number of Estonians' applications decreased in 2017.

By the end of the August in 2018, altogether 6 534 registration applications were left. The top 10 nationalities have been the same as the last year, although the sequence of the most common nationalities has changed.

Table 8. Registration applications of EU citizens' right of residence, top 10 nationalities in 2016–August 2018

| Year 2016 | | Year 2017 | | 1.1–31.8.2018 | |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| Country | Applications | Country | Applications | Country | Applications |
| Estonia | 3 410 | Estonia | 2 427 | Estonia | 1 591 |
| Poland | 771 | Germany | 571 | Romania | 472 |
| Germany | 662 | Romania | 536 | United Kingdom | 440 |
| Romania | 550 | Poland | 494 | Germany | 417 |
| France | 475 | United Kingdom | 447 | France | 393 |
| United Kingdom | 453 | France | 427 | Poland | 344 |
| Italy | 409 | Italy | 391 | Latvia | 321 |
| Spain | 363 | Spain | 391 | Spain | 320 |
| Greece | 300 | Latvia | 280 | Italy | 282 |
| Latvia | 287 | Bulgaria | 262 | Bulgaria | 243 |
| Others | 2 418 | Others | 2 131 | Others | 1 711 |
| Total | 10 098 | TOTAL | 8 357 | TOTAL | 6 534 |

Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

5.5.2 The most were registered Estonians' EU citizens' right of residence

In 2017, the Finnish Immigration Service made a decision in respect of registrations of 8 243 EU citizens. Almost all, 7 800 (95%), of these decisions were positive and the remaining 443 (5%) were negative. Of the positive decisions on EU citizen registrations, employment was the ground in 51% of decisions, family ties and a family member's residence card in 30%, studies in 10 % and other things in 9%. Most of registration applications accepted by the Finnish Immigration Service were submitted by Estonians. Among them, work was the most common ground for the registration (Table 9).

Table 9. Registrations of EU citizens' right of residence, top 5 nationalities by total number of positive decisions in 2017

| Country | Grounds for the registration | | | | Positive decisions total |
|----------------|------------------------------|-------|---------|--------|--------------------------|
| | Family ties* | Work | Studies | Others | |
| Estonia | 705 | 1 332 | 23 | 151 | 2 211 |
| Germany | 78 | 234 | 157 | 80 | 549 |
| Romania | 108 | 338 | 20 | 32 | 498 |
| Poland | 107 | 310 | 24 | 33 | 474 |
| United Kingdom | 95 | 168 | 50 | 84 | 397 |
| Others | 1 209 | 1 619 | 507 | 336 | 3 671 |
| Total | 2 302 | 4 001 | 781 | 716 | 7 800 |

* Incl. Registration of the family members residence card

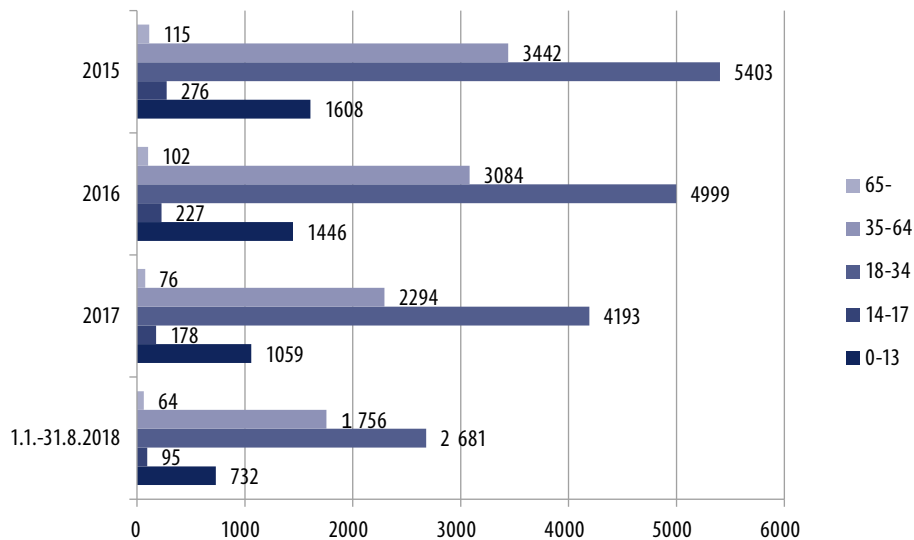
Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

Altogether 6 143 applications for registrations of EU citizens right of residence have been left by the end of August 2018. Most have been accepted the registration applications left by Estonian citizens (1 307). The second common nationality have been citizens of United Kingdom (393), followed by Romanians (378) and France (296). Germans (288) have been the fifth most common nationality. Poland has not been among the top 5 nationalities anymore in 2018.

5.5.3 The sequence of the age groups has been the same over the previous years

In 2017, most of the people (4 193) who received a positive decision on their registration application were at the age of 18-34. The second biggest group (2 294) was EU-citizens who were between 35 and 64 years of age. The age group 0-13 was the third largest (1 059). As figure 10 shows, the sequence of the age groups have been the same over the previous years. There has been a slight decrease in the number of EU-citizens who registered their right of residence over the age of 65 during that period. The number of EU-citizens who got a positive decision on their registration application at the age of 0-13 has also decreased.

