



Ministry of the Interior  
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# International Migration 2018–2019 – Report for Finland



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# International Migration 2018–2019 – Report for Finland

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<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>A national report by Finland, commissioned annually by the OECD, presents a concise summary of Finland's policies regarding migration, key legal amendments, a comprehensive media review and up-to-date statistics. The report covers 2018 and the first six months of 2019. The themes covered in the report are based on guidance from the OECD.</p> <p>During the reporting period, Finland's government changed. Prime Minister Sipilä's Government resigned in March 2019 and Prime Minister Rinne's Government took office in June 2019. Both the governments of Rinne and Sipilä have emphasised in their Government Programmes the importance of work-based migration for maintaining Finland's vitality.</p> <p>Several legislative reforms were completed during the review period, including the creation of a new residence permit for growth entrepreneurs and changes to the labour market tests. Statistics show that the number of immigrants has increased steadily in Finland. In particular, the number of people moving to Finland to work and study is on the increase, whereas the number of asylum seekers is at record lows.</p> <p>The topic of migration featured often in the media during the report period. In most cases, articles on migration related to crime.</p> <p>The report was compiled by the Migration 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 and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, have been involved in producing material for the report in accordance with their areas of responsibility. The report has been submitted to the OECD in English and is therefore published only in English in Finland.</p>			
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<b>Tiivistelmä</b>	<p>OECD:lle vuosittain toimeksiantona laadittava Suomen kansallinen raportti esittelee tiivistetysti muuttoliikkeeseen liittyviä poliittisia linjauksia, keskeisiä lakimuutoksia, kattavan mediakatsauksen sekä ajankohtaisia tilastoja. Tarkastelujaksoneen on vuosi 2018 sekä vuoden 2019 ensimmäiset kuusi kuukautta. Raportin aiheet perustuvat OECD:lta saatuun ohjeistukseen.</p> <p>Raportoinnin ajanjaksolla Suomessa vaihtui hallitus, kun pääministeri Sipilän hallitus erosi maaliskuussa 2019 ja pääministeri Rinteen hallitus aloitti toimessaan kesäkuussa 2019. Sekä Rinteen että Sipilän hallitukset ovat hallitusohjelmissaan korostaneet työperäisen maahanmuuton merkitystä Suomen elinvoimaisuuden ylläpitämiseksi.</p> <p>Raportin tarkastelujaksolla valmistui useita lainsäädäntöuudistuksia, kun luotiin esimerkiksi uusi, kasvuyrittäjille suunnattu oleskelulupa sekä tehtiin muutoksia työvoiman saatavuusharkintaan. Tilastot osoittavat, että maahanmuuttajien määrä on kasvanut tasaisesti Suomessa. Erityisesti töihin ja opiskelemaan muuttavien määrät ovat kasvussa, kun taas turvapaikanhakijamäärät ovat ennätysalhaiset.</p> <p>Tarkastelujaksolla maahanmuutto oli usein esillä mediassa. Määrällisesti maahanmuutosta kirjoitettiin eniten yhdistettynä rikollisuuteen.</p> <p>Raportti on koottu sisäministeriön maahanmuutto-osastolla. Useat muut ministeriöt sekä virastot, kuten työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö, oikeusministeriö ja ulkoministeriö, ovat olleet mukana tuottamassa aineistoa omien vastualueidensa mukaisesti. Raportti on toimitettu OECD:lle englannin kielellä ja tästä syystä julkaistaan myös Suomessa ainoastaan englanniksi.</p>		
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<b>Referat</b>	<p>Den nationella rapport som Finland årligen utarbetar på uppdrag av OECD tillhandahåller en kort presentation av de politiska riktlinjer som gäller migration, centrala lagändringar, en omfattande medieöversikt och aktuell statistik. Granskningsperioden omfattar 2018 och de första sex månaderna av 2019. Rapportens teman baserar sig på OECD:s anvisningar.</p> <p>Rapporteringsperioden omfattade ett regeringsskifte i Finland, då statsminister Sipiläs regering avgick i mars 2019 och statsminister Rinnes regering tillträdde i juni 2019. Både statsminister Rinnes och statsminister Sipiläs regeringar har i sina regeringsprogram betonat vikten av arbetskraftsinvandring när det gäller att upprätthålla Finlands livskraft.</p> <p>Under rapportens granskningsperiod genomfördes flera lagstiftningsreformer i och med att man tog i bruk till exempel ett nytt uppehållstillstånd för tillväxtföretagare och genomförde ändringar i prövningen av tillgången på arbetskraft. Statistiken visar att antalet invandrare i Finland har ökat jämnt. I synnerhet antalet personer som flyttar till landet för att arbeta och studera håller på att öka, medan antalet asylsökande är rekordlitet.</p> <p>Under granskningsperioden figurerade invandringen ofta i medierna. Volymmässigt skrevs det mest om invandring i kombination till brottslighet.</p> <p>Rapporten har sammanställts vid inrikesministeriets migrationsavdelning. Flera andra ministerier och ämbetsverk, som arbets- och näringsministeriet, justitieministeriet och utrikesministeriet, har varit med om att producera material inom ramen för sina ansvarsområden. Rapporten har sänts till OECD på engelska och därför publiceras den också i Finland endast på engelska.</p>		
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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Summary</b> .....	9
<b>2</b>	<b>Major developments in migration policy</b> .....	12
2.1	Prime Minister Rinne's Government (2019–) sets out to promote labour migration.....	12
2.2	Migration policies of Prime Minister Sipilä's Government (2015–2019) .....	13
2.3	Talent Boost – International talents boosting growth programme .....	14
<b>3</b>	<b>Recent migration statistics</b> .....	15
3.1	Immigration explains population growth in Finland .....	15
3.2	Seven per cent of the Finnish population are foreign language speakers.....	17
3.3	More and more immigrants applied for a residence permit based on work or studies.....	19
3.4	Registrations of EU citizens has increased.....	20
<b>4</b>	<b>Work-based immigration</b> .....	22
4.1	The number of work-based residence permit applications has increased .....	22
4.2	Registrations of an EU citizen's right of residence on the grounds of employment.....	25
4.3	Policy changes in legislation regulating entry .....	25
<b>5</b>	<b>Foreign students</b> .....	28
5.1	Increase in students' residence permit numbers over the last year .....	28
5.2	Policy changes in legislation regulating entry.....	30
<b>6</b>	<b>Family reunification</b> .....	32
6.1	Family is the most common reason for moving to Finland.....	32
6.2	Policy changes in legislation of family reunification.....	34
<b>7</b>	<b>Naturalisations</b> .....	35
7.1	Finland received 9,600 new citizens in 2018.....	35
7.2	Policy changes in naturalisation policy .....	37
<b>8</b>	<b>International protection</b> .....	38
8.1	Asylum seekers .....	38
8.2	Refugees.....	40
8.3	Policy changes in international protection .....	41

<b>9</b>	<b>Irregular migration</b>	44
9.1	Enforcement of decisions on removal from the country	45
9.2	Policy changes in legislation regarding irregular migration and removals of the country	45
<b>10</b>	<b>Integration</b>	47
10.1	Main changes in labour market outcomes of immigrants and their children	49
10.2	An investment fund for the employment of immigrants	51
<b>11</b>	<b>Migration and co-operation for development policies</b>	52
<b>12</b>	<b>Anti-discrimination policies and diversity programmes</b>	54
12.1	Implementation of non-discrimination act	54
12.2	Policy programmes	55
12.3	The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO)	56
<b>13</b>	<b>Immigration discussion in Finland</b>	57
13.1	Background and overview	57
13.2	Immigration and crime were discussed more often than other topics	61
13.3	President Donald Trump was referred to a number of times	63
13.4	Immigration in the news of Finnish parliamentary elections and government formation negotiations	64
13.5	Swedish general elections and other topics	66

# 1 SUMMARY

A new government took over in Finland in June 2019, as Prime Minister Rinne's Government started its work. Both Prime Minister Rinne's Government (2019–) and its predecessor, Prime Minister Sipilä's Government (2015–2019) stressed the significance of labour migration for maintaining Finland's viability in their Government Programmes. In January 2018, Prime Minister Sipilä's Government published a Migration Policy Programme to Strengthen Labour Migration. Several legislative amendments were also made during the previous government term aiming to streamline the residence permit process for migrants coming to work in Finland and thus make Finland more attractive for international specialists.

Net immigration to Finland has been slightly declining since 2016. However, the number of people immigrating to Finland continues to exceed the number of those emigrating from the country. The reason for the drop in the migration gain is a decline in immigration and an increase in emigration. Regardless of the decreased net immigration, migration continues to support population growth in Finland as the birth rate is lower than ever before.

The number of applications for a first residence permit based on work has thus shown a clear increase since 2017. In 2018, a total of 10,805 applications for a residence permit based on work were submitted, which exceeds the same figure in 2017 by more than 2,000. The majority of applications for a residence permit for an employed person concerned manual labour (53% of applicants). The second highest number applied for a residence permit based on specialist tasks (14%).

In 2018, family reunification was again the most common reason for migrating to Finland. First residence permits on the basis of family ties were issued to a total of 9,009 applicants. The figure for 2017 was similar. Traditionally, the greatest number of residence permits on the basis of family ties has been issued to Russian nationals. In the context of family reunification, an amendment to the Aliens Act entered into force in June 2019, under which an unaccompanied minor arriving in Finland is treated as a minor for the purposes of family reunification even if they turn 18 during the process.

A first residence permit for studies in Finland was applied for by 6,281 people in 2018. This represents a year-on-year increase of 11 per cent. During the first six months of 2019, the number of residence permit applications submitted was slightly lower than in the same period in 2018. The largest groups in 2018 were Chinese, Russian and Vietnamese applicants. The number of residence permits for studies registered for EU citizens has also increased in recent years. It has been the policy of both the current and previous Finnish Government to promote the immigration of students and researchers.

In 2018–2019, fewer asylum seekers arrived in Finland than during any other period in the 2010s. 4,548 asylum applications were submitted in Finland in 2018. Almost half of these (2,139) were subsequent applications, however. The submission of subsequent applications on this scale is a new phenomenon, which has emerged since 2015.

The Finnish Government stresses the importance of common European solutions and Nordic cooperation in its response to the global refugee and asylum situation. As part of its international cooperation, Finland promotes the wider use of the resettlement of refugees. In 2019, Finland decided to resettle 850 refugees while in recent years the number has been 750.

In 2018, applications for Finnish citizenship were submitted by 11,676 people, which exceeds the previous year's number by almost 1,000. Russians are annually the largest nationality group applying for Finnish citizenship. A new act which makes it possible for persons who are guilty of certain serious offences to lose their Finnish citizenship entered into force in May 2019. These offences include treason, high treason and offences against Finland's vital interests made with terrorist intent.

Finland suffers from a labour shortage in certain fields, and the ageing of the population will exacerbate this situation in the future. In 2018, foreign-born population's employment rate was 10 per cent lower than that of domestic-born population. Finland is striving to facilitate migrants' faster access to the labour market. In 2018, the Government allocated additional funding for developing Skills Centre activities for migrants to strengthen migrants' skills and preconditions for employment.

The Government published the second National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human rights in the beginning of 2017. The plan focuses on fundamental and human rights education, equality and non-discrimination, self-determination as well as fundamental rights and digitalisation. The implementation of the action plan was very much in progress during the year 2018 and by May 2019, 90% of the activities had been accomplished.

Immigration was a highly visible topic at the Finnish media during the period between July 2018 and June 2019. Especially international topics related to immigration had a very

high visibility in the Finnish media. Such topics included developments in the European Union, the United States, and international crises. In domestic news, immigration and crime were discussed more often than other topics

Commissioned by the OECD, a national report by Finland covering the year 2018 and the beginning of 2019 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. This publication was produced in cooperation between several ministries as well as the Finnish Immigration Service, Statistics Finland and the National Police Board.

## 2 MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION POLICY

### 2.1 Prime Minister Rinne's Government (2019–) sets out to promote labour migration

Parliamentary elections were held in Finland in spring 2019. For the first time in the history of Finnish parliamentary elections, all parties won less than 20 per cent of the votes cast. Antti Rinne as Chairperson of the largest party, the Social Democratic Party, formed a five-party coalition government. The parties in Prime Minister Rinne's Government are the Social Democratic Party, the Centre Party, the Green Party, the Left Alliance and the Swedish People's Party. The Government was appointed on 6 June 2019. It has 19 ministers.<sup>1</sup>

Prime Minister Rinne's Government Programme '**Inclusive and competent Finland – a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society**'<sup>2</sup> was submitted to Parliament as a communication on 6 June 2019. In the context of migration, the Government's objective is to boost labour migration of skilled workers to Finland. In particular, the Government Programme seeks to attract workers for sectors suffering from labour shortages as well as specialists, students and researchers who are essential for leading and growing fields.

The Government wishes to raise the employment rate of people with an immigrant background who have already migrated to Finland and improve the employment of international degree students. In the future, the Government's goal state is that students will be granted a residence permit for the full period of their studies. The post-graduation residence permit will additionally be prolonged to two years, and it will allow the permit holder to take short-term work. An investigation will also be made on financial support

<sup>1</sup> Government of Prime Minister Antti Rinne: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/rinne/ministers> (17.7.2019)

<sup>2</sup> Programme of Prime Minister Antti Rinne's Government: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/rinne/government-programme> (17.7.2019)

modes to compensate for the tuition fees of non-EU/EEA students studying in Finland if they stay on to work in Finland after graduation.

In migration on the grounds of international protection, the Government emphasises the importance of common European solutions and Nordic cooperation. The Government stresses the effectiveness of the quota refugee system and will increase the number of quota refugees to a minimum of 850 from 2020. The Government also wishes to improve certain asylum seekers' rights, such as enabling the use of a counsel at asylum interviews and improving the provision of general legal advice to asylum seekers. The combined impact on legal protection of the numerous separate amendments made to the Aliens Act and of practices of applying the Act, issues relating to family reunification as well as the reasonable income limits applied to family reunification sponsors who have been granted international protection will also be examined.

## 2.2 Migration policies of Prime Minister Sipilä's Government (2015–2019)

Migration was one of the major themes of Prime Minister Sipilä's government term in 2015–2019. Finland was faced with record-breaking numbers of asylum seekers at the very beginning of the government term. As a consequence, the Government set up a ministerial working group on migration in September 2015 and soon after published Government's action plan on asylum policy, in December 2015. The asylum policy implemented by Prime Minister Sipilä's Government in the early part of its term had particular relevance to those applying for international protection and the application process. The Government implemented a number of legislative amendments related to such issues as family reunification, removal of the category of humanitarian protection, and streamlining the asylum process.

In the latter part of its term, Prime Minister Sipilä's Government published two programmes associated with labour migration and efforts to increase it. They are **Work in Finland – Government Migration Policy Programme to Strengthen Labour Migration**<sup>3</sup> (2018) and **Talent Boost – International talents boosting growth programme**<sup>4</sup>. The objective of these programmes was to make visible and promote migration policy that supports employment as well as migration that strengthens the public economy, improves the dependency ratio and promotes the internationalisation of the economy. The Government

3 Work in Finland — Government Migration Policy Programme to Strengthen Labour Migration: <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/160444> (26.7.2019)

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

implemented several legislative amendments in order to streamline the immigration of international specialists. They included a new residence permit for startup entrepreneurs (2018) as well as changes to the duration of residence permits for specialists (2018) and labour market testing (2019).

