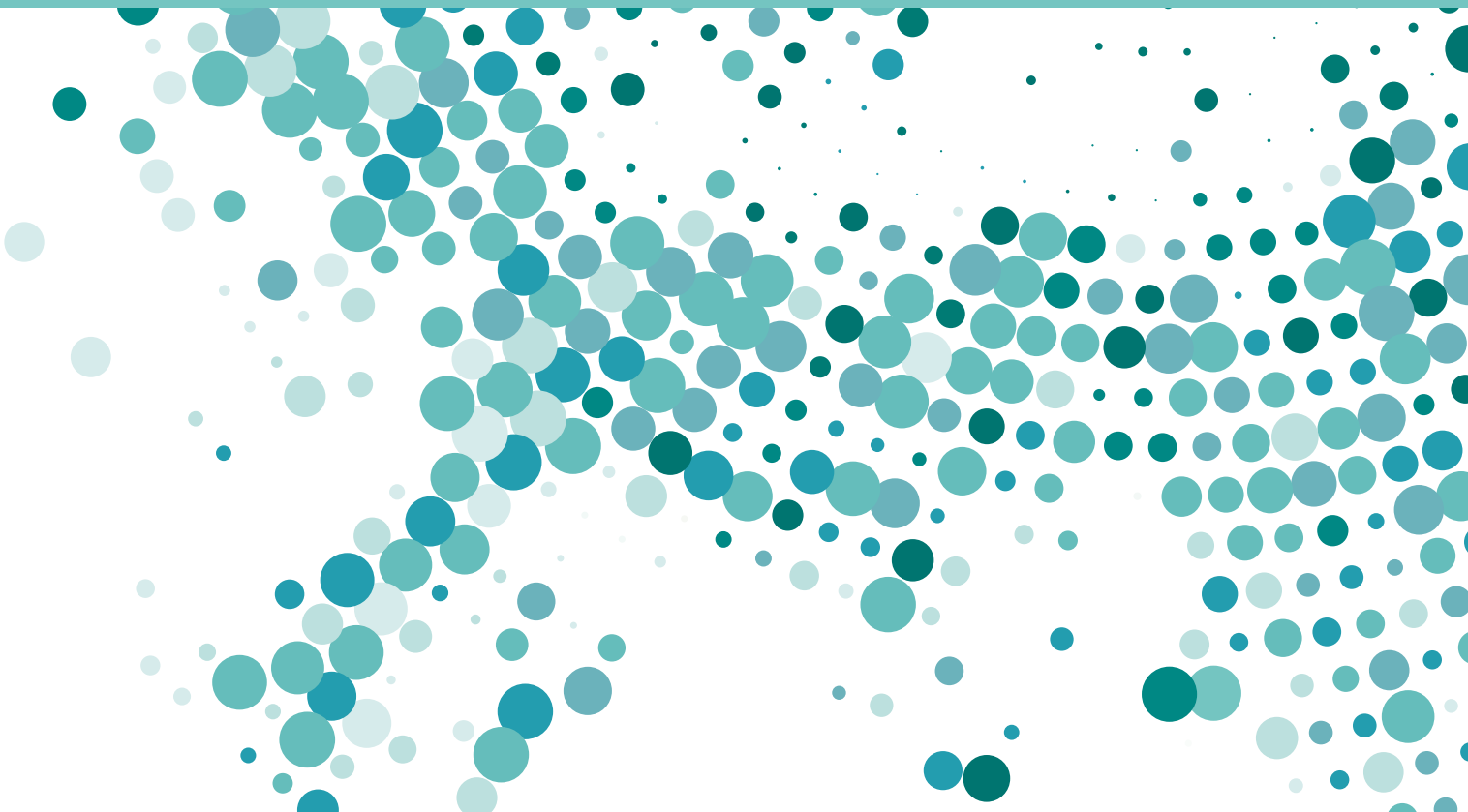


International Migration 2016–2017 Report for Finland

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR PUBLICATION 28/2017

Migration



Ministry of the Interior Publication 28/2017

International Migration 2016–2017

Report for Finland

Ministry of the Interior, Helsinki 2017

Suomi
Finland
100

Ministry of the Interior

ISBN (printed): 978-952-324-163-3

ISBN PDF: 978-952-324-164-0

Layout: Government Administration Unit, Publications, Teija Metsänperä

Helsinki 2017



Description sheet

Published by	Ministry of the Interior	6.11.2017
Authors	Immigration Department	
Title of publication	Finland's report on immigration to the OECD 2016–2017	
Series and publication number	Ministry of the Interior Publication 28/2017	
Register number		Subject Immigration
ISBN (printed)	978-952-324-163-3	ISSN (printed) 2341-8524
ISBN PDF	978-952-324-164-0	ISSN (PDF) 2341-8524
Website address (URN)	http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-164-0	
Pages	54	Language English
Keywords	immigration, emigration, immigration policy, statistics, OECD	
<p>Abstract</p> <p>Commissioned by the OECD, a national report by Finland covering the years 2016 and 2017 provides a concise summary of Finland's policies regarding immigration, key legal amendments, up-to-date statistics and a summary of the media commentary.</p> <p>On account of rapid changes to the immigration situation, Juha Sipilä's government enacted a number of amendments to legislation which sought to enhance the control of immigration and to streamline processes.</p> <p>In July 2017, the Ministry of the Interior launched a project to draft a government programme on immigration. The state's programme on integration was approved in September 2016. Efforts have been taken to promote equality and non-discrimination in various political sectors, including immigration.</p> <p>Improving conditions in the countries of origin of immigrants is one of the goals of Finland's development collaboration. Improving living conditions is also the key in controlling immigration movements.