Figure 10 Registrations of EU citizens' right of residence between 2017–August 2018, age groups



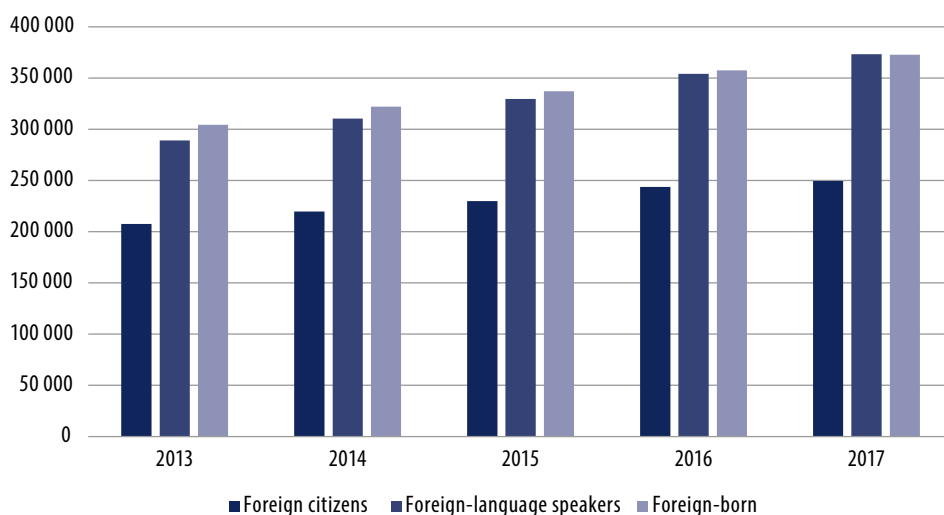
Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

5.6 Population with foreign background in Finland

5.6.1 The immigrant population increased steadily in between 2013–2017

Statistics Finland publishes annual statistics on the population living in Finland based on citizenship, country of birth, language and origin. In the following, the statistics of the immigrant population in Finland are presented by country of birth, citizenship and language. As Figure 11 shows, the size of the target group varies based on which of these background variables are included in the examination. It is also worth noting that the different groups partly overlap, such as, foreign citizens and people born abroad. Figure 11 illustrates a steady increase in the immigrant population between 2013–2017.

Figure 11 Foreign citizens, foreign-language speakers and foreign-born people in Finland 2013–2017



Source: Statistics Finland

In 2017, the number of the foreign-born population in Finland was 372 802, an increase of 15 261 (4%) from the previous year. The foreign-born population constituted 7% of the total population in 2017. Between 2013 and 2017 there was an increase of 23% in the number of foreign-born people. (Figure 11).

5.6.2 Gender distribution greatly varied based on the country of birth

The gender distribution of the foreign-born population in 2017 was fairly even: females accounted for 48% and males 52%. However, the gender distribution varied greatly based on the country of birth. For example, 79% of the people born in Thailand and living in Finland in 2017 were female. By contrast, 36% of the people born in Iraq and living in Finland in 2017 were women. (Table 10).

In 2017, 5% of the foreign-born population was over 65 years of age. This is a significantly smaller proportion than in the whole population, which is 21%. The share of people over 65 years of age varied between the top ten countries of the foreign-born population. For instance, 15% of the people born in the Former Soviet Union were over 65 years in 2017, while among people born in Thailand or China only 1% were over 65 years. 55% of the foreign-born population over 65 years were women in 2017.

Table 10. Foreign-born population by country of birth in 2013–2017, top 10 countries

| | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | Women in 2017, % (N) | 65 years and over in 2017, % (N) |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Former Soviet Union | 53 740 | 54 742 | 55 552 | 56 476 | 56 696 | 62% (35 319) | 15% (8 421) |
| Estonia | 39 488 | 42 652 | 44 481 | 45 659 | 46 022 | 50% (23 009) | 3% (1 276) |
| Sweden | 31 777 | 31 894 | 31 994 | 32 147 | 32 424 | 48% (15 485) | 6% (1 789) |
| Iraq | 9 275 | 10 001 | 10 723 | 13 825 | 16 254 | 36% (5 835) | 2% (345) |
| Russia | 11 058 | 12 005 | 12 766 | 13 668 | 14 227 | 55% (7 860) | 3% (412) |
| Somalia | 9 618 | 10 054 | 10 570 | 11 102 | 11 437 | 48% (5 466) | 3% (297) |
| China | 8 894 | 9 433 | 9 956 | 10 447 | 10 862 | 58% (6 288) | 1% (133) |
| Thailand | 8 699 | 9 240 | 9 742 | 10 184 | 10 517 | 79% (8 286) | 1% (69) |
| Country unknown | 6 467 | 7 121 | 7 942 | 8 554 | 9 084 | 44% (3 953) | 9% (819) |
| Vietnam | 5 531 | 5 984 | 6 603 | 7 468 | 8 012 | 55% (4 431) | 4% (288) |
| Others | 119 732 | 128 851 | 136 833 | 148 011 | 157 267 | 41% (64 853) | 4% (6 369) |
| Total | 304 279 | 321 977 | 337 162 | 357 541 | 372 802 | 48% (180 785) | 5% (20 218) |

Source: Statistics Finland

5.6.3 Number of foreign language speakers has grown

Just as the number of foreign-born population and foreign citizens has grown, the number of foreign language speakers has also increased (Table 11). Foreign language speakers are considered as persons whose first language is other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami, which are the national languages in Finland. At the end of 2017, there were 373 325 foreign language speakers living in Finland, which corresponds to 7% of the entire population. There was an increase of 5% compared to the previous year. Russian, Estonian and Arabic were the most common foreign languages in 2017.