## **2.3 Talent Boost – International talents boosting growth 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. It was decided in the Government's mid-term policy review session in April 2017 that the International talents boosting growth agenda will be expanded into an intersectoral Talent Boost programme for the Government.

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.

Talent Boost programme will be expanded by Prime Minister Antti Rinne's Government to support international recruitment on the fields suffering from lack of workforce. More effort will be put also on enhancing international student and researcher attraction, integration and employment.



## 3 RECENT MIGRATION STATISTICS

### 3.1 Immigration explains population growth in Finland

According to Statistics Finland's statistics on population structure<sup>5</sup>, the official total population of Finland at the end of 2018 was 5,517,919. Finland's population grew only by 4,789 persons in 2018 and population growth was smallest since 1970.

In 2018, a total of 31,106 people immigrated to Finland, or slightly less than the year before (2017: 31,797). On the other hand, a greater number of people emigrated from Finland than in 2017. Net immigration was 11,958 people in 2018, which represents a decrease of more than 3,000 compared to 2017. The reason for the drop in the migration gain was a decline in immigration and an increase in emigration. Despite the drop in net immigration, migration continues to support population growth in Finland.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1. Immigration, emigration, and net migration in 2014–2018**

	Immigration	Emigration	Net migration
2014	31,507	15,486	16,021
2015	28,746	16,305	12,441
2016	34,905	18,082	16,823
2017	31,797	16,973	14,824
2018	31,106	19,148	11,958

Source: Statistics Finland

The emigration from Finland grew by 2,175 persons or 13 per cent than in the year before. Sixty per cent or 11,538 of emigrants were Finnish citizens. Finland's migration gain from

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Finland: Population growth smallest since 1970 [https://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2018/vaerak\\_2018\\_2019-03-29\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html](https://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2018/vaerak_2018_2019-03-29_tie_001_en.html) (17.7.2019)

<sup>6</sup> Statistic Finland: Migration [https://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/muuttoliike\\_en.html](https://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/muuttoliike_en.html) (24.7.2019)

foreign citizens amounted to 15,536 persons, but Finnish citizens generated a migration loss of 3,578 persons.

Net migration of Finnish citizens has been negative throughout the 2010s, and more Finnish citizens have thus emigrated from Finland than immigrated to the country. In 2018, 11,538 Finnish citizens emigrated. Of these, 6,320 (55%) were women and 5,218 (45%) men. In the last ten years, the number of emigrating Finnish citizens has varied between 8,100 and 11,500, with an increasing trend. More women than men emigrate each year.

In 2018, the largest group of foreign nationals immigrating to Finland were the Estonians with 1,974 people. While immigration from Estonia has declined clearly in the last five years, Estonians continue to be the largest group moving to Finland. Years 2016 and 2017 were exceptional, however, as more Iraqis than Estonians immigrated to Finland. The greatest drop in 2018 was recorded in the numbers of migrants from Iraq and Syria, whereas Indians were the nationality that increased its share the most.

**Table 2. Immigration to Finland in 2014–2018 by nationality**

Nationality	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Estonia	4,663	3,355	2,596	2,176	1,974
Iraq	776	754	3,235	2,570	1,871
Russian Federation	2,420	2,086	2,540	1,549	1,696
India	826	821	676	730	1,046
China	696	732	768	711	818
Ukraine	445	502	517	545	740
Syrian Arab Republic	570	578	1,716	1,958	697
Afghanistan	515	394	1,864	879	681
Sweden	604	547	579	584	643
Viet Nam	506	679	942	616	576
Other foreign nationalities	11,626	10,966	11,841	11,417	12,404
Finland	7,860	7,332	7,631	8,062	7,960
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,507</b>	<b>28,746</b>	<b>34,905</b>	<b>31,797</b>	<b>31,106</b>

Source: Statistics Finland

## 3.2 Seven per cent of the Finnish population are foreign language speakers

In the past five years, the number of persons speaking Finnish, Swedish or Sami as their native language has decreased by 36,029 persons. At the same time, the number of foreign-language speakers has increased by 102,678 persons.<sup>7</sup>

A total of 391,746 persons speaking a foreign language as their native language were living permanently in Finland at the end of 2018. The proportion of foreign-language speakers in the total population is now seven per cent. The biggest foreign-language speaking groups were Russian speakers, 79,225 persons, Estonian speakers, 49,691, and Arabic speakers, 29,462.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 3. Population by language in 2015–2018**

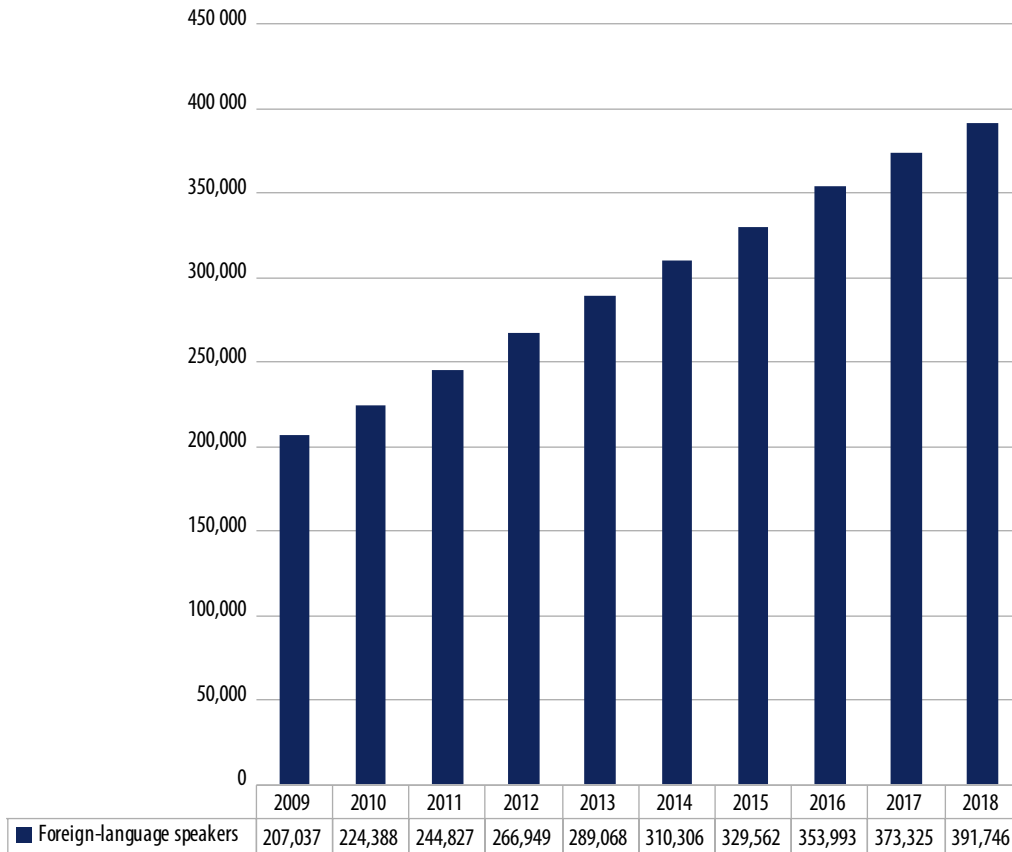
Native language	2015	2016	2017	2018
Finnish	4,865,628	4,857,795	4,848,761	4,835,778
Swedish	290,161	289,540	289,052	288,400
Sami	1,957	1,969	1,992	1,995
Other languages in total	329,562	353,993	373,325	391,746
• Russian	72,436	75,444	77,177	79,225
• Estonian	48,087	49,241	49,590	49,691
• Arab	16,713	21,783	26,467	29,462
• Somali	17,871	19,059	20,007	20,944
• English	17,784	18,758	19,626	20,713
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,487,308</b>	<b>5,503,297</b>	<b>5,513,130</b>	<b>5,517,919</b>

Source: Statistics Finland

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Finland. Foreign-language speakers: <https://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa/vieraskieliset.html>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 1. Foreign-language speakers in Finland 2009–2018**



**Source: Statistics Finland**

Examined by region, the share of foreign-language speakers was at the end of 2018 highest in the region of Uusimaa, 13 per cent of the population, and lowest in South Ostrobothnia, two per cent. Examined by municipality, the share of foreign-language speakers among the population was highest in Vantaa, 19 per cent, in Espoo, 17 per cent, and in Helsinki, 16 per cent.

The gender division of foreign-language speakers varies greatly between different language groups. Men were the dominant group among Italian (68.3%), Turkish (65.6%) and Nepalese (65.2%) speakers living in Finland. Women, on the other hand, were the majority among Thai (83.1%), Filipino (67.2%) and Russian (58.6%) speakers.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Finland: Foreign language speakers: [https://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa/vieraskieliset\\_en.html#tab1483972313984\\_3](https://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa/vieraskieliset_en.html#tab1483972313984_3) (29.7.2019)

### 3.3 More and more immigrants applied for a residence permit based on work or studies

According to the Finnish Immigration Service, 28,610 people submitted an application for a first residence permit in Finland in 2018. In 2017, this figure was 26,349, and in 2016 it was 26,066. A rising trend has been seen in residence permit applications in recent years. Clearly the largest number of applications for a first residence permit has been submitted by Russians.

**Table 4. First applications for residence permits by nationality in 2015–6/2019**

Nationality	2015	2016	2017	2018	-6/2019
Russian Federation	3,320	3,726	2,803	3,265	1,546
Ukraine	1,520	1,692	1,937	2,524	1,746
India	1,670	1,743	1,971	2,326	1,275
China	1,791	1,948	2,022	2,120	982
Iraq	592	1,228	2,067	1,196	529
Viet Nam	1,196	1,511	882	1,185	765
United States	989	1,091	1,005	1,072	502
Thailand	973	946	823	899	533
Philippines	613	581	582	864	553
Kosovo	495	496	535	690	383
Other Countries	13,031	14,830	14,525	15,734	7,456
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,870</b>	<b>26,066</b>	<b>26,349</b>	<b>28,610</b>	<b>14,724</b>

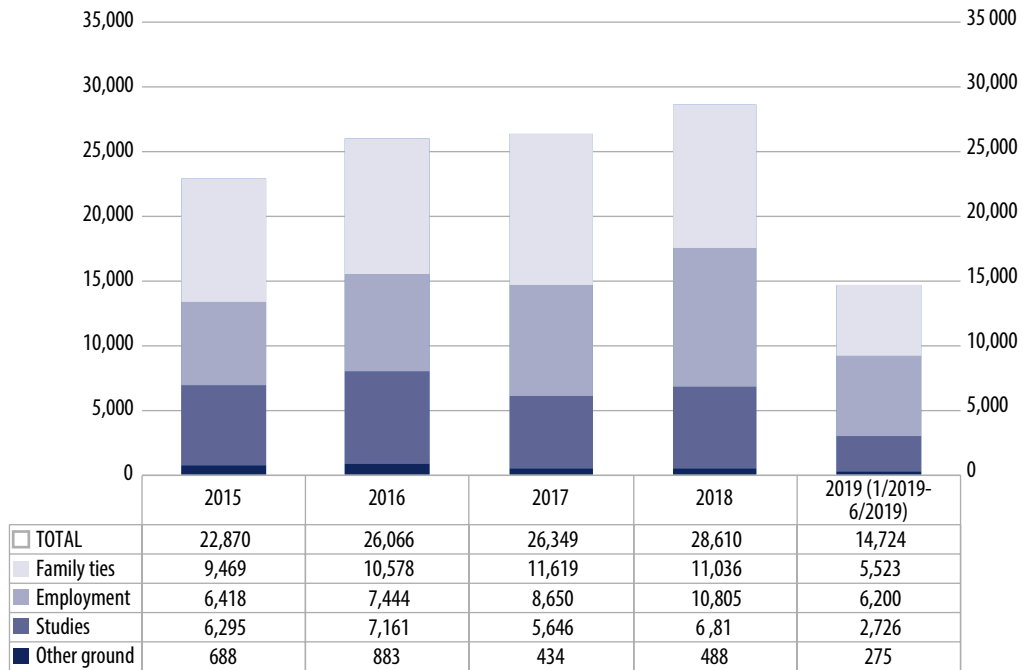
Source: [statistics.migri.fi](https://statistics.migri.fi)

In 2018, a first residence permit was issued to 82 per cent of the applicants, whereas 18 per cent of the applications were turned down. The proportions of applications to which positive and negative decisions were issued varied by nationality. Of United States nationals, for example, 92 per cent were issued with a positive decision and eight per cent of the applications were turned down, whereas these figures for Iraqi nationals were 63 per cent and 37 per cent respectively.

More and more immigrants applied for a residence permit last year based on work or studies. According to the annual statistics of the Finnish Immigration Service, the number of work-based residence permit applications increased clearly compared to last year. In total, 10,805 first residence permit applications were submitted based on work (2017: 8,650).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Finnish Immigration Service: Immigration statistics 2018: Last year, more and more people applied for a residence permit based on work [https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset\\_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-useampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella](https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-useampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella) (25.7.2019)

**Figure 2. Applications for residence permits by application type in 2014–6/2019**



Source: statistics.migri.fi

### 3.4 Registrations of EU citizens has increased

In 2018, the number of registration applications submitted by EU citizens went up by more than a thousand from the year before. The overwhelmingly largest nationality group submitting registration applications continued to be the Estonians, even if the number of their registrations has been declining in recent years. The number of registration applications submitted by Romanians, on the other hand, has increased over the last five years. An increase from 2017 was also seen in the number of EU registration applications submitted by UK nationals. In the first six months of 2019, UK nationals submitted more applications for EU registration than in the entire year 2018.

**Table 5. Applications of registration of an EU citizen by nationality in 2015–2018**

Nationality	2015	2016	2017	2018	-6/2019
Estonia	4,132	3,410	2,427	2,454	915
Romania	454	550	536	774	383
Germany	770	662	571	751	291
United Kingdom	463	453	447	660	708
Other Countries	5,155	5,023	4,376	5,652	2,403
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,974</b>	<b>10,098</b>	<b>8,357</b>	<b>10,291</b>	<b>4,700</b>

Source: [statistics.migri.fi](https://www.migri.fi)

## 4 WORK-BASED IMMIGRATION

### 4.1 The number of work-based residence permit applications has increased

According to the annual statistics of the Finnish Immigration Service, the number of work-based residence permit applications increased clearly in 2018 compared to 2017. In total, 10,805 first residence permit applications were submitted based on work (2017: 8,650). In the first six months of 2019, the number of applications for first residence permits based on work increased clearly compared to the same period in the previous year.