</p> <p>Asylum policy and asylum seekers have been the focus of public discussion, with integration and the employment of immigrants being overshadowed by other factors.</p> <p>The report was compiled by the Immigration Department of the Ministry of the Interior. Several other ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, contributed to the report in accordance with their areas of responsibility. The report has been delivered to the OECD in English and is, for this reason, published only in English in Finland.</p>		
Publisher	Ministry of the Interior	
Printed by (place and time)	Lönnerberg Print & Promo, 2017	
Distributed by/ Publication sales	Online version: julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi Publication sales: julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi	

Kuvailulehti

Julkaisija	Sisäministeriö	6.11.2017	
Tekijät	Maahanmuutto-osasto		
Julkaisun nimi	Suomen maahanmuuttoraportti OECD:lle 2016–2017		
Julkaisusarjan nimi ja numero	Sisäministeriön julkaisu 28/2017		
Diaari/hankenumero		Teema	Maahanmuutto
ISBN painettu	978-952-324-163-3	ISSN painettu	2341-8524
ISBN PDF	978-952-324-164-0	ISSN PDF	2341-8524
URN-osoite	http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-164-0		
Sivumäärä	54	Kieli	englanti
Asiasanat	maahanmuutto, maastamuutto, maahanmuuttopolitiikka, tilastot, OECD		
Tiivistelmä	<p>OECD:lle vuosittain toimeksiantona laadittava Suomen kansallinen raportti vuosilta 2016–2017 esittelee tiivistetysti maahanmuuttoon liittyviä poliittisia linjauksia, keskeisiä lakimuutoksia, ajankohtaisia tilastoja sekä sisältää mediakatsauksen.</p> <p>Viime vuosina nopeasti muuttuneen maahanmuuttotilanteen seurauksena pääministeri Juha Sipilän hallitus on toimeenpannut lainsäädännön uudistuksia, joilla tavoitellaan mm. maahanmuuton parempaa hallintaa ja sujuvampia prosesseja.</p> <p>Sisäministeriö asetti heinäkuussa 2017 hankkeen hallituksen maahanmuuttopolitiittisen ohjelman laatimiseksi. Valtion kotouttamisohjelma hyväksyttiin syyskuussa 2016. Yhdenvertaisuuden ja syrjimättömyyden edistäminen on pyritty huomioimaan useilla eri politiikan osa-alueilla, myös maahanmuuttopolitiikassa.