Table 11. Foreign-language population by language 2013–2017, top 10 countries

| | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | Women in 2017, % (N) | 65 years and over in 2017, % (N) |
|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Russian | 66 379 | 69 614 | 72 436 | 75 444 | 77 177 | 59 % (45 368) | 8 % (5 871) |
| Estonian | 42 936 | 46 195 | 48 087 | 49 241 | 49 590 | 51 % (25 056) | 3 % (1 729) |
| Arabic | 13 170 | 14 825 | 16 713 | 21 783 | 26 467 | 39 % (10 230) | 2 % (461) |
| Somali | 15 789 | 16 721 | 17 871 | 19 059 | 20 007 | 48 % (9 634) | 2 % (303) |
| English | 15 570 | 16 732 | 17 784 | 18 758 | 19 626 | 35 % (6 908) | 6 % (1 080) |
| Kurdish | 10 075 | 10 731 | 11 271 | 12 226 | 13 327 | 39 % (5 243) | 1 % (178) |
| Persian | 7 281 | 8 103 | 8 745 | 10 882 | 12 090 | 43 % (5 156) | 3 % (318) |
| Chinese | 9 496 | 10 110 | 10 722 | 11 334 | 11 825 | 55 % (6 489) | 2 % (181) |
| Albanian | 8 214 | 8 754 | 9 233 | 9 791 | 10 391 | 44 % (4 623) | 1 % (149) |
| Vietnamese | 6 991 | 7 532 | 8 273 | 9 248 | 9 872 | 54 % (5 351) | 3 % (257) |
| Others | 93 167 | 100 989 | 108 427 | 116 227 | 122 953 | 46 % (56 634) | 3 % (4 213) |
| Total | 289 068 | 310 306 | 329 562 | 353 993 | 373 325 | 48 % (180 692) | 4 % (14 740) |

Source: Statistics Finland

5.7 Finnish citizenship

5.7.1 The number of citizens who have dual citizenship increased significantly in 2017

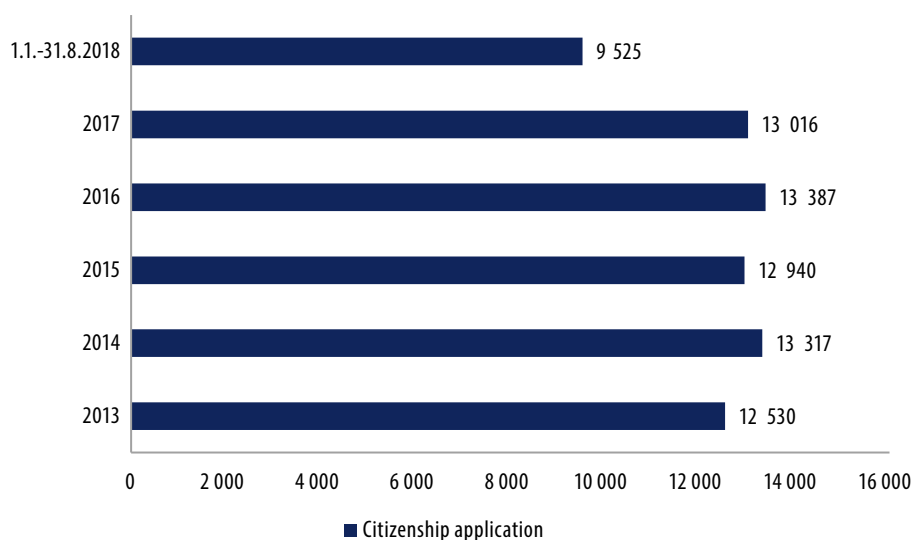
A person can automatically acquire Finnish citizenship on the basis of birth, marriage of parents, adoption, or place of birth. In addition, Finnish citizenship can be acquired by application or by declaration to the authorities. Finnish citizenship is covered by the Nationality Act (359/2003). The rights and obligations of Finnish citizens are laid out in the Finnish Constitution and other legislation.

Finnish legislation accepts dual or multiple nationality. According to Statistics Finland, a total of 117,000 persons with dual citizenship were living permanently in Finland in 2017. The number of citizens who have dual citizenship has increased by 12 000 people since 2016. A Finnish national who acquires a foreign nationality will not lose his Finnish nationality, nor will foreigners who acquire Finnish nationality be obliged to renounce their current nationality. It should be noted, however, that the nationality legislation of the country in question does not necessarily accept multiple nationality.

According to the Finnish Immigration Services, a total of 13 016 persons applied for Finnish citizenship in 2017. The number of citizenship applications decreased slightly since the previous year when altogether 13 387 people applied for Finnish citizenship. The top 10 nationalities were the same as the previous year.

Altogether 9 525 applications for Finnish citizenship was left by the end of August 2018 (Figure 12).