**Table 6. Applications of first residence permits based on work in 2015–6/2019**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	6/2019
TOTAL	6,418	7,444	8,650	10,805	6,200

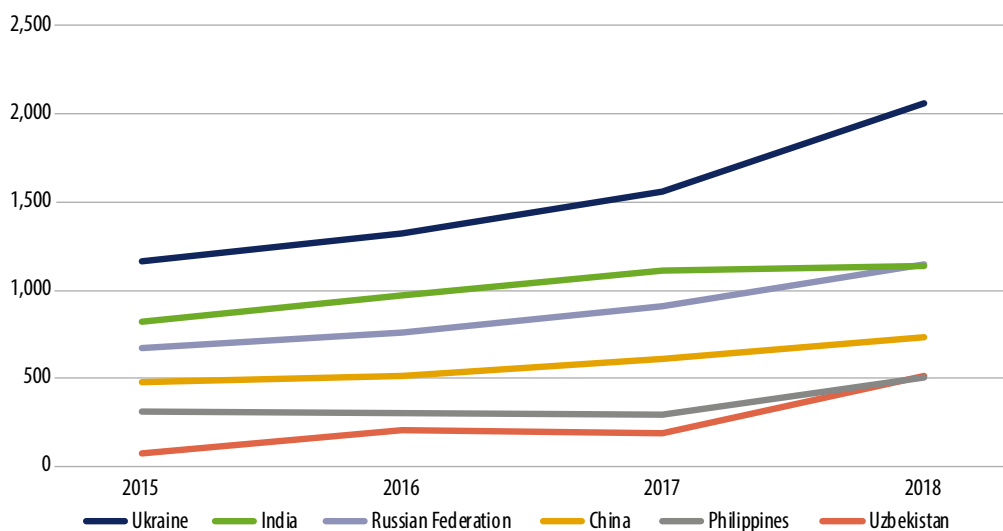
Source: [statistics.migri.fi](https://www.migri.fi)

There are several kinds of work-based residence permits; for example, specialists and entrepreneurs have their own permits. The growth in applications of first residence permits based on work is partially explained by the fact that new permit types, such as a seasonal work permit, were introduced in 2018.<sup>11</sup> However, the number of applications increased in almost all of these permit types.

In 2018, the largest groups to apply for residence permits based on work were Ukrainian (2,065), Russian (1,142) and Indian (1,134) nationals. The numbers of applications submitted by all the largest nationality groups have been increasing in recent years.

<sup>11</sup> Finnish Immigration Service: Immigration Statistics 2018: Last year, more and more people applied for a residence permit based on work. [https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset\\_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-useampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella](https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-useampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella) (25.7.2019)



**Figure 3. Residence permit applications based on work in 2015–2018, six of the largest nationalities**

Source: [statistics.migri.fi](http://statistics.migri.fi)

The Finnish Immigration Service issued decisions on a total of 9,447 applications for a residence permit on the grounds of employment. Of the decisions given, 81 per cent were positive and 19 per cent were negative. First residence permits on the grounds of employment were issued most often to citizens of Ukraine (1,828), India (1,054) and the Russian Federation (785).<sup>12</sup>

The most common case was that a first residence permit on the grounds of employment was issued for employment requiring a preliminary decision that is a so-called residence permit for an employed person. Most of the applicants for a residence permit for an employed person are manual labourers. Sectors for which such residence permits are issued include the following, for instance: agriculture, catering, construction, cleaning and transport. A total of 3,424 residence permits for an employed person were issued in 2018. The most common nationality was Ukrainian, with nearly one third (1,008) of all residence permits for an employed person issued to Ukrainians.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> EMN: Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Finland 2018, p. 88. [http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto\\_ja\\_turvapaikka\\_2018\\_FI\\_EN.pdf](http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_2018_FI_EN.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

**Table 7. Positive decisions on first applications for a residence permit on the grounds of employment requiring a preliminary decision, by six biggest nationalities in 2018**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	30.6.2019
Ukraine	912	1,047	1,276	1,008	419
Russian Federation	400	387	410	377	239
Philippines	200	252	189	277	252
Viet Nam	210	245	250	266	97
Uzbekistan	10	168	115	239	40
Thailand	263	252	287	231	145
Other countries	1,008	831	1,056	1,026	542
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,003</b>	<b>3,182</b>	<b>3,583</b>	<b>3,424</b>	<b>1,734</b>

Source: statistics.migri.fi

Many residence permits were also issued to specialists: 1,439 permits in 2018. Specialists came to Finland especially from India: a total of 829, or more than half, of the persons that were issued with a first residence permit for a specialist for Finland were citizens of India. Most of them came to work in the IT sector.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 8. Positive decisions on first applications for a residence permit on the grounds of employment, specialists, by four biggest nationalities in 2018.**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	30.06.2019
India	643	586	839	829	362
Russian Federation	74	101	122	129	96
Unites States	54	84	80	81	53
China	63	49	55	65	51
Brazil	5	13	32	30	18
Other countries	146	109	246	305	114
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>1,374</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>694</b>

Source: statistics.migri.fi

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

## 4.2 Registrations of an EU citizen’s right of residence on the grounds of employment

The number of residence permits issued on the grounds of employment does not give a complete picture of foreign labour in Finland, as not all foreign nationals coming to work in Finland need to obtain residence permits. Some foreign employees enter Finland from the EU and EEA under the principle of free movement. EU citizens may freely reside and work in Finland for three months without registering their right of residence. Those EU citizens who stay in Finland for more than three months are required to register their right of residence.

In 2018, 4,179 EU citizens registered their right of residence in Finland on the grounds of employment. The number of these EU citizens increased slightly from the previous year but, over a longer term, their number is decreasing slightly. About one third (1,227) of the EU citizens who registered their right of residence on the grounds of employment were Estonians. Other nationalities of employment-based EU migration included citizens of Romania and Poland.<sup>15</sup>

## 4.3 Policy changes in legislation regulating entry

It has been the policy of both Prime Minister Sipilä’s Government (2015–2019) and the current Prime Minister Rinne’s Government (2019–) to attract specialists and entrepreneurs to Finland. Amendments to legislation on the permit system represent a policy of streamlining the residence permit process, thus facilitating entry and making Finland more attractive.

Residence permits issued on the grounds of employment are divided into 13 categories. Five new categories were introduced in 2018: startup entrepreneurs, seasonal workers, workers in seasonal employment requiring a separate preliminary decision, intra-corporate transferees and participants in voluntary service. In addition, the residence permit for a self-employed person was changed to the residence permit for an entrepreneur. The changes were a result of legislative amendments that entered into force in 2018.<sup>16</sup>

The new **residence permit for startup entrepreneurs** introduced in April 2018 has attracted interest, especially among technology sector specialists. The possibility of obtaining a residence permit for a startup entrepreneur supports efforts to attract talent

15 EMN: Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Finland 2018, p. 87–88. [http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto\\_ja\\_turvapaikka\\_2018\\_FI\\_EN.pdf](http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_2018_FI_EN.pdf)

16 Ibid.

to Finland and thus also promotes the importation of innovations. As part of the process of issuing residence permits, Business Finland assesses the company's business plan and considers whether or not the company to be established has sufficient competence as well as potential and resources for international growth and business. During the first year since the new Act entered into force, Business Finland has already received over one hundred applications for statements and issued 34 statements in favour of a company. The Finnish Immigration Service issued 23 residence permits for startup entrepreneurs in the first year.

As the residence permits for startup entrepreneurs were created, **the duration of residence permits issued to specialists and their family members was also changed. Under the new provisions, a residence permit may be issued for two years, rather than for one year as previously.** The residence permit process was also streamlined, and an extended permit can now be applied for in a fully electronic process without visiting the Finnish Immigration Service. While this amendment applies to all residence permits, in practice it makes the permit process easier especially for those working in international companies.

**The new Seasonal Workers Act** entered into force at the beginning of the year 2018. Pursuant to the new act, either a seasonal work visa or a seasonal work certificate must be applied for short-term seasonal work that lasts less than three months. A seasonal work visa is applied for by third-country nationals from non-visa-exempt countries and a seasonal work certificate by third-country nationals from visa-exempt countries. The Seasonal Workers Act applies only to workers in an employment relationship. Seasonal workers who are planning to work for more than three months will need to apply for a residence permit for seasonal work with the Finnish Immigration Service. If seasonal work lasts for less than six months, the granting of a residence permit does not require a preliminary decision by the Employment and Economic Development Office. For seasonal work that lasts 6–9 months, a residence permit for seasonal work is issued in a two-step process that includes a preliminary decision by an Employment and Economic Development Office (seasonal work requiring a preliminary decision). The new act implemented the EU Seasonal Work Directive in Finland. **The Seasonal Work Decree** (966/2017), supplementing the Seasonal Workers Act, also entered into force at the beginning of the year 2018.<sup>17</sup>

Under a legislative amendment which entered into force at the beginning of June 2019, labour market testing has been dropped in situations where a person who has already been working in Finland for at least one year with a permit issued on the grounds of employment

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17 EMN: Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Finland 2018, p. 88–91. [http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto\\_ja\\_turvapaikka\\_2018\\_FI\\_EN.pdf](http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_2018_FI_EN.pdf)

applies for an extended permit for a field different from the one for which the first permit was issued. The purpose of this amendment is to improve the preconditions for workforce mobility.

The new **ICT Act** entered into force at the beginning of the year 2018. The act 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 introduced a new residence permit type for intra-corporate transferees. Intra-corporate transferees under the ICT Act are managers, specialists and trainee employees of companies established in a third country who are posted within the same group of companies to work in a subsidiary established in Finland. For subsidiaries located in Finland, posted workers are in a key position and it is therefore important that their permit procedure is smooth. The act implemented the EU ICT Directive (Intra-Corporate Transferees Directive) in Finland.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

## 5 FOREIGN STUDENTS

### 5.1 Increase in students' residence permit numbers over the last year

#### Applications

In 2018, 6,281 persons applied for their first student residence permit. The number of residence permit applications by international students increased 11 per cent from the previous year (2017: 5,646). In the first six months of 2019, the number of residence permit applications submitted for studies was 2,726, which slightly exceeds the number submitted in the first six months of 2018 (2,571 applications).

In 2018, the largest number of applicants came from China (919), Russia (855), Viet Nam (440) and Bangladesh (332). Of these applicants, 51 per cent (3,229) were women, while 49 per cent (3,050) were men.

**Table 9. First applications of residence permit based on studies in 2015–6/2019**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	30.06.2019
China	882	993	973	919	390
Russian Federation	1,004	942	679	855	335
Viet Nam	638	892	289	440	230
Bangladesh	171	273	183	332	264
Republic of Korea	332	367	289	309	117
Other Countries	3,268	3,694	3,233	3,426	1,390
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,295</b>	<b>7,161</b>	<b>5,646</b>	<b>6,281</b>	<b>2,726</b>

Source: [statistics.migri.fi](http://statistics.migri.fi)

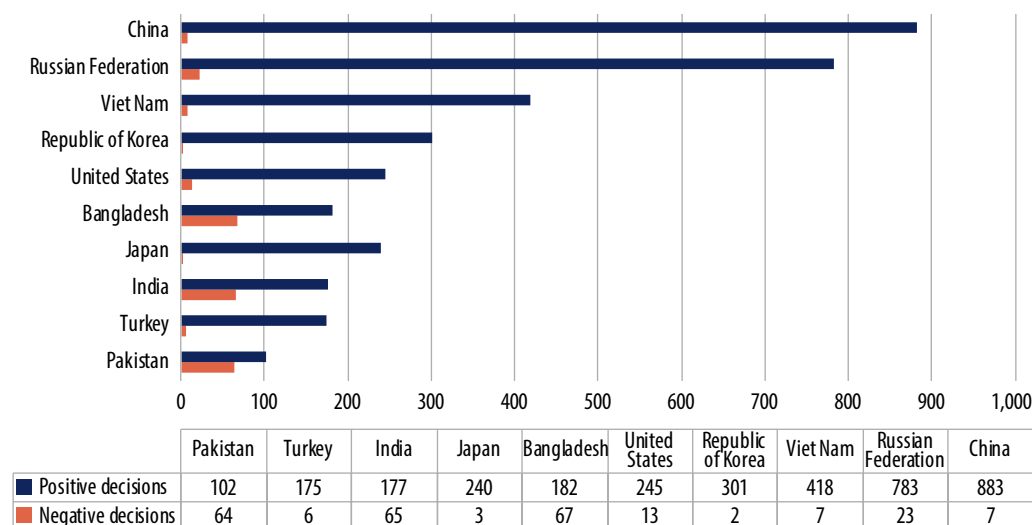
The number of EU citizens' registration applications for studies increased in 2018. The number of such applications submitted in 2018 was 1,317, whereas this figure was 801 in 2017 and 922 in 2016. The highest number of registration applications in 2018 was

submitted by German (299), French (200) and Italian (126) nationals. Of these applicants, 56 per cent were women and 44 per cent men.

## Decisions

In 2018, a first residence permit on the grounds of studies was issued to 5,202 foreign nationals. The number remained roughly at the same level as in the previous year (2017: 5,194 residence permits issued) and the downward trend that started in the previous year did not continue.<sup>19</sup> As in 2017, the largest groups of students entering Finland were Chinese (883 residence permits issued), Russian (783) and Vietnamese (418). In 89 per cent of cases, the decision on a student's residence permit was positive, 55 per cent of those who were granted a residence permit for studies were female and 46 % were male.

**Figure 4. Decisions on first residence permit applications based on studies, top 10 nationalities in 2018**



Source: [statistics.migri.fi](http://statistics.migri.fi)

In 2018, the number of decisions issued on applications for EU registration was 1,248. This number is clearly larger than in the year before. In 2017, the number of decisions made on registration applications was 794, and in 2016 it was 930. In 2018, 79 per cent of the decisions (1,014) were positive, while 21 per cent were negative (270). The

<sup>19</sup> EMN: Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Finland 2018 [http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto\\_ja\\_turvapaikka\\_2018\\_FI\\_EN.pdf](http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_2018_FI_EN.pdf)

greatest numbers of decisions were issued to German (293), French (198) and Italian (124) nationals.

The proportion of decisions to reject an EU citizen's registration increased significantly in 2018. Whereas in 2017, the share of accepted applications was 98 per cent, in 2018 it was 79 per cent. The number of negative decisions increased in almost all groups of nationalities. A likely cause for the changes in the numbers of accepted registrations is the transfer of matters related to aliens from the police to the Finnish Immigration Service at the beginning of 2017. In order to ensure consistent practices, decisions on the most demanding issues regarding EU citizens and their family members have been centralised to a single division of the Finnish Immigration Service.

The numbers of foreign students studying in Finland have been increasing over the last few years. While the table below illustrates this trend for each level of education, no statistics for 2018 are available yet.

**Table 10. Total stock of foreign students in Finland in 2015–2017**

	2015	2016	2017
General upper secondary education	1,908	1,956	2,142
Vocational education and training	13,830	16,467	19,203
UAS degree	9,195	9,291	8,943
Bachelor's degree	678	651	672
UAS Master's degree	540	618	657
Master's degree	6,297	6,873	6,468
Doctoral degree	3,615	3,651	3,603
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>36,063</b>	<b>39,507</b>	<b>41,688</b>

Source: Education Statistics Finland

## 5.2 Policy changes in legislation regulating entry

In recent years, it has been the policy of the Finnish Government to facilitate the immigration of students and researchers. The new Government Programme of Prime Minister Rinne contains several references to international students. The Government wishes to facilitate the opportunities for foreign researchers, students and graduates and their families to stay in Finland by reforming the permit practices, streamlining the residence permit processes and reinforcing the connections between higher education and working life. In the future, the Government intends to grant students a residence permit for the full period of their studies and extend it for a period of two years after graduation as well as allow permit holders to accept short-term work. The Government



also plans to investigate financial support modes to compensate for the tuition fees of non-EU/EEA students studying in Finland if they stay on to work in Finland after graduation.

A legislative amendment that entered into force at the beginning of September 2018 extends the validity of residence permits for researchers and students from non-EU countries, and provides encouragement for jobseeking and entrepreneurship by issuing residence permits for these purposes. This amendment implemented an EU directive (2016/801/EU) aiming to ensure that as many of those who have completed their degrees in EU countries as possible would also remain in the EU area to work. While a temporary residence permit will still be issued to all students, as a basic premise it will be valid for two years rather than one if the preconditions for its issue are met for the full period of residence. An extended permit will also be issued for two years at a time in principle. A continuous residence permit will always be issued to researchers, regardless of the duration of the research project.

## 6 FAMILY REUNIFICATION

### 6.1 Family is the most common reason for moving to Finland

#### Applications

In 2018, family was again the most common reason for moving to Finland. The number of first applications for a residence permit on the grounds of family ties totalled 11,036. In 2017, their number was 11,619 so there was a decrease of approximately five per cent. The number of applications for a first residence permit submitted in the first six months of 2019 was 5,523, or a similar figure as in the first six months of 2018 (5,456).

In 2018, Russian became again the most common nationality among applicants for a residence permit on the grounds of family ties whereas in the previous year, it had exceptionally been Iraqi. This exception in the statistics in 2017 seems to be a result of the asylum seeker situation in 2015 when approximately 32,000 asylum seekers entered Finland, 63 per cent of them Iraqi nationals.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 11. Applications of first residence permit based on family ties in 2015–6/2019**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	30.6.2019
Russian Federation	1,383	1,592	1,172	1,208	595
India	677	579	700	936	536
Iraq	558	1,100	1,689	846	364
Somalia	483	576	661	558	274
China	410	431	433	459	230
Thailand	552	516	422	441	223
Ukraine	268	278	310	382	192
Other Countries	5,138	5,071	6,232	6,206	3,109
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,469</b>	<b>10,578</b>	<b>11,619</b>	<b>11,036</b>	<b>5,523</b>

Source: [statistics.migri.fi](http://statistics.migri.fi)

<sup>20</sup> EMN: Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Finland 2018, p. 92–93 [http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto\\_ja\\_turvapaikka\\_2018\\_FI\\_EN.pdf](http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_2018_FI_EN.pdf)

## Decisions

In 2018, the Finnish Immigration Service made a total of 11,305 decisions on first applications for a residence permit on the grounds of family ties. A first residence permit on the grounds of family ties was issued to 9,009 foreign nationals. The number decreased slightly from the previous year when 9,089 residence permits were granted on the grounds of family ties.

**Table 12. Decisions on first residence permit based on family ties in 2015–6/2019**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	6/2019
Russian Federation	1,281	1,472	1,012	1,052	527
Iraq	317	557	1,107	902	340
India	688	565	698	873	425
Somalia	411	410	448	469	192
Thailand	540	472	350	359	222
Other Countries	4,802	4,695	5,474	5,434	2,922
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,039</b>	<b>8,171</b>	<b>9,089</b>	<b>9,009</b>	<b>4,628</b>

Source: [statistics.migri.fi](http://statistics.migri.fi)

In 2018, Russians reclaimed their position as the most common nationality among those who received a residence permit on the grounds of family ties (1,052). The second most common nationality was Iraqi (902) and the third was Indian (873).<sup>21</sup>

Of the decisions given, 80 per cent were positive and 20 per cent were negative. The share of positive decisions decreased slightly from the previous year (2017: 83 per cent).<sup>22</sup>

Residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties can be categorised based on the sponsor. Of those who were issued with a first residence permit on the grounds of family ties, 31 per cent were family members of Finnish citizens. Family members of beneficiaries of international protection accounted for 19 per cent of all people who were issued with a residence permit on the grounds of family ties. However, as in the previous year, the most common scenario was the granting of a residence permit on the grounds of family ties to a family member of other foreign national, such as a foreign national who had been issued with a residence permit on the grounds of employment: 49 per cent of all cases were like this.<sup>23</sup>

21 EMN: Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Finland 2018, p. 92–93 [http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto\\_ja\\_turvapaikka\\_2018\\_FI\\_EN.pdf](http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_2018_FI_EN.pdf)

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

Of the first residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties in 2018, 61 per cent were issued to women. This figure was 71 per cent in 2017 and 69 per cent in 2016.

Apart from third-country nationals, family reasons brought also EU citizens to Finland. In 2018, a total of 1,895 EU citizens registered their right of residence in Finland on the grounds of family ties. Their number increased somewhat from the previous year: in 2017, the corresponding figure was 1,706. The most common nationality among these registrations was Estonian (654).<sup>24</sup>

## 6.2 Policy changes in legislation of family reunification

An amendment to the Aliens Act, under which the age of a family reunification sponsor is based on the date on which they submitted an application for international protection, entered into force at the beginning of June 2019. Consequently, an unaccompanied minor arriving in Finland will be treated as a minor for the purposes of a family reunification application even if they turn 18 during the process.

This amendment is based on the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union, and it applies both to those who have been granted asylum and those receiving subsidiary protection. The application for family reunification still needs to be submitted within three months of the date on which the family reunification sponsor is notified of the decision granting them international protection. In 2018, the Finnish Immigration Service received 62 applications for a first residence permit where the grounds for the application were guardianship of a minor receiving international protection.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.93

## 7 NATURALISATIONS

### 7.1 Finland received 9,600 new citizens in 2018

#### Applications

At the end of 2018, almost 258,000 foreign nationals were living in Finland. The number of foreign nationals increased by almost 8,200, or 3.3 per cent, year on year. At the end of 2018, foreign nationals represented 4.7 per cent of the entire population.<sup>25</sup>

In 2018, more people than in previous years applied for Finnish citizenship. A total of 11,676 citizenship applications were submitted during 2018 (2017: 10,704). Russian citizens are still the largest group of applicants. Somalis and Iraqis are among the other largest groups of applicants. The number of applications for Finnish citizenship submitted by Syrians has increased significantly in recent years, and Syrians are now one of the largest groups applying for Finnish citizenship.

The statistic also showed a slight increase in applications by citizens of the United Kingdom. When citizenship declarations are also included, 230 citizens of the United Kingdom applied for Finnish citizenship (2017: 201, 2016: 99).<sup>26</sup>

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25 Statistics Finland, Foreign citizens: <https://www.tilastokeskus.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa/ulkomaan-kansalaiset.html> (31.7.2019)

26 Immigration statistics 2018: Last year, more and more people applied for a residence permit based on work: [https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset\\_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-useampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella](https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-useampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella) (31.7.2019)

**Table 13. Applications of Finnish citizenship in 2015–2019**

Former Nationality	2015	2016	2017	2018	30.6.2019
Russian federation	2,312	2,347	2,131	2,137	980
Iraq	988	896	811	972	599
Somalia	1,316	1,110	950	1,127	577
Estonia	448	533	580	589	341
Afghanistan	508	520	579	549	272
Syrian Arab Republic	46	97	134	309	254
Other nationalities	5,420	5,623	5,519	5,993	2,837
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,038</b>	<b>11,126</b>	<b>10,704</b>	<b>11,676</b>	<b>5,860</b>

Source: [statistics.migri.fi](http://statistics.migri.fi)

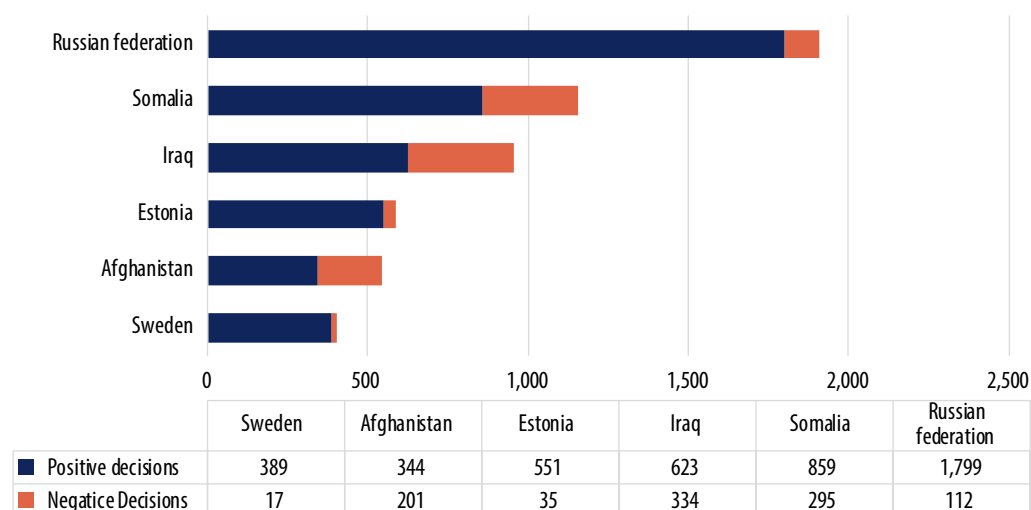
Certain groups of people, such as former Finnish citizens, can obtain Finnish citizenship by declaration. In 2018, there were 1,020 citizenship declarations made. The number of citizenship declarations shows an increasing trend: 923 declarations were submitted in 2017, whereas this figure was 787 in 2016.

## Decisions

The number of decisions on citizenship applications and declarations was 11,415. Of these, 84 per cent were positive and 16 per cent were negative. As in previous years, the most common reason for a negative decision was insufficient language skills. Other common reasons were unclear identity, insufficient period of residence and the applicant's failure to satisfy the integrity requirement.<sup>27</sup>

In 2018, Finnish citizenship was granted to a total of 9,610 individuals. This includes both citizenship applications and citizenship declarations. The number decreased compared to 2017, when citizenship was granted to 12,600 individuals. The larger number of decisions in 2017 was due to a backlog from earlier years being cleared. Of those who were granted Finnish citizenship, 53 per cent were women and 47 per cent were men.

<sup>27</sup> EMN: Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Finland 2018, p. 112 [http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto\\_ja\\_turvapaikka\\_2018\\_FI\\_EN.pdf](http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_2018_FI_EN.pdf)

**Figure 5. Decisions on applications of Finnish citizenship, top 6 groups by former nationality**

Source: [statistics.migri.fi](https://statistics.migri.fi)

## 7.2 Policy changes in naturalisation policy

The Nationality Act was amended so that a person found guilty of certain serious offences may lose their Finnish citizenship. The Act entered into force on 1 May 2019. An individual may lose their Finnish citizenship if found guilty of an offence against the vital interests of Finland for which the most severe punishment provided is at least eight years of imprisonment. Such offences include compromising the sovereignty of Finland, incitement to war, treason and espionage. The loss of citizenship also requires the individual to have been sentenced to at least five years of unconditional imprisonment.

A person may also lose their citizenship if they are convicted of a serious offence with terrorist intent, such as a breach of the prohibition on chemical weapons, aggravated trafficking in human beings, hostage taking, a nuclear explosive offence, kidnapping or killing. In this case, a further condition is that the crime in question was committed against the vital interests of Finland.

An individual may lose their Finnish citizenship only if they are also a citizen of another country and have sufficient de facto ties to that country. The decision on the annulment of citizenship will be made by the Finnish Immigration Service.

## 8 INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

### 8.1 Asylum seekers

#### Applications

In 2018, a total of 4,548 asylum applications were submitted (2017: 5,047), but nearly one half of them were subsequent applications. There were 2,409 first asylum applications (2017: 2,137) and 2,139 subsequent applications. When the subsequent applications are not counted, the number of asylum seekers arriving in Finland is very low. Last years the numbers of asylum seekers arriving Finland have been lower than before the record year 2015, when more than 32,000 asylum seekers arrived in Finland. Before 2015, the number of applicants remained relatively stable at 3,000–4,000 applicants per year.<sup>28</sup>

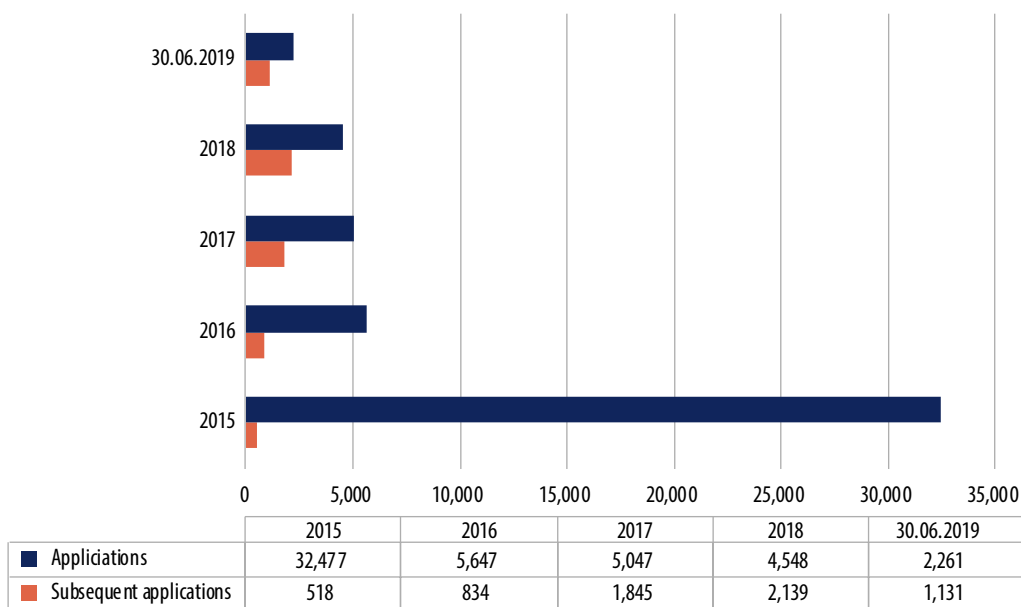
A subsequent application refers to an application concerning international protection submitted by a person after receiving a legally valid decision concerning a previous application. A common reason for subsequent application is that the applicant states new grounds that had not emerged before. The most typical new grounds provided by the applicant are the applicant having converted to Christianity in Finland or that they are a member of a sexual or gender minority.<sup>29</sup> The submission of subsequent applications on this scale is a new phenomenon, which emerged following an exceptional year for asylum seekers in 2015.

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28 Immigration statistics 2018: Last year, more and more people applied for a residence permit based on work [https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset\\_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-useampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella](https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-useampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella)

29 Ibid.



**Figure 6. The number of asylum applications and subsequent applications in 2015–6/2019**

Iraqi nationals submitted 1,566 asylum applications in Finland in 2018. However, 1,347 of these, or almost 86 per cent, were subsequent applications. Iraqis were the largest group submitting subsequent applications. After Iraqis, the largest citizenship groups among asylum seekers were the Russians and Somalis. Russians became the second-largest group of applicants during last year. A large number of the Russian asylum seekers were Jehovah's Witnesses and North Caucasians.<sup>30</sup> The number of asylum applications submitted in the first six months of 2019 was 2,261. One half of these were subsequent applications (1,131).

**Table 14. The number of asylum seeker applications by nationality in 2015–6/2019**

	2015	2016	2017	2018	30.06.2019-
Iraq	20,484	1,247	1,453	1,556	766
Russian Federation	190	192	405	490	145
Somalia	1,981	432	130	371	218
Turkey	57	101	113	293	188
Afghanistan	5,214	754	420	284	189
Other countries	4,551	2,921	2,526	1,554	755
TOTAL	32,477	5,647	5,047	4,548	2,261

Source: [statistics.migri.fi](https://statistics.migri.fi)

30 Immigration statistics 2018: Last year, more and more people applied for a residence permit based on work. [https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset\\_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-use-ampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella](https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/maahanmuuton-vuoden-2018-tilastot-yha-use-ampi-haki-viime-vuonna-oleskelulupaa-tyon-perusteella)

While the number of new asylum seekers arriving in Finland was low in 2018, the number of clients registered at reception centres has only decreased relatively slowly. Whereas the number of clients registered with the reception system was approx. 13,300 at the end of 2017, this number remained at approx. 10,700 at the end of 2018.