Figure 12 The number of citizenship applications between 2013–August 2018



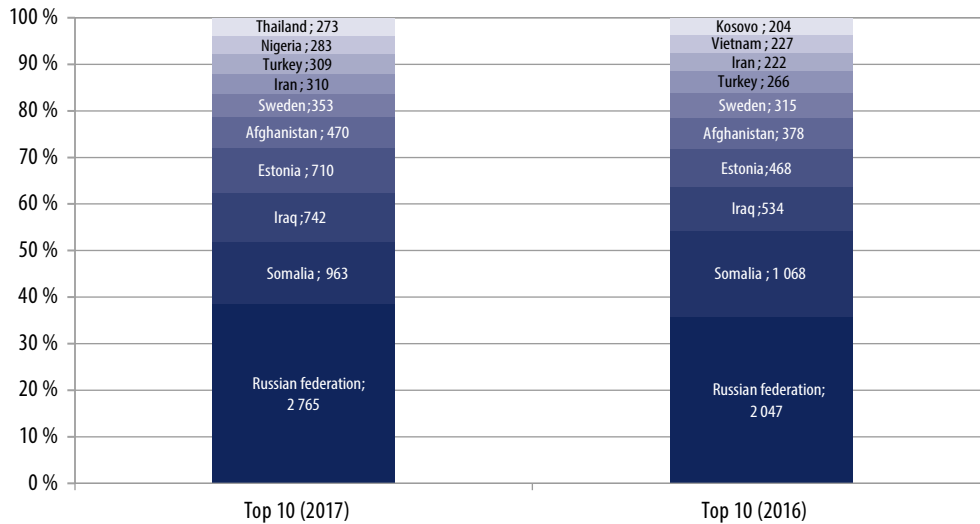
Source: Finnish Immigration Service

5.7.2 Growing number of Russians were granted Finnish citizenship

85 % of the decisions on citizenship applications were positive and 15 % negative in 2017. Finnish citizenship was granted to altogether to 12 600 applicants. The number of negative citizenship decisions was 2 249. Altogether 2 956 more citizenships were granted in 2017 than the year before when 9 644 applicants received a positive decision on their citizenship application.

Most Finnish citizenships were granted to Russian citizens (2 765). Somali citizens were the second largest group of recipients (963) and Iraqis (742) the third largest group. Vietnam and Kosovo were replaced by Nigeria and Thailand in the top 10 nationalities in 2017. In addition, Iran which was the 7th common nationality went ahead of Turkey. Otherwise, the sequence of the top 10 nationalities was the same as the previous year. Especially the number citizenships granted to Russians increased. As the Figure 13 shows, the citizenships granted to Russians accounted for almost 39% of all the citizenships granted in 2017.

Figure 13 Persons who were granted Finnish citizenship in 2016 and 2017, top 10 by former citizenship



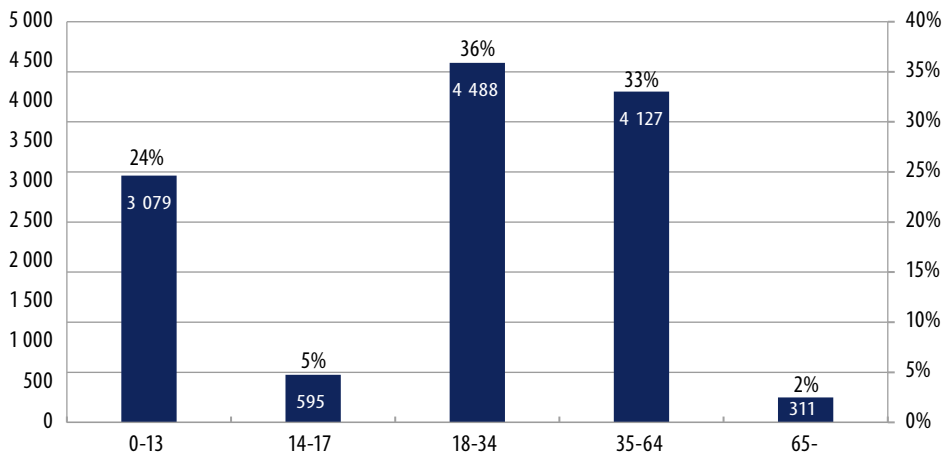
Source: Finnish Immigration Service

By the end of August in 2018, Finnish citizenship has been granted to altogether 6 649 applicants. The most common nationalities have been almost the same as the previous year. Russian citizens have remained the largest group (1 189). Citizens of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (144) were the 7th biggest group and they excluded citizens of Nigeria from the top 10 nationalities.

5.7.3 Average age to receive Finnish citizenship was 18-34

In 2017, the average age of persons receiving Finnish citizenship was 18-34 years. Of all the persons who received Finnish citizenship, 65% were under 34 years old. Only 2% (311) were older than 65 (Figure 14). In 2018, the largest age groups have been the same as the previous year.

Figure 14 Naturalised foreigners by age structure in 2017



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

5.8 International protection

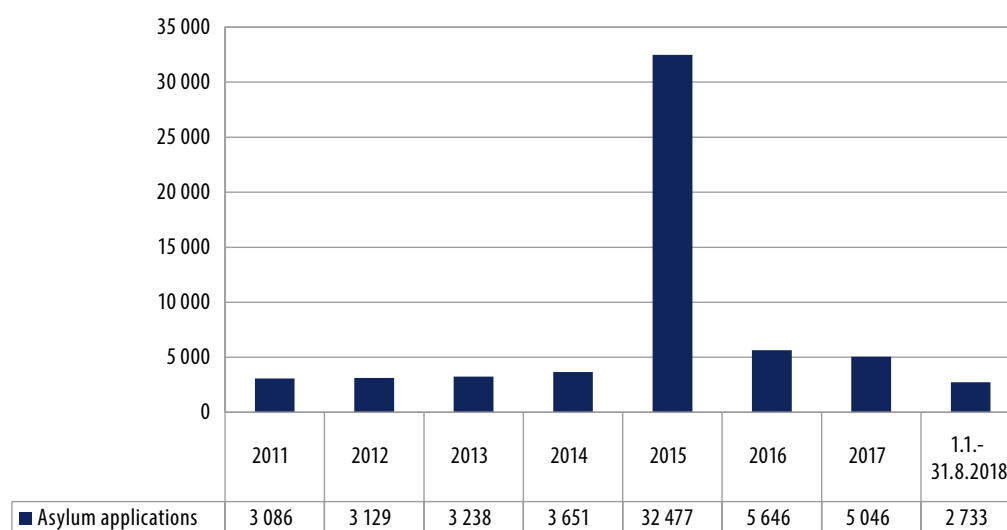
In Finland, international protection is granted to those in need, in accordance with the obligations laid down in international human rights conventions, EU-legislation and national legislation.

5.8.1 The number of subsequent applications for asylum increased considerably

A total of 5 046 individuals sought asylum in Finland in 2017. The number of asylum applications was a little bit lower than the previous year (5 646). However, it should be noted that the number of subsequent applications for asylum increased considerably from the previous year: In 2017, 1 845 subsequent applications for asylum were left which was 36,5 % of the total number of asylum applications. A year before, the corresponding figure was 14,8 %.

The number of asylum seekers has remained low during 2018. Between January and the end of August 2018, a total of 2 733 people sought asylum in Finland. (Figure 15). The number of subsequent applications for asylum continued to increase: 47 % of the applications were subsequent applications for asylum.

Figure 15 The number of asylum applicants in Finland, 2011–August 2018



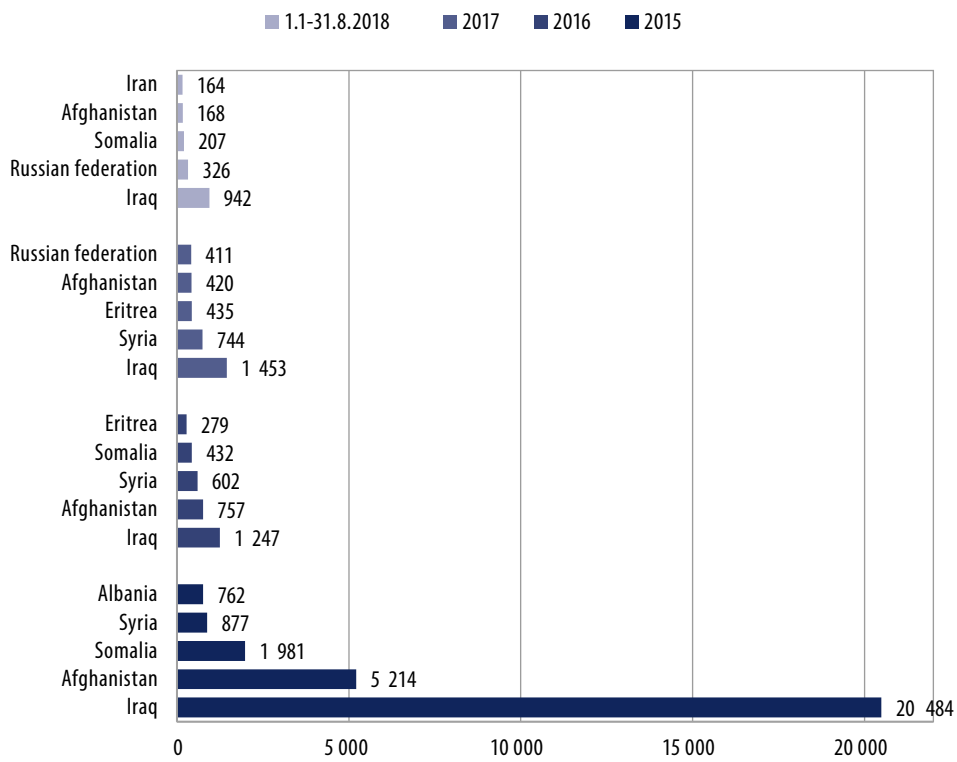
Source: Finnish Immigration Service

In 2017, most of the asylum seekers came from Iraq (1 453). The number of Syrian asylum seekers was also high (744). The third biggest group was Eritrean asylum seekers (435). Compared to the previous year, the number of Iraqi asylum seekers increased the most

(206) among the top 5 most common nationalities. Among them, the biggest drop (333) was seen in the group of Afghan asylum seekers. The number of Russian asylum seeker increased by 218 from the previous year and they replaced Somalians in the top 5 nationalities. As Figure 16 shows, especially the number of asylum seekers from Iraq has fallen after peaking in 2015.

In 2018, Somalia has climbed back into the top 5 nationalities.

Figure 16 Five biggest groups of asylum seekers in 2014–August 2018, by country of origin

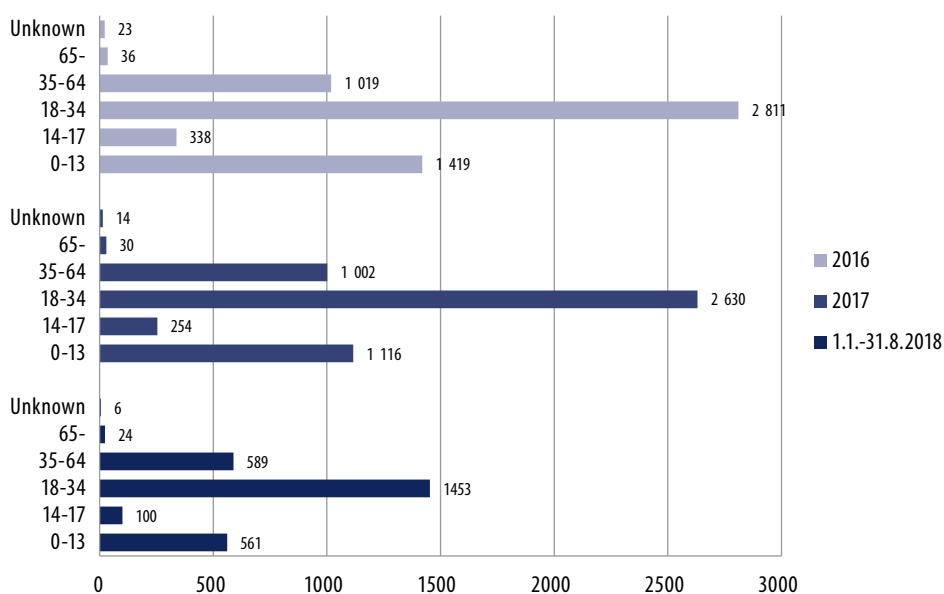


Source: Finnish Immigration Service

5.8.2 Most of the asylum seekers were 18-34 years of age

Most of the asylum seekers were between 18 and 34 years of age in 2017. The second biggest age group was between 0 and 13 years of age and the third biggest between 35 and 64 years of age. The fourth common age to apply asylum was between 14 and 17 years of age. Only very few asylum seeker was over 65 years old. In 2018, the asylum seekers between 0 and 13 years of age has been the third biggest age group. Otherwise, the order of the biggest age groups have been the same between 2016–2018 (Figure 17).