Funding from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is used to speed up the processing of asylum applications by for example strengthening the cooperation and division of work between officials as well as to support the vocational expertise of the officials. Funding is also directed to developing IT systems, collecting data about the health of asylum seekers, ensuring the quality of the general legal counseling provided at the reception centers and collecting information from the countries of origin.

## Decisions

In 2018, the Finnish Immigration Service made a total of 6,379 decisions on asylum applications. Of these decisions, 43 per cent were positive (2017: 40%). In absolute numbers, this is 2,740 positive decisions, most of which (1,852) granted asylum. Subsidiary protection was granted to 431 individuals and a residence permit on other grounds, such as compassionate grounds, to 457 individuals. The share of negative decisions was 31 per cent (2017: 42%). 20 per cent of applications were dismissed and in 6 per cent of cases, the application expired.<sup>31</sup>

When comparing the distribution of decisions with that of the previous year, one can note that the share of positive decisions increased slightly and the share of negative decisions decreased. The share of dismissal decisions increased, too. One reason for the increase in dismissal decisions were subsequent applications: with some applicants, it was noted that their applications did not present new, relevant grounds and consequently there was no need to re-examine the applications.<sup>32</sup>

## 8.2 Refugees

For 40 years, Finland has resettled 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

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31 EMN: Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Finland 2018, p. 97 [http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto\\_ja\\_turvapaikka\\_2018\\_FI\\_EN.pdf](http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_2018_FI_EN.pdf)

32 Ibid.

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.

Finland's refugee quota, 750 refugees per year, remained unchanged for several consecutive years. The Prime Minister Rinne's Government, which came into office in June 2019, decided that the number of quota refugees will be increased to 850 in 2020 in line with the Government Programme.

Under the 2020 refugee quota, Finland will receive a total of 400 Syrian refugees from Lebanon and Turkey and 200 Congolese refugees from Zambia. In addition, Finland will receive a total of 130 refugees from Niger, including particularly vulnerable refugees evacuated by the UNHCR from Libya to Niger. However, Finland might also receive refugees evacuated from Libya from other countries where an evacuation mechanism may be established.

Finland is also preparing for the resettlement of 120 emergency and urgent cases. Emergency and urgent cases mean people who are in need of urgent resettlement because they need protection or they have serious medical needs, for example. These people are resettled without any limitations on nationality or region.

Funding from AMIF is used to support and streamline the Finnish resettlement process for instance by offering pre-departure cultural orientation for the annual quota refugees, strengthen the abilities of municipalities to receive refugees and develop guidance to accelerate the refugees' integration paths. 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.

### **8.3 Policy changes in international protection**

Subsequent applications submitted by asylum seekers on the current scale are a new phenomenon in Finland, and legislation was amended in an attempt to address the phenomenon. New legislation on the issue entered into force at the beginning of June 2019. These amendments concern both the conditions on which applications are accepted for processing and putting decisions to refuse entry into effect. The purpose of the amendment is to reduce the possibilities of abusing the subsequent application procedure concerning international protection and to guide applicants to present all the facts and grounds known to them that are relevant to the application already in their first application or an appeal concerning it.

At the same time, more specific provisions on the right to work of foreign nationals applying for international protection were laid down: the right to work now ends once a decision to remove from the country an asylum seeker whose application has been turned down is final or their application has expired. The right to work only becomes valid again three or six months after the submission of a subsequent application, depending on whether or not the applicant has presented a valid travel document when submitting the application. Under the amendment, a subsequent application cannot be used merely to extend the right to work in situations where a foreigner has no grounds for being issued with a residence permit based on work.

This legislative amendment also contained a provision on seizing the travel document of a foreign national who is applying for international protection. Its purpose is to promote a smoothly running asylum procedure, ensuring that a missing travel document will not make it impossible to, for example, identify an applicant or remove from the country a person whose application has been turned down. The document is returned to the applicant once they have been issued with a residence permit on the grounds of international protection or they leave the country.

In recent years, the quality of asylum decisions in Finland and the asylum procedure have been criticised in public discussion, especially by community sector. In 2018 and 2019, efforts were made to ensure and develop the quality of the asylum process with the aid of several projects, studies and analyses. An internal study of the asylum process and decision-making requested by the Ministry of the Interior and produced by the Finnish Immigration Service was completed in June 2018<sup>33</sup>. This study indicates that the asylum decisions have mostly been compliant with the law. One of the areas of development identified in the study was the systematic monitoring of interpretation quality and accuracy. The Finnish Immigration Service conducted an analysis of the interpretation quality in asylum interviews. After the analysis, the Finnish Immigration Service decided to recruit two quality control interpreters in the languages of the main countries of origin (Arabic and Dari). Their tasks include the quality control of asylum interview interpretation.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the Finnish Immigration Service's study, the Ministry of the Interior also commissioned a third-party report on the asylum process in December 2018. The purpose of this was, among other things, to identify any needs to develop the asylum process and to examine inter-authority practices and administrative courts' operating models in asylum

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33 Maahanmuuttoviraston selvitys sisäministerille turvapaikkapäätöksentekoon ja -menettelyyn liittyen. 13 June 2018. <https://intermin.fi/documents/1410869/4024872/Maahanmuuttoviraston+turvapaikkaselvitys/91b15620-7955-4876-9539-b2e23f9ee9f4>

34 EMN: Annual Report on Migration and Asylum. Finland 2018, p. 98 [http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto\\_ja\\_turvapaikka\\_2018\\_FI\\_EN.pdf](http://www.emn.fi/files/1970/Maahanmuutto_ja_turvapaikka_2018_FI_EN.pdf)

matters. The objective was finding out how the asylum process could be streamlined, the quality of the process improved and its duration shortened while ensuring better legal protection for asylum seekers in the future. The report was completed in June 2019, and it contains 21 recommendations for improving the asylum process. Among other things, the recommendations concern improving asylum seekers' legal protection, submission of asylum applications and identity checks.

## 9 IRREGULAR MIGRATION

In 2018, 2,014 irregular migrants were found in Finland. The total numbers for 2018 are not essentially different from these figures for 2017. Irregular stays take many forms, including both illegal residence and irregular work. The majority of these cases are minor violations, mainly short intervals between permits, most of which are detected in the course of the permit process. Persons residing in the country or in the area of free movement without a valid residence permit or a visa are also uncovered as part of supervision (emergency calls, monitoring of foreigners, inspections) and criminal investigations. These cases typically are about persons who attempt to hide from the authorities.

In the total statistics, all first-time asylum seekers who did not have a document entitling them to residence when submitting their applications have been regarded as staying in the country irregularly. Those who register as asylum seekers without documents entitling them to residence usually contact the authorities on their own initiative shortly after their arrival.

The total number of persons residing or working in Finland without the appropriate permits cannot be estimated directly based on the numbers of those who have been found living or working in the country on irregular terms. The figures describe the numbers of cases uncovered by the authorities, or those that have come up in the course of the authorities' actions. The figures on work only cover those working without the work permit required of a third-country national, not other abuses related to work.

The number of observations of irregular stays in inland areas and internal borders during the first six months of 2019 slightly exceeded the figures for the same period in the year before, however with minor differences. The increase in the number of violations against prohibitions of entry correspond to the earlier trend and are associated with itinerant crime rates. At the beginning of 2019, violating a prohibition of entry was criminalised as a specific offence under the Criminal Code. Previously, it was one form of violation against the Aliens Act. In the first half of 2019, the largest groups of nationalities came from Turkey, Iraq, Nigeria, Gambia and Afghanistan. These figures do not include EU citizens, who are a typical group violating the prohibition of entry in Finland.

## 9.1 Enforcement of decisions on removal from the country

It is the statutory task of the police to remove from the country any persons who do not leave Finland voluntarily once they have been issued with a removal decision (who have been refused entry or received a deportation decision). In 2018, the police repatriated approx. 2,600 persons who had been issued with a removal order, and this year, approx. 1,600 had been removed by the end of July. The most frequent destination countries for persons to be repatriated are Finland's neighbours, Estonia and Russia. Removals to European countries often take place under the Dublin Regulation. Estonia, however, is an exception. In total, the police repatriate persons who have been issued with a removal decision to approx. 100 different countries annually.

**Table 15. Removals by destination country**

	2018	- 31 July 2019
Estonia	662	342
Russian Federation	267	206
Italy	234	101
Romania	139	84
Iraq	137	32
Ukraine	83	93
Spain	76	50
Sweden	72	53
Turkey	56	38
Georgia	51	33

**Source:** Polstat

Finland continues to experience certain challenges in removing from the country those who have been refused entry or received a deportation decision to some key destination countries. In particular, these challenges are associated with the reluctance of two key countries of origin of asylum seekers, Iraq and Somalia, to readmit their returned citizens. Bilateral negotiations with both Iraq and Somalia aiming to conclude a readmission agreement continue.

## 9.2 Policy changes in legislation regarding irregular migration and removals of the country

The scale of penalties for the breach of an entry ban was toughened. A new penal provision related to the breach of an entry ban was added to the Criminal Code of Finland. Pursuant to it, the penalty for the breach of an entry ban is a fine or a maximum of one

year in prison. Before the amendment's entry into force, the provision mainly applied to breaches of an entry ban was the Aliens Act's provision on the violation of the Aliens Act, with the only penalty option being a fine. The legislative amendment was approved on 19 December 2018 and entered into force at the beginning of 2019.

Funding from AMIF is used to intensify the counselling given in the reception centers in order to motivate voluntary return, enhance the coordination and cooperation of return measures, develop cooperation with third countries and monitor the re-integration of returnees. Funding is also directed to the harmonization of repatriation procedures by developing a nationwide model to ensure the equal treatment of the returnees, especially those in a vulnerable position and to strengthen the effectiveness of monitoring removals from the country.



## 10 INTEGRATION

The working age population is decreasing in Finland, and we are already experiencing a shortage of skilled labour force. Consequently, it is important to invest in skills development and employment-promoting measures among the employed, the unemployed, and those outside the labour market, such as immigrants. The objective of the integration process is to prepare immigrants to enter working life as soon as they have the necessary capabilities. The need for integration measures is individual, and depends largely on the immigrant's background and situation in life. It is also important to recognise that the structures and receptiveness of society and the labour market have a major impact on integration.

It is important that the integration policy and any related reforms are based on extensive, reliable and sustained research data. In recent years, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has been strongly moving towards a data-driven integration policy and invested in building an integration follow-up system. The next comprehensive review of integration and good relations between different population groups, prepared during each parliamentary term, will be completed in autumn 2019.

On 23 January 2019, the Parliament approved, based on the Audit Committee's report, a position statement on the effectiveness of the integration of immigrants. In its statement, the Parliament asks the Government to prepare a comprehensive action plan addressing the need to modify integration measures and proposing reforms to be implemented. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is now preparing an action plan to be submitted to the Parliament. The action plan is to be submitted to the Parliament by the end of 2020.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has launched the preparation of an intersectoral **Government Integration Programme for 2020–2023**, which will include objectives and actions for the integration policy. The programme will be prepared in consultation with a number of different interest groups. This process also will be of much use in the preparation of a report required by the Parliament.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has addressed **the Parliament's position statement** in the Government Annual Report. The Ministry will provide the Parliament with an account within the requested schedule. One of the priorities of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government was to accelerate education and employment paths in order to make integration measures more compatible with the requirements of working life. Steps have also been taken to improve the integration of children, young people and families. Many of the reforms are fairly new, which means it is too early to assess their impact on the employment of immigrants. The impacts of integration measures and reforms of the education system already implemented on the education and employment paths of immigrants will be assessed in the report. Other factors assessed include the effects of labour market structures, social security, and the receptiveness of the labour market.

In its second supplementary budget proposal of 2018, the Government made a decision on a one-off additional transfer of EUR 5 million in total for the administrative branches of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment for developing Skills Centre activities, which improve migrants' skills and employment preconditions. This transfer was granted to the five largest cities for the development of a Skills Centre operating model for migrants. The model aims to provide combined education and training, employment and rehabilitation services for adult migrants. The objective is to accelerate migrants' paths to education, training and employment and to respond to the shortage of skilled labour. The goal of the Skills Centre activities is to improve the efficiency of mapping migrants' skills and guiding them to the labour market, education and training. It is likely that funds for continuing the Skills Centre Activities will also be made available in the 2019 Budget.

Funding from AMIF is used to ensure the integration of third country nationals (TCN) with a special focus on those in vulnerable position. Majority of the on-going projects aim to enhance reception capacity and improve integration services in municipalities. Many projects focus on the improvement of initial-stage integration services and models as well as the social inclusion of TCNs. Some projects offer training to professionals working with TCNs and develop new operating culture among volunteers. Culturally sensitive techniques for nationwide performance assessment are being developed and info systems are being put in place to promote the services by NGOs. Several projects focus on the integration of TCNs in a vulnerable position for example by developing alternative care systems or other services. Mental health and housing services are also being made more available for TCNs.

## 10.1 Main changes in labour market outcomes of immigrants and their children

In 2018, the employment rate (15–64) for foreign-born population was 62,2 % whereas for the domestic-born population the figure was 72,8 %<sup>35</sup>. 2017–2018 marked an exceptionally strong growth in employment and also the employment rate of foreign-born population grew by two percentage points in both 2016–17 and 2017–18. However, the employment rate is still 10 percentage points lower than that of the domestic-born population. Furthermore, the recent growth has not been any stronger for the migrants than the natives, although migrants were hit much harder by the recession.

The difference in native- and foreign-born populations' employment rates is largely due to the weak labour market performance of foreign-born women, which has declined remarkably since 2012 (Figure 7). Looking at the register-based statistics (Figure 8), the decline in employment rate of migrant women has not been as drastic (from 49 % to 46 % in 2012–2016), but the direction of the trend is the same – although the year 2018 is still not available. Also, register-based employment statistics give an even bleaker picture of migrant employment, especially for migrant men.

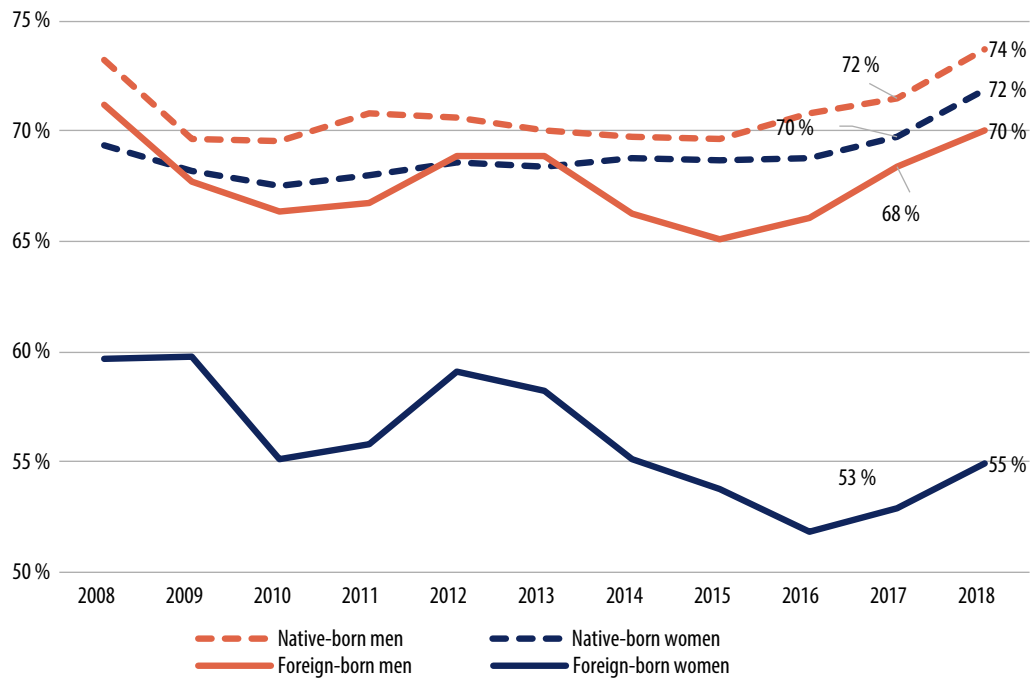
The differences are due to different concepts (age, migrant definition, LFS covers more seasonal work) and methodology (selective non-response in LFS, population over-coverage in register). People with better labor market position are overrepresented in LFS, but register based statistics do not cover all the seasonal work migrants do. Also, population-register overcoverage pushes the employment rate down as emigrated people are still counted as not-employed. Thus we see that the labor market position of migrant men is not as good as LFS figures show, but not as bleak as the register-based data suggest.