Figure 17 Asylum seekers by age structure 2016–August 2018



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

5.8.3 Fewer decisions on asylum applications - appeals and subsequent applications prolonged the asylum process

In 2017, a total of 9 418 (28 208) decisions on asylum applications were made. The average processing time for an asylum application was 357 days (2016: 261 days). The number of decisions was significantly lower, and the processing time longer compared to the previous year because of limited personnel resources. The Finnish Immigration Service started the recruitment of new staff in the end of 2017. During the year, 15 982 asylum seekers, on average, were within the reception system. Compared to the previous year, the average number of asylum seekers within the reception system has fallen by 9 866. In the end of August 2018, 11 266 asylum seekers were in the reception system.

Asylum processes have also been prolonged because many asylum seekers appealed on their negative asylum decision to the administrative court. The administrative courts gave judgement in 7 007 asylum cases in 2017. The Supreme Administrative Court issued its judgement in 3 305 asylum cases of which 344 were handled under expedited procedure.

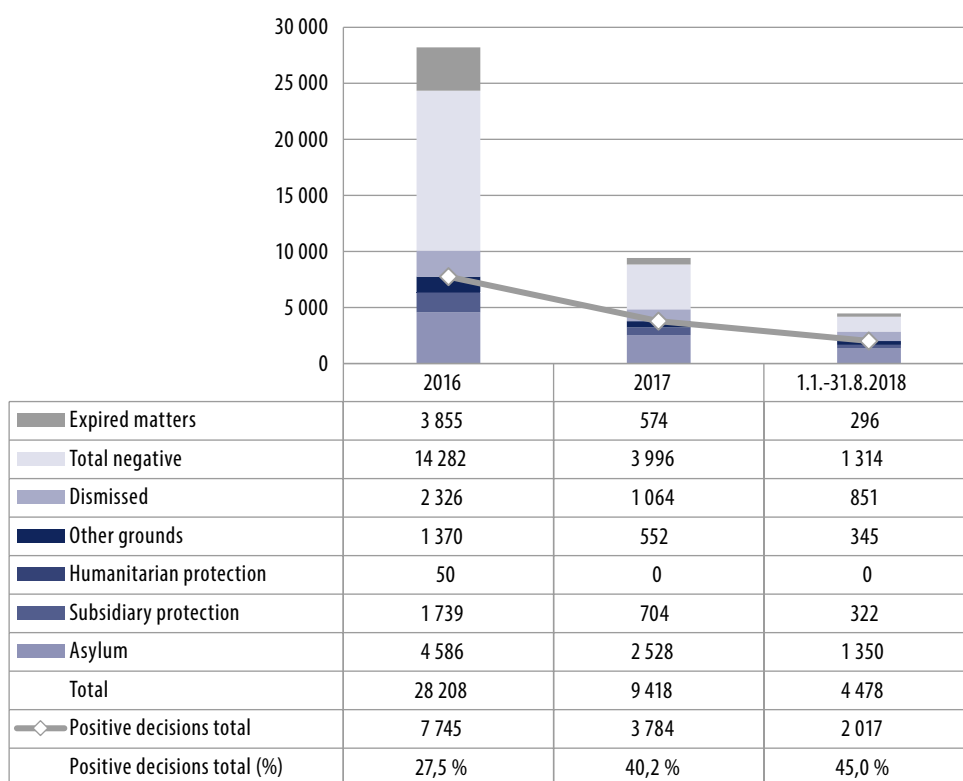
In addition, many asylum seekers who had already received a final decision on their asylum application have made a subsequent application for asylum. In 2017, the Finnish Immigration Service made 1 845 decisions on a subsequent application for asylum. That was 20% of all asylum decisions.

By the end of August in 2018, altogether 4 478 decisions on asylum application have made. 29 % of the decisions were made on subsequent applications for asylum.

5.8.4 The percentage of positive decisions on Iraqis' asylum applications increased

The percentage of positive decisions on asylum applications increased between 2017 and 2018. As figure 18 shows, positive asylum decisions (3 784) accounted for 40,2% of all decisions in 2017. Asylum was granted to 2 528 persons. The rest were granted protection based on either humanitarian protection or subsidiary protection. In addition, 552 asylum seekers were issued a residence permit on grounds other than international protection. During 2018, 45 % of the decisions have been positive. In 2016, only 27,5% of the decisions were positive.

Figure 18 Decisions on asylum applications between 2016–August 2018



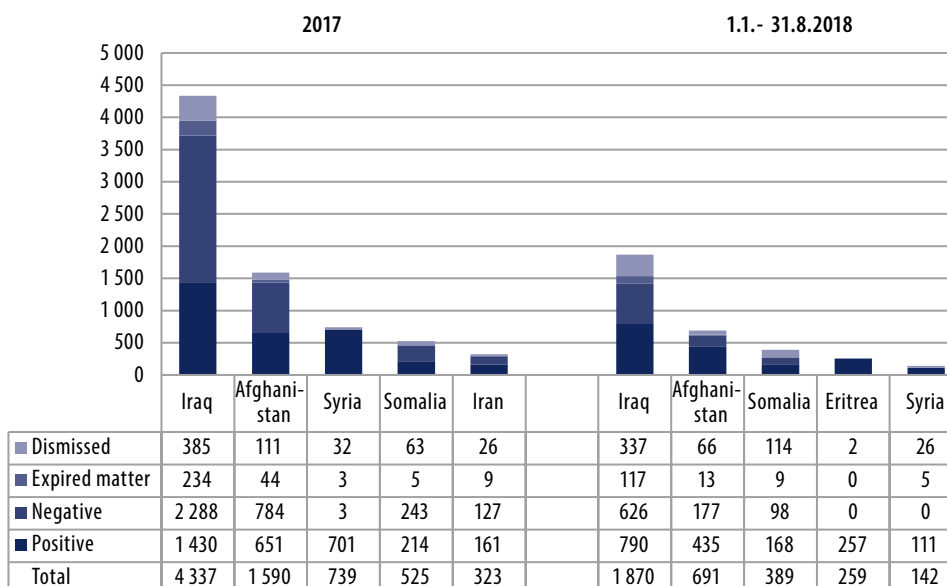
Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

The Finnish Immigration Service follows the security situation in the main countries of origin of asylum seekers on a regular basis. Nevertheless, when considering the issue of residence permits, the individual grounds for granting asylum or subsidiary protection are always assessed for each applicant.

In 2017, most (4 337) of the decisions were given for Iraqis' applications of which 33% were positive and 53% negative. Other applications were expired or dismissed. Afghans were the second largest group with 1 590 decisions given, of which 41% were positive and 49% negative. Almost all the asylum applications of Syrians (95%) were given positive decisions (Figure 19).

By the end of August 2018, most decisions were made on Iraqis' applications. 42% of them were positive. Eritrea was a new country among the five largest countries of origin who received the most decisions on asylum applications. 99% of Eritreans received a positive decision on their asylum application. During the reporting period, percentage of the positive decisions on Iraqis' asylum applications rose significantly from 2016 when only 18% of Iraqi asylum seekers received positive decision.

Figure 19 Decision on asylum application between 2017– August 2018, by five largest countries of origin



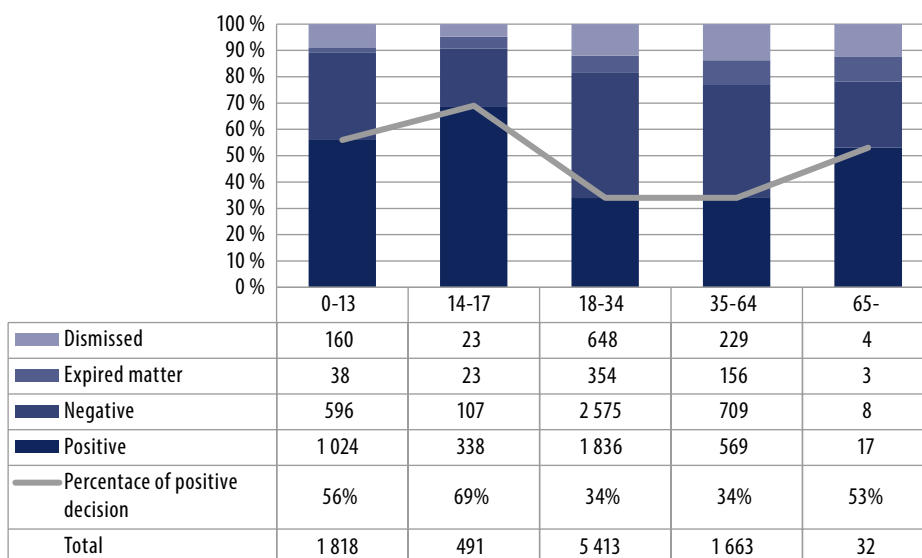
Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

5.8.5 Most of 0-13 year-old asylum seekers received a positive decision

In 2017, asylum seekers who were at the age of 14-17 received the most positive decisions with relation to the number of applications (69%). The second most positive decisions (56%) were given to asylum seekers who were at the age of 0-13. There were more positive than negative decisions also in the age group 65-. The percentage of positive decisions was significantly lower among asylum seekers between the ages of 18-34 and 35-64.

The largest age groups who received positive decisions on their asylum applications have remained the same between January and August in 2018.

Figure 20 Decisions on asylum applications by age structure 2017



Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

5.8.6 Congolese and Syrian quota refugees were received

For over 30 years, Finland has received quota refugees in partnership with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Under the refugee quota, Finland accepts persons whom the UNHCR has designated as refugees or other foreign nationals who are in need of international protection. To receive quota refugees is a voluntary assignment that is principally offered to any country. In Finland, Parliament decides annually, when the state budget is approved, the number of quota refugees Finland is committed to receive the next year.

In the refugee quota for 2017, a total of 750 quota refugees were selected including 530 Syrians from Turkey and 120 Congolese refugees from Zimbabwe. In addition, 100 places were reserved for cases falling within UNHCR's emergency and urgent cases category, irrespective of their region or nationality. Through this, Finland also fulfilled its EU commitments on resettlement. Finland decided to take 1035 Syrians from Turkey as part of the 1:1 scheme between EU and Turkey on the basis of the EU-Turkey declaration. By the end of its implementation in early January 2018, Finland had received a total of 986 Syrians from Turkey under this scheme.

In December 2017, the Ministry of the Interior announced that Finland receives 750 quota refugees in 2018. The quota of 2018 will consist of 530 Syrian refugees from Turkey and 120 Congolese refugees from Zambia. Finland is also prepared to receive 100 refugees categorized as emergency and urgent cases without limitations on region or nationality.

Funding from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is used to support and streamline the Finnish resettlement process. For instance, pre-departure cultural orientation on Finnish society, language and culture is offered for the refugees selected as part of the annual quota by an AMIF project implemented by the Finnish Immigration Service. Moreover, information sharing between the authorities involved in the resettlement process, IT systems as well as services such as mental health and housing services for the resettled refugees are developed with AMIF funding.

5.8.3 Finland fulfilled its responsibilities in the temporary relocation scheme of the EU

The temporary emergency relocation of the EU came to end in 2017. The temporary relocation scheme was established in two Council Decisions in 2015 to relocate 160 000 asylum seekers from Italy and Greece. Finland was very active in these and received a total of 1 981 asylum seekers under the scheme; 1 202 persons were received from Greece and 779 from Italy. The last of these asylum seekers arrived in Finland in December 2017.

5.9 Irregular migration

In December 2016, the government published an action plan on measures for preventing illegal stays in Finland, including its control. This plan seeks to ensure that authorities have access to a continuous and up-to-date situation evaluation which is more comprehensive than the previous one and which supports the operations of authorities and help them to direct measures in the right direction.¹⁴⁴

Voluntary return is always the primary option for returning those who have received a negative residence permit decision or have discontinued their application process. A system based on voluntary return offers people the opportunity to return voluntarily to their home country or a permanent county of residence.

The government has taken significant efforts to develop the system of voluntary return. In 2016 and 2017, work related to voluntary return was actively carried out within the scope of an AMIF-funded project named the “Normalisation of voluntary return”, both at reception units and reception centres, and in the beginning of 2017 a return project “Voluntary return from Finland to Iraq, Afganistan and Somalia (AUDA)” was launched to enhance the coordination and cooperation of return measures, to develop cooperation with third countries and to monitoring the re-integration of returnees.¹⁴⁵

5.9.1 Number of persons staying without residence permit remained relatively low

The number of persons living in Finland without a residence permit (i.e. illegal residents) has remained rather low, despite expectations to the contrary. In 2017, approx. 2 300 illegal residents were encountered in Finland, and in early 2018 (January–July) this figure was approx. 1 100. In terms of nationality, the greatest number of illegal residents were Estonians (331), with Russian nationals (291) and Iraqis (171) as the next largest groups. The majority of the Estonians were persons who had been refused entry.

According to the police, the risk of illegal residence has grown, however, as the majority of the asylum seekers who arrived in Finland in 2015–2016 and who have been refused entry have appealed their decisions to courts of different degrees. The enforcement of decisions to return illegal residents is hampered by subsequent asylum applications, which are submitted by many asylum seekers once they have been turned down by different courts of

144 An action plan on measures for preventing illegal stays in Finland (only in Finnish): <http://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10616/1266558/TpsuunnitelmaLAMA.pdf/c5b16a1b-8418-4fe0-a3ba-3fe3663ef67f>

145 Source: The Ministry of the Interior

appeal. The police cannot return asylum seekers if they have a subsequent asylum application pending.¹⁴⁶

According to the Border Guard the Finnish Border Guard, an exceptionally sharp peak in the number of illegal entries in 2015/2016 was linked both to the aggravated situation at the Mediterranean EU borders and to the phenomenon of irregular migration on the so-called Arctic route through the Finnish-Russian Federation border. It can be assessed that most of the illegal entries to Finland are currently made across the internal Schengen borders and are still often linked to illegal border crossings to the EU Member States at the Mediterranean. However, the reintroduction of border checks at several internal Schengen borders has prevented major transit movements towards Finland since 2016. This is mirrored also in the relatively low number of new asylum applications made in Finland.¹⁴⁷

5.9.2 Willingness for voluntary return clearly reduced

If a person refuses to leave Finland voluntarily, the police is the responsible authority for handling his/her return. In 2017, the police were either involved in or returned 2 473 people with no legal residence permit in Finland. In 2016, the police returned more than 6 600 people. In 2015, the corresponding figure stood at 3 180.

In 2017, the number of people who returned voluntarily amounted to 1 422. The number was significantly lower than the previous year when 2 113 people returned voluntarily.¹⁴⁸

The police report that asylum seekers' willingness for voluntary return has clearly reduced, and the number of those opposing their return has increased. The police consider it possible that, at the conclusion of the process, some of those refused residence permit will hide before they can be returned, stay illegally in Finland, or move to another European country.

During 2017 and in the first four months of 2018, an increasing number of itinerant perpetrators of crimes against property exploiting the asylum system were encountered in Finland; they have not necessarily entered the country illegally, but once they have been caught committing offences, they apply for asylum in Finland. By taking them in custody and fast-tracking the processing of obviously unfounded residence permit applications, it has to some extent been possible to prevent the exploitation of the asylum process by itinerant crime.

146 Source: The National Police Board

147 Source: The Finnish Border Guard

148 Source: Statistics of the International Organization for Migration (IOM)

In accordance with the EU's Treaty, readmission agreements and any negotiations on them fall under the competence of the EU. In fact, the EU has 17 valid readmission agreements with third countries. From the Finnish perspective, the most important of them is the readmission agreement between the EU and Russia. Nevertheless, there are people staying in Finland with no right to stay, for example, from Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia. Finland has had a bilateral declaration on return arrangements with Afghanistan since 2016. At present, Finland is engaged in negotiations with Somalia and Iraq in order to reach a mutual understanding on the promotion of the return of the nationals of these countries.¹⁴⁹

149 Source: The National Police Board



Ministry of the Interior
Finland

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