The second generation (children of immigrants) is still very young in Finland, 90 % being less than 20 years old and only 3 000 persons being over 25 years old (Statistics Finland, Population structure 2017). Hence, it is too early to study labour market integration of the second generation.

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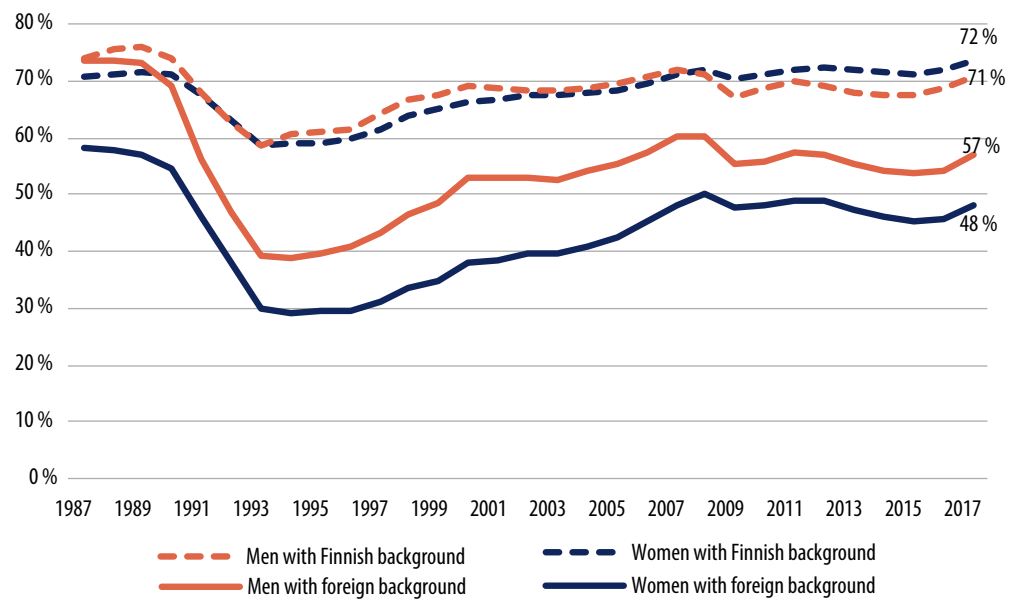
<sup>35</sup> Labour Force Survey, Eurostat

Figure 7. Employment rate (15–64) by sex and country of birth



Source: Labour Force Survey, Eurostat

Figure 8. Employment rate (18–64) by sex and migration background



Source: Statistics Finland

## 10.2 An investment fund for the employment of immigrants

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 jobs available are mainly on following areas: manufacturing, hotel and catering industry, transport, logistics and warehousing, cleaning and construction.

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.

In the KOTO-SIB experiment, 700 immigrants have been employed so far. The experiment has had 1,700 participants, and approx. 400 immigrants are receiving training. In the last operating year of this experiment (2016–2019), cooperation with the project administrator of the KOTO-SIB experiment (FIM Vaikuttavuussijoitukset Oy, formerly Epiqus), the service providers and the TE Office has been running smoothly. The client process and the partners' roles have been put on an permanent footing.

## 11 MIGRATION AND CO-OPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Finnish development policy is guided by the Government Report on Development Policy adopted in February 2016 and the Government Programme adopted in June 2019. 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 national, EU and international level in other fields. Coherence between the various policy sectors is a key principle in development policy.

Finland's development policy is based on the UN's Agenda 2030 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.

In addition to development cooperation and policy, Finland seeks to influence the underlying reasons and background factors of irregular and forced migration through multiple other ways, including crisis management, trade policy and through actions targeted to tackle climate change. 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.

Finland's development co-operation has four (4) priority areas, which all have an influence the drivers of migration over the long term:

1. Strengthening women and girls' status and rights
2. The growth of developing countries' economies to generate more jobs, livelihoods and well-being
3. Strengthening democracy and the functional capacity of societies
4. 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 – for instance – 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 2019 Government Programme places even a stronger priority on conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding in Finland's foreign policy.

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 where one of the targets is better management of migration.

In these countries, Finland also 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 totalled EUR 899 million and represented 0.39% of the gross national income (GNI). In 2019, a total of EUR 989 million is reserved for development cooperation (0.41% of GNI).

## 12 ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES AND DIVERSITY PROGRAMMES

### 12.1 Implementation of non-discrimination act

A new Discrimination Act came into force in the beginning of 2015. According to an act, authorities, educational institution and employers must promote equality and non-discrimination. The Ministry of the Justice guides other authorities on equality planning and the assessment of equality impacts. Equality Plan covering all grounds of discrimination is obligatory for authorities, organizers of education and all employers, who regularly employ more than 30 persons. Equality planning is a platform to promote equality and non-discrimination including measures to tackle racism, xenophobia and related intolerance. A number of training sessions on equality planning has been organized in different fields of society during 2017–2018. New guidebooks were also published on equality planning in municipalities and secondary education. Non-discrimination ombudsman gave its report to parliament in year 2018. The report consists of remarks and recommendations on the implementation of non-discrimination act and tackling human trafficking. The government has also commissioned a study on implementation of equality law, which will be published during the year 2020.

Finland has continued the implementation of the national system for monitoring on discrimination. The system is being implemented at three stages:

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](http://www.equality.fi))
2. Publishing an annual discrimination study and
3. Publishing a general report on discrimination in Finland once in a parliamentary period. During the period (2018–2019) two policy briefs, a study on data collection and Report on the realisation of equality in the freedom of choice experiments related to the health and social services reform was published within the national monitoring mechanism.



## 12.2 Policy programmes

The Government published the second National Action Plan on Fundamental and Human rights in the beginning of 2017. 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 the implementation of the action plan. The action plan's part on equality included a number of activities on tackling discrimination and promoting equality in different fields of society (for example conducting Fundamental Rights Survey and Programme to tackle working life discrimination). The implementation of the action plan was very much in progress during the year 2018 and by May 2019, 90% of the activities had been accomplished.

The Ministry of Justice has run various projects aiming to promote anti-discrimination and diversity:

**TRUST – Good Relations in Finland** was a project (2016–2018) coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and financed by the Ministry of Employment and Economy. The aim of the project was the promotion of non-discrimination in municipalities and regions around Finland through the application of the framework on good relations between population groups. The initial focus of the work was specifically on asylum seekers and municipalities with reception centres, but since 2017 the focus was been extended to involve other groups of migrants and ethnic minorities as well. The initiative developed, trained and tested good practices in municipalities in order to strengthen and maintain good relations, multidirectional integration and mutual respect. As a result, the project produced three official publications, training materials and other material for the promotion of good relations between population groups.

Finland was part of an EU funded project called **PROXIMITY** (“Proximity Policing against Racism, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Intolerance”, 2017–2018), coordinated by the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Security. The objective of the project was to increase the capacities of local authorities, especially of the municipal police, to identify and intervene in hate crime and other forms of intolerance. The project published a Comparative Report on Best Practices and a Practical Tool Kit for Proximity Policing, which Finland was responsible for.

Finland coordinated an EU funded project titled **RAINBOW RIGHTS** (2017–2018), aiming for the promotion of LGBTI equality in Europe. The project supported the implementation of the legislation on non-discrimination and promotion of non-discrimination both in Finland and in Baltic countries. The project produced diverse types of materials (written publications, videos, training materials etc.) for the promotion of non-discrimination and equality from both the LGBTI perspective as well as an intersectional approach.

Ministry of Justice heads the **AGAINST HATE** project (late 2017–2019) in collaboration 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. It has produced a shadow report on hate crimes, trained police officers and prosecutors and judges to recognize acts of hate crime and hate speech, and also the project has followed court cases on hate crimes and drafted recommendations for tackling the phenomenon in the future.

### 12.3 The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO)

Finland runs an Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO), both nationally and regionally. It 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 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
4. disseminate general information on good ethnic relations to society.

ETNO is co-ordinated under the auspices of Ministry of Justice (decree on ETNO (771/2015). The current advisory boards sit between years 2016 and 2020.

## 13 IMMIGRATION DISCUSSION IN FINLAND

### 13.1 Background and overview

This chapter looks at references to immigration themes in the Finnish media between July 2018 and June 2019. It is based on Meltwater media monitoring, in which keywords are tracked to find articles about a selected topic.<sup>36</sup> To ensure nationwide representation, a number of the largest Finnish national and regional media was included in the monitoring. It was also ensured that all major media companies are represented in the report.<sup>37</sup>

A total of 9,992 articles on immigration were published in the monitored media between 1 July 2018 and 30 June 2019. The word Suomi or Finland in different grammatical forms came up in 24% of the articles (2,408 articles) discussing immigration. While there were great many articles on Finnish politics and events, it was often not necessary to make a specific reference to Finland in them, for example in features discussing politics or elections. It should be noted, however, that international topics related to immigration had a very high visibility. Such topics included developments in the European Union, the United States, and international crises.

Yle and Helsingin Sanomat published a higher number of articles than the other media. Immigration was a topic of national significance covered in all parts of Finland. Yle and

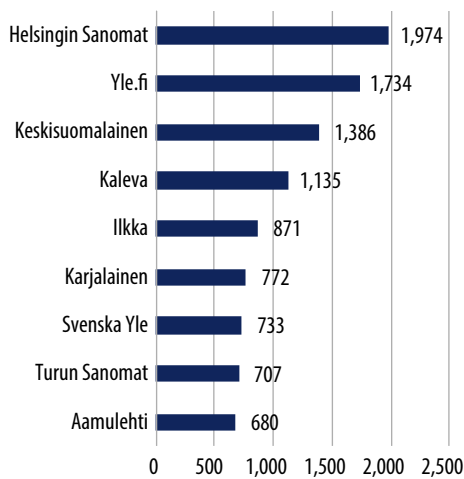
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36 The following keywords were used in the search: maahanmuut\*, turvapaik\*, pakolais\*, pakolain\*, immigratio\*, migrati\*, flyting\* & asyl\*. By using an asterisk, all grammatical forms and word endings can be included in the search.

37 Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle is the largest digital news media in Finland in terms of potential audiences for news broadcasts. Yle offers not only Finnish but also Swedish media (Yle Svenska). Helsingin Sanomat (Sanoma Media Finland) represents media in the Helsinki region in the report, in addition to which this newspaper is a national media with readers around Finland. Other media included in the report were Aamulehti in Tampere (Alma Media), Turun Sanomat in Turku (TS-Yhtymä), Ilkka in Ostrobothnia (Ilkka-Yhtymä), Karjalainen in Eastern Finland (PunaMusta Media), Keskisuomalainen in Jyväskylä (Mediatalo Keskisuomalainen) and Kaleva in Oulu (Kaleva Media). While the report did not include any specific media from Lapland, the largest newspaper in this region, Lapin Kansa, is owned by Kaleva, and most articles of a general nature were published in identical form both in Kaleva and Lapin Kansa.

Helsingin Sanomat also had significantly larger potential reach than other media.<sup>38</sup> Yle’s website had more than 1.5 million unique visitors in a month, whereas Helsingin Sanomat’s website attracted more than 800,000 unique viewers monthly. Consequently, articles on these media were more likely to reach a higher number of readers than the other media included in the report. In regional media, exceptionally large numbers of articles on immigration were published not only in the Helsinki region (Helsingin Sanomat) but also in Central Finland (Keski-suomalainen) and Oulu (Kaleva). A contributing factor to the large number of articles in Kaleva, in particular, were sexual offences committed in Oulu subregion in which the suspects comprised a number of persons with an immigrant background.

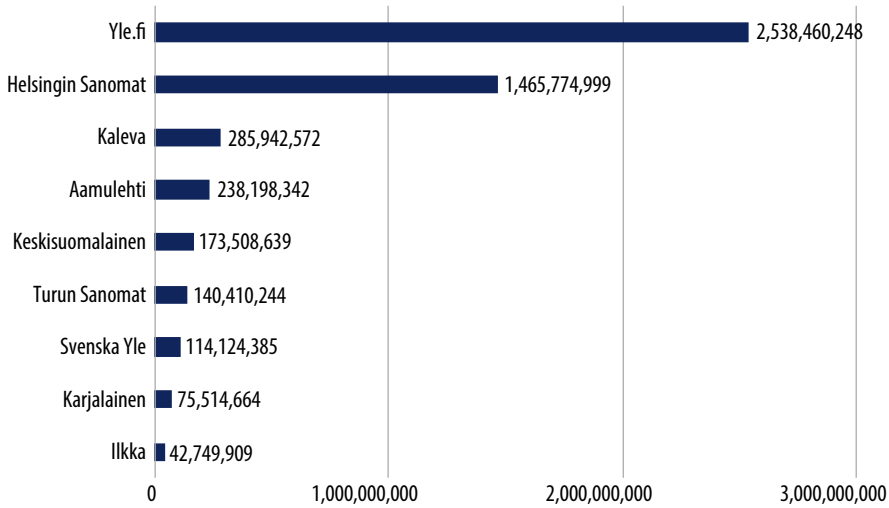
**Figure 9. Number of articles related to migration by news media, 7/2018–6/2019**



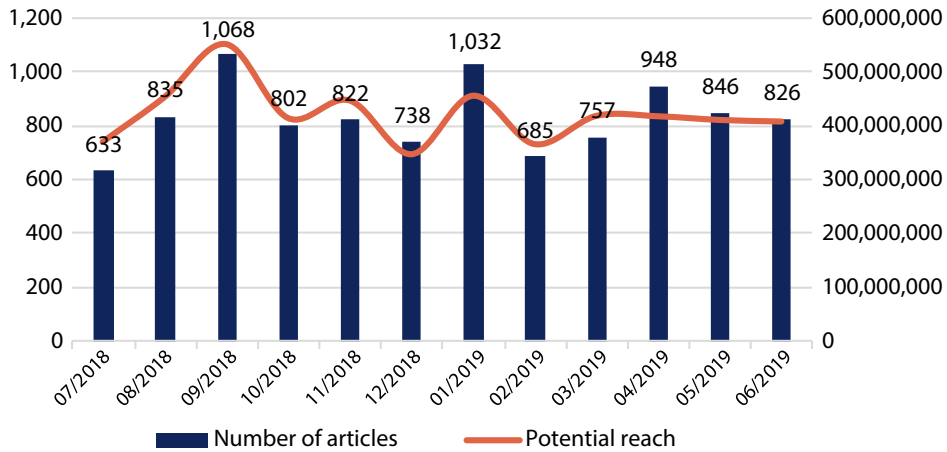
In September 2018 as well as in January and April 2019, the number of articles published was higher than in the other months. The potential reach was also higher in September and January. In September, the general election in Sweden created heightened visibility; in January, immigration and asylum seekers came under media limelight as the sexual offences in Oulu were uncovered; and in April, parliamentary elections in Finland increased the number of articles on immigration.

<sup>38</sup> Potential reach is the potential value based on unique monthly viewers on websites (data provided by SimilarWeb).

**Figure 10. Potential Reach of viewers by news media, 7/2018–6/2019**



**Figure 11. Media visibility of migration topics by month, 7/2018–6/2019**



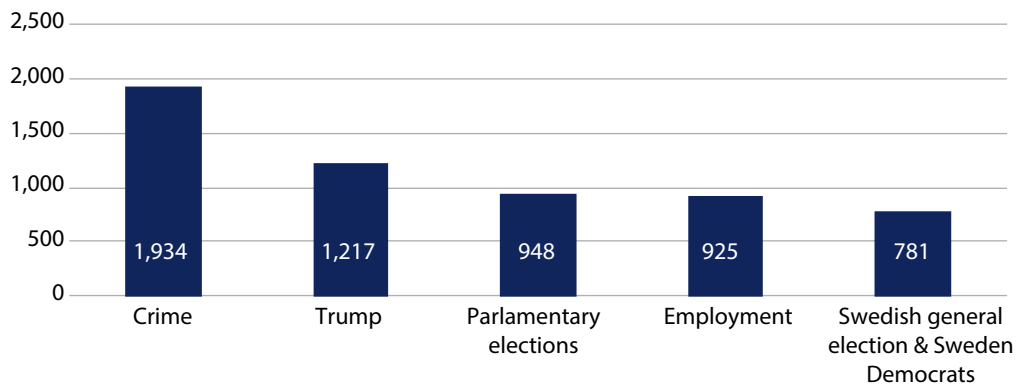
A number of different but partly overlapping themes contributed to the media visibility of immigration in Finland. Immigration and crime were discussed more often than other topics, as crime was referred to in 1,934 articles during the period under scrutiny. Within the theme of crime, particularly the sexual offences in Oulu received a great deal of media attention. President Trump was mentioned in 1,217 articles in the context of immigration.

These topics included his statements related to immigration, his meeting with President Putin in Helsinki, and mid-term elections in the United States.

The Finnish parliamentary elections were the third largest theme, which was cited in 948 articles in connection with immigration topics. The elections were the backdrop for a number of articles which, while making no mention of the parliamentary elections, represented political parties' and candidates' efforts to reach and influence voters. The general election in Sweden and the Sweden Democrats party had a great deal of visibility in the Finnish media in the context of immigration. Immigration and employment were also discussed in a number of articles. Apart from these themes, especially international events (including the crisis in Syria) attracted media interest.

All in all, discussions related to immigration were almost always connected to a more extensive theme, and their scale and content were thus determined by topical events. It could be said that during the period under scrutiny, the coverage of immigration in the Finnish news media consisted of three different categories: crime associated with immigration, international events, and current affairs that influenced domestic politics.

**Figure 12. Media visibility of different topics related to migration, 7/2018–6/2019**



## 13.2 Immigration and crime were discussed more often than other topics

Keywords related to immigration combined with offence(s) and crime with all possible attributes (including sexual offences) and in all grammatical forms were mentioned in 1,934 articles in total. The highest level of media attention by far was attracted by sexual offences against minors in Oulu, in which the perpetrators were men having arrived in Finland as asylum seekers or refugees, some of whom had already been granted Finnish citizenship.<sup>39</sup> Oulu was referred to in 30 per cent of all articles discussing immigration and crime (577 articles), and Oulu and offences were mentioned in five per cent of all articles published about immigration. The highest number of articles relating to Oulu, immigration and crime was published in Kaleva (138 articles).

The sexual offences in Oulu were linked to immigration in the media on 4 and 5 December as the investigator in charge talked about the background of the offences. The police were investigating three cases of sexual offences in Oulu, in all of which the victim of the suspected offence was a girl aged under 15, and all perpetrators had arrived in Finland as asylum seekers or refugees. A common denominator in all these cases was that the victim and the suspect had met on the social media. According to the police, there were no direct links between the cases.<sup>40</sup> On 12 January 2019, the news related that the number of suspects had gone up to 16 and that the number of victims was close to ten.<sup>41</sup>

In the aftermath of the offences committed in Oulu, articles were published on the media that discussed the proportion of asylum seekers in sexual offence statistics. They also gave rise to human interest articles in which, stimulated by the news of the offences in Oulu, people described their personal experiences,<sup>42</sup> and various experts gave their opinions from

39 Aamulehti 4 December 2018: Osa Oulun seksuaalirikoksista epäillyistä oli jo ehtinyt saada Suomen kansalaisuuden – Uhreina kolme alle 15-vuotiasta (<https://www.aamulehti.fi/a/201340985>) (read on 5 September 2019).

40 Yle 5 December 2018: Tämän tiedämme Oulun seksuaalirikosepäilyistä nyt: Kymmenen epäiltyä, joista yksi tavoittamatta, useita kansallisuuksia, kaikki uhrin alle 15 (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10540583>) (read on 5 September 2019).

41 Yle 12 January 2019: 16 epäiltyä, yksi vapaalla jalalla, uhrien määrä lähestyy kymmentä – ainakin tämä Oulun seksuaalirikosepäilyistä tiedetään (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10593609>) (read on 5 September 2019).

42 See e.g. Keskisuomalainen 12 January 2019: Uusista seksirikosepäilyistä toipuvassa Oulussa toivotaan malttia surun keskellä – äiti pelkää lapsensa puolesta, maahanmuuttaja joutui huutelun kohteeksi (<https://www.ksml.fi/kotimaa/Uusista-seksirikosepailyista-toipuvassa-Oulussa-toivotaan-malttia-surun-keskella-C3%A4-iti-pelkaa-lapsensa-puolesta-maahanmuuttaja-joutui-huutelun-kohteeksi/1310277>) (read on 5 September 2019) & Yle 14 January 2019: Maahanmuuttajat huolestuivat uusista rikosepäilyistä ja välttelevät Oulun keskustaa – "Kun tuli lisää näitä, loppui voimat" (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10596132>) (read on 5 September 2019).

different perspectives<sup>43</sup>. The sexual offences in Oulu also sparked political discussion, in which the most frequent topics were losing citizenship as a result of committing offences<sup>44</sup>, deportation<sup>45</sup>, the Blue Reform party's demand of a government emergency meeting<sup>46</sup>, the motion of censure planned by the Finns Party concerning the security situation in Finland<sup>47</sup> as well as imposing harsher penalties for offences against children<sup>48</sup>.

President Sauli Niinistö said it was intolerable that some of those who have come to Finland for safety have made the country less safe. President Niinistö's comments were discussed in a number of media.<sup>49</sup> The first court hearing and sentencing in the Oulu cases did not attract as much media interest as the investigation. The communication policy of the police in Oulu, on the other hand, sparked media discussion. In these articles, experts criticised the media management of the police and the media as, according to experts, these actors should understand that offences committed by foreigners give rise to strong reactions.<sup>50</sup>

Immigrants and offences also came up in the context of the trial of journalist Johanna Vehkoo as Junes Lokka, a local councillor in Oulu, accused Vehkoo of defamation. Vehkoo had called Lokka a racist and a Nazi in a Facebook post. Vehkoo considered the report of an offence as part of the harassment to which Lokka had subjected her.<sup>51</sup>

43 See e.g. Kaleva 8 December 2018: "Valitettavasti nämä teot eivät tulleet minulle yllätyksenä", sanoo professori Matti Tolvanen Oulun seksuaalirikoksista - lainoppineet selkeyttäisivät nykyistä lainsäädäntöä (<https://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/oulu/valitettavasti-nama-teot-eivat-tulleet-minulle-yllatysena-sanoo-professori-matti-tolvanen-oulu-seksuaalirikoksista-lainoppineet-selkeyttaisivat-nykyista-lainsaadantoa/811692/>) (read on 5 September 2019) & Yle 12 January 2019 Kyberrikollisuuden erikoistunut rikosylikomisario Oulun tapauksista: "Kyse on vain jäävuoren huipusta" (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10593661>) (read on 5 September 2019).

44 Yle 12 January 2019: Sisäministeri Oulun seksuaalirikosepäilyistä: Tällaisten rikosten pitäisi olla kansalaisuuden menettämisen peruste (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10593511>) (read on 5 September 2019).

45 Helsingin Sanomat 12 January 2019: Voiko seksuaalirikokseen syyllistyneen ulkomaalaisen karkottaa? Miksi irakilaiset korostuvat rikostilastossa? HS kokosi vastauksia kysymyksiin, joita viime päivien tapahtumat herättävät (<https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005963532.html>) (read on 5 September 2019).

46 Kaleva 12 January 2019: Siniset vaatii hallitusta kokoontumaan ylimääräiseen hätäkokoukseen Oulun seksuaalirikosepäilyjen vuoksi (<https://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/siniset-vaatii-hallitusta-kokoontumaan-ylimaaraiseen-hatakoukseen-oulu-seksuaalirikosepailyjen-vuoksi/813453/>) (read on 5 September 2019).

47 Yle 8 December 2018: Perussuomalaiset kutsuu opposition tekemään välikysymystä turvallisuustilanteesta (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10545226>) (read on 5 September 2016).

48 Kaleva 15 January 2019: Kaikki päättäjät koventaisivat rangaistuksia – Kaleva kysyi Oulun vaalipiirin kansanedustajilta, mitä on tehtävä seksuaalirikosten ehkäisemiseksi (<https://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/oulu/kaikki-paattajat-koventaisivat-rangaistuksia-kaleva-kysyi-oulu-vaalipiirin-kansanedustajilta-mita-on-tehtava-seksuaalirikosten-ehkaisyksi/813562/>) (read on 5 September 2019).

49 Helsingin Sanomat 12 January 2019: Presidentti Niinistö Oulun uusista seksuaalirikosepäilyistä: Kestämätöntä (<https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005963593.html>) (read on 5 September 2016).

50 See e.g. Yle 18 January 2019: Päivi Happonen: Onko Oulu ainoa paikka, jossa tutkitaan seksuaalirikoksia? Mitä Oulun poliisin tiedotuskampanja sai aikaan? (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10602010>) (read on 6 September 2019) & Helsingin Sanomat 18 January 2019: Tutkijat arvostelivat Oulun seksuaalirikosten mediahoitoa – Päätoimittajat vastaavat, mikä on ammattimaisen median rooli ja vastuu (<https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000005970409.html>) (read on 6 September 2019).

51 Yle 20 March 2019: Toimittajan ja kaupunginvaltuutetun oikeudenkäynti on merkittävä tapaus vihapuheen rajanvedossa – "Saako varasta nimittää varkaaksi?" (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10697834>) (read on 5 September 2019).



Of other themes related to offences and immigrants, the media brought up assaults on bus drivers, one of which occurred in Loimaa and another in Uurainen, by men who had been refused asylum. According to the police, these incidents were not connected, the perpetrators were not known to each other, and there were no indications of terrorism.<sup>52</sup>

Immigrants and offences were linked to measurements of political support, and they were seen to have influenced the increase in support for the Finns Party, in particular.<sup>53</sup>

### 13.3 President Donald Trump was referred to a number of times

US President Donald Trump was referred to a number of times in the context of immigration themes during the period under scrutiny. In total, keywords related to immigration and President Trump came up in 1,217 articles. The greatest spike in President Trump's visibility was associated with the mid-term elections in the United States in November 2018. Refugeeism came up, especially as Ilhan Omar was elected to the House of Representatives. This Democratic candidate elected in Minnesota was born in Somalia and lived at a refugee camp in Kenya as a child before migrating to the United States in 1997.<sup>54</sup> Before the elections, President Trump and immigration issues had appeared in the same articles in connection with the mid-term election themes and electoral advertising. Particular attention was attracted by President Trump's campaign advertisement, which such media operators as Facebook, CNN, NBC and Fox News shelved because of its racist tone.<sup>55</sup>

In summer 2018, President Trump met his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in Helsinki, which created visibility both before and after the meeting. Prior to the meeting, the media speculated on the topics to be brought up and discussed the reasons for the planned demonstrations. After the meeting, the media rehashed its topics, in which refugeeism came up due to the humanitarian crisis and refugee situation in Syria. President Putin said that the United States and Russia could work together to resolve the humanitarian crisis. President Trump commented on the refugee situation in Syria as being difficult. The articles

52 Yle 7 December 2018: KRP vaatii kahta vangittavaksi välikohtauksista linja-autoissa – toinen vangittiin, toinen oikeudessa lauantaina (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10543786>) (read on 4 September 2019).

53 Yle 11 April 2019: Ylen kannatusmittaus: Perussuomalaiset kiilasi kakkoseksi, SDP:n etumatka kutistunut (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10731903>) (read on 5 September 2019).

54 Helsingin Sanomat 7 November 2018: He tekivät historiaa – Yhdysvaltain välivaaleissa oli ehdolla ennätysmäärä naisia ja vähemmistöjen edustajia (<https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005891250.html>) (read on 5 September 2019).

55 Aamulehti 6 November 2018: Donald Trumpin mainos hyllytettiin rasistisena – Facebook ja suuret uutiskanavat päättivät pannasta (<https://www.aamulehti.fi/a/201289479>) (read on 5 September 2019).

drew attention to President Trump's failure to mention that the United States has received few Syrian refugees because of the security risk.<sup>56</sup>

Towards the end of the period under scrutiny in May 2019, President Trump made headlines once more in the context of Latin American migrants attempting to enter the United States. President Trump announced that he wanted Mexico to solve the problem of illegal immigration from Latin America to the United States through Mexico and said he would impose a five per cent tariff on imports from Mexico as a penalty for illegal immigration through Mexico.<sup>57</sup>

### 13.4 Immigration in the news of Finnish parliamentary elections and government formation negotiations

Keywords related to the parliamentary elections and immigration came up in 948 articles during the period under scrutiny. The coverage of immigration and the parliamentary elections was the most extensive in Helsingin Sanomat, which published 195 articles on this theme, followed by Yle with 161 articles. The greatest spikes in visibility were associated with analyses of the election results and anticipation of government formation negotiations. It should be noted that the volume of political discussion related to immigration was higher, even if the parliamentary elections were not always referred to in these articles. Political parties' expressions of opinion and goals were nevertheless relevant to the elections of spring 2019 and attempts to reach voters.<sup>58</sup>

At the time of the general election in Sweden, Finnish journalists speculated on whether or not its results would have an impact on the Finnish elections. The Finns Party, in particular, rejoiced in the success achieved by the anti-immigration Sweden Democrats party, and believed it would be reflected on their support in the Finnish parliamentary elections.<sup>59</sup> Immigration was mainly discussed at a general level before the elections, referring to it as one of the key themes. Paradoxically, at the same time there was no spike in the occurrence

56 See e.g. Helsingin Sanomat 16 July 2018: Trump antoi Putinille paljon köyhtä – Yhdysvaltojen ja Venäjän suhteissa otettiin askel kohti parempaa, mutta moni pöyristyi Trumpin käytöksestä (<https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005759405.html>) (read on 5 September 2019).

57 Yle 31 May 2019: Meksikon presidentti Trumpille: Meksikolaiset eivät ansaitse tällaista kohtelua (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10811118>) (read on 5 September 2019).

58 See e.g. Helsingin Sanomat 7 February 2018: Perussuomalaiset leikkaisivat vaalikauden aikana kaksi miljardia VM:n virkamiesehdotuksen tavoin – kohteina tuulivoima ja maahanmuuttajat (<https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005993294.html>) (read on 6 September 2019).

59 Helsingin Sanomat 9 September 2018: Perussuomalaisten Jussi Halla-aho ruotsidemokraattien vaalivalvojoissa: "Tulos hyödyttää Ruotsia, perussuomalaisia ja kaikkia suomalaisia monellakin tavalla" (<https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005821387.html>) (read on 6 September 2019).

of immigration and parliamentary elections in the same article, and no major immigration debate focusing on differences between the opposing views came up.

After the elections, the foremost topic was the backgrounds of the persons elected to Parliament, and the candidates' views of immigration were aired in the articles in this context.<sup>60</sup> The behaviour of voters and issues they considered important<sup>61</sup> were also discussed, as well as the political parties' views of immigration<sup>62</sup>. The most prominent daily spike by far occurred on the day after the elections, or 15 April 2019, as the composition of the future government was considered, and there was speculation about the government formation negotiations. Immigration was mainly mentioned as an issue important for the Finns Party<sup>63</sup> and a stumbling block in the government formation negotiations<sup>64</sup>. The change in the political map of Finland was also analysed, citing not only climate policy but also immigration as factors that obviously divide the parties' opinions.<sup>65</sup>

In connection with the government formation negotiations, immigration was referred to in 241 articles after the elections, or between 14 April and 30 June 2019. Immigration was mentioned as an area in which the Finns Party would demand a stricter policy<sup>66</sup>. Later on, the media discussed the incoming Government's plans of monitoring asylum seekers who have received a negative decision using technical devices (including electronic tagging).<sup>67</sup>

60 See e.g. Yle 14 April 2019: Tässä ovat Vaasan vaalipiirin 16 kansanedustajaa – RKP kiri historiallisesti ohi keskustan (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10739074>) (read on 6 September 2019).

61 Helsingin Sanomat 14 April 2019: Suomi äänestää tänään: HS selvitti, mikä äänestäjille on tärkeää ehdokkaan valinnassa (<https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000006070186.html>) (read on 6 September 2019).

62 Keskisuomalainen 14 April 2019: Kommentti: Haaviston vihreät ja Halla-ahon "tsunamipuolue" voittajia jo nyt (<https://www.ksml.fi/kotimaa/Kommentti-Haaviston-vihre%C3%A4t-ja-Halla-ahon-tsunamipuolue-voittajia-jo-nyt/1357569>) (read on 6 September 2019).

63 Yle 15 April 2019: Analyysi: Hallitusneuvotteluista äärimmäisen vaikeat – muutoksen suunta jäi kysymysmerkiksi (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10739181>) (read on 6 September 2019).

64 Aamulehti 15 April 2019: Rinne pelastui täpärästi, mutta edessä ovat äärimmäisen vaikeat hallitusneuvottelut ja vaarana heikko hallitus (<https://www.aamulehti.fi/a/856374f2-778c-4bea-8652-dd66554af3ec>) (read on 6 September 2019).

65 Keskisuomalainen 15 April 2019: Professori eduskuntavaaleista: On siirrytty tilanteeseen, jossa useampi tasaväkinen puolue kilpailee keskenään (<https://www.ksml.fi/kotimaa/Professori-eduskuntavaaleista-On-siirrytty-tilanteeseen-jossa-useampi-tasav%C3%A4kinen-puolue-kilpailee-kesken%C3%A4%C3%A4n/1357981>) (read on 6 September 2019).

66 Helsingin Sanomat 15 April 2019: Voitonjuhlien jälkeen Antti Rinteellä alkaa arki: Nämä isot asiat hallitustunnustelija löytää edestään (<https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000006072467.html>) (read on 6 September 2019).

67 Yle 30 May 2019: Tuleva hallitus suunnittelee teknistä valvontaa kielteisen päätöksen saaneille turvapaikanhakijoille (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10809502>) (read on 6 September 2019).

## 13.5 Swedish general elections and other topics

The Swedish general election or the Sweden Democrats were mentioned together with keywords related to immigration in 758 articles during the period under scrutiny. Before the election, there was extensive coverage in Finland of a dispute between the Swedish television company SVT and Sweden Democrats, as a result of which the producer of SVT's election programmes left her task.<sup>68</sup> The election was believed to predict the results of the Finnish parliamentary elections, and the same polarisation was expected to also become evident in Finnish politics.<sup>69</sup> The Finns Party considered the Sweden Democrats' success a positive development which would lead to a healthier discussion culture<sup>70</sup> and become the new normal for Europe<sup>71</sup>.

Once the election results were out, Jussi Halla-aho anticipated a need for the Swedish Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party to work together with the Sweden Democrats. Halla-aho also believed that the Sweden Democrats would form the government with the Moderate Party.<sup>72</sup> Difficult government formation negotiations were predicted for Sweden in a number of statements from experts and politicians.<sup>73</sup> The post-election analyses asked if this would mark the end of bloc politics in Sweden.<sup>74</sup> Immigration was referred to in the articles as the Sweden Democrats' most important election theme. In general, the opinions of Jimmie Åkesson, Chairperson of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, were covered more extensively than other parties' views<sup>75</sup>.

68 Helsingin Sanomat 9 September 2018: Ruotsidemokraatit suuttuivat Ruotsin yleisradion kannanotosta ja boikotoivat nyt vaaliohjelmia – Yle ei toimisi samoin, sanoo etiikkapäällikkö (<https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005820761.html>) (read on 6 September 2019).

69 See e.g. Helsingin Sanomat 9 September 2018: Kannattaa katsoa tänään Ruotsiin, sillä polarisoituminen uhkaa Suomenkin politiikkaa (<https://www.hs.fi/mielipide/art-2000005820617.html>) (read on 6 September 2019) & Karjalainen 9 September 2018: Ruotsissa käydään Suomen esivaalit (<https://www.karjalainen.fi/mielipiteet/mielipiteet/paakirjoitus/item/193996>) (read on 6 September 2019).

70 Yle 9 September 2018: Halla-aho: Ruotsidemokraattien nousu tervehdyttää keskustelukulttuuria Ruotsissa (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10395424>) (read on 6 September 2019).

71 Helsingin Sanomat 9 September 2018: Perussuomalainen Jussi Halla-aho ruotsidemokraattien vaalivalvojaisissa: "Tulos hyödyttää Ruotsia, perussuomalaisia ja kaikkia suomalaisia monellakin tavalla" (<https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005821387.html>) (read on 6 September 2019).

72 Kaleva 9 September 2018: Jussi Halla-aho Lännen Medialle: Moderaatit ja sosiaalidemokraatit joutuvat nyt tekemään yhteistyötä ruotsidemokraattien kanssa (<https://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/jussi-halla-aho-lannen-medialle-moderaatit-ja-sosiaalidemokraatit-joutuvat-nyt-tekemaan-yhteistyota-ruotsidemokraattien-kanssa/804417/>) (read on 6 September 2019).

73 See e.g. Kaleva 9 September 2018: Upin Tiilikainen: Ruotsin vaalitulos saattaa enteillä hankalia hallitusneuvotteluja (<https://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/ulkomaat/upin-tiilikainen-ruotsin-vaalitulos-saattaa-enteilla-hankalia-hallitusneuvotteluja/804416/>) (read on 6 September 2019) & Helsingin Sanomat 9 September 2018: Sipilä ennakoii Ruotsille hankalia hallitusneuvotteluja – ja ruotsidemokraateille tanakasti valtaa (<https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000005821448.html>) (read on 6 September 2019).

74 Yle 10 September 2018: Analyysi: Voisiko blokkipolitiikan takuumaa Ruotsi ottaa jatkossa mallia Suomesta? (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10395901>) (read on 6 September 2019).

75 See e.g. Aamulehti 10 September 2018: Ruotsidemokraattien Åkesson kertoi suosikkinsa hallituspohjaksi – "Jos Kristersson haluaa muodostaa hallituksen, hänen pitää puhua minulle" (<https://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/ruotsidemokraattien-akesson-kertoi-suosikkinsa-hallituspohjaksi-jos-kristersson-haluaa-muodostaa-hallituksen-hanen-pitaa-puhua-minulle-201190283>) (read on 6 September 2019).

Of other topics, a government crisis in Germany received visible media attention. Differing opinions about immigration were seen as the cause of the dispute. Interior Minister Seehofer announced he would step down if his immigration policy reform programme would not be adopted. Chancellor Merkel opposed to one item in the 63-point programme, under which Germany would refuse entry to asylum seekers who have already been registered in another EU Member State.<sup>76</sup> The dispute was resolved as an agreement was reached to exercise more stringent immigration policy on the border between Germany and Austria.<sup>77</sup>

European Union policy on asylum seekers and immigration was discussed in a number of articles. The topics included asylum centres planned by the EU<sup>78</sup> and border controls on the EU's external borders<sup>79</sup>. The United Kingdom's Brexit process and its impacts on British citizens residing in European Union territory as well as European Union citizens living in the United Kingdom also came up.<sup>80</sup>

The UN's Global Compact for Migration attracted media attention in early December 2018. The articles stated that Finland was planning to adopt the document at the Marrakech conference. According to the articles, the Global Compact for Migration is a general convention that sets out the principles of procedures in migration issues. The largest party in Belgium announced it would resign from the government because the Belgian Government intended to adopt the Compact.<sup>81</sup>

Immigration also came under the limelight at regular intervals as a consequence of crises in various states. Syria, for example, was referred to in 667 articles together with keywords related to immigration. The crisis in Syria was one of the largest of its kind from the perspective of the media visibility of immigration. In the context of Syria, the articles discussed the progress of military campaigns, political discussions and the development

76 Yle 2 July 2018: Maanantai on Saksan hallituksen kohtalon päivä, kompromissia etsitään vielä kerran – tästä pääset kärryille hallituskriisin uusista käänteistä (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10284241>) (read on 7 September 2019).

77 Yle 3 July 2018: Saksan hallituksen kriisiin ajaneessa kiistassa syntyi sopu (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10285386>) (read on 7 September 2019).

78 Yle 20 September 2018: EU:n kaavailemat pakolaiskeskukset jumissa: Kukaan ei halua isännöidä niitä (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10414302>) (read on 7 September 2019).

79 Helsingin Sanomat 20 September 2018: Tuleeko EU:n rajoille 10000 rajavalvojaa, miten etenee brexit? Suora lähetys Salzburgin kokouksesta, äänessä EU-johtajat (<https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005834893.html>) (read on 7 September 2019).

80 Yle 16 January 2019: EU-maat rauhoittelevat Britannian kansalaisia sopimuksettoman Brexitin varalta – Hollanti ohjeistaa brittejä kirjeitse (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10598685>) (read on 7 September 2019).

81 Helsingin Sanomat 9 December 2018: Suurin puolue jätti Belgian hallituksen vastalauseena YK:n siirtolaisuus-sopimukselle, jota Suomikin on hyväksymässä alkavalla viikolla (<https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005926857.html>) (read on 7 September 2019).

of the refugee situation<sup>82</sup>. Other themes covered included refugees' personal stories<sup>83</sup>, the results of elections in Denmark<sup>84</sup>, Nigeria and Boko Haram<sup>85</sup> and the situation in Venezuela<sup>86</sup>.

Immigrants' and asylum seekers' employment was a topic covered steadily throughout the period under scrutiny. In October, Sture Fjäder from the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland Akava proposed paying lower wages to immigrants to facilitate their employment, resulting in a media uproar<sup>87</sup>. Prime Minister Rinne's idea of making applicants who have been refused asylum work gave rise to a number of articles.<sup>88</sup> Li Andersson from the Left Alliance and Antti Häkkänen from the National Coalition Party agreed that more immigration will be needed as the working-age population in Finland grows older.<sup>89</sup> Immigrants' and asylum seekers' employment was analysed in media articles,<sup>90</sup> in addition to which the new Government Programme referred to giving immigrants access to the labour market and increasing immigration as measures for improving employment.<sup>91</sup>

82 Yle 2 July 2018: Yli 270 000 ihmistä pakenee Syyrian hallinnon hyökkäystä – naapurit pitävät rajansa kiinni (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10285074>) (read on 7 September 2019).

83 Yle 6 June 2019: Turvapaikanhakijana tullut Gabar Othman kauhistui kylmyyttä ja kieltä, mutta päätti jäädä – nyt hän puhuu seitsemää kieltä ja auttaa muita kotoutumaan (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10807925>) (read on 7 September 2019).

84 Yle 6 June 2019: "Ilmastotollot" jyräsivät ja populistit hävisivät Tanskan vaaleissa – Ylen toimittaja Kööpenhaminasta: Tanska on usein trendien aallonharjalla (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10817901>) (read on 7 September 2019).

85 Helsingin Sanomat 15 January 2019: Boko Haram hyökkäsi sotilastukikohtaan Nigeriassa ja syytti tuleen pakolaisten suojapaikkoja – seitsemän kuoli (<https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000005966674.html>) (read on 7 September 2019).

86 Helsingin Sanomat 22 February 2019: Venezuelan rajalla järjestetään tänään kaksi kilpailevaa konserttia – toisella kerätään apua, toisella vastustetaan ulkovaltojen sekaantumista (<https://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/art-2000006010490.html>) (read on 7 September 2019).

87 Yle 30 October 2018: Akavan johtajan Sture Fjäderin nauttima luottamusta punnitaan kohlausuntojen jälkeen – Akavan hallitus kokoontuu iltapäivällä (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10481623>) (read 7 September 2019).

88 Helsingin Sanomat 13 April 2019: Antti Rinne hämmensi vaatimalla, että kielteisen turvapaikkapäätöksen saaneet on laitettava töihin – Näin hän selittää (<https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000006068734.html>) (read on 7 September 2019).

89 Yle 19 November 2018: Li Andersson ja Antti Häkkänen: Maahanmuuttoa tarvitaan lisää, kun työikäinen väestö ikääntyy (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10515767>) (read on 7 September 2019).

90 See e.g. Aamulehti 20 September 2018: Yli 400 turvapaikanhakijaa on työllistynyt ja saanut oleskeluluvan Suomeen, vaikka turvapaikkahakemus on hylätty (<https://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/yli-400-turvapaikanhakijaa-on-tyollistynyt-ja-saanut-oleskeluluvan-suomeen-vaikka-turvapaikkahakemus-on-hylatty-201208554>) (read on 7 September 2019) & Helsingin Sanomat 15 May 2019: Turvapaikanhakijoilla usein niukka koulutus – kotona oltiin korjausverstaalla, rakennuksella tai kokkina (<https://www.hs.fi/paivanlehti/15052019/art-2000006105674.html>) (read on 7 September 2019).

91 Helsingin Sanomat 4 June 2019: HS-analyysi: Rinteen hallitus jättää ikääntyvän Suomen talousaasteet pitkälti tulevien hallitusten murheeksi (<https://www.hs.fi/politiikka/art-2000006130220.html>) (read on 7 September 2019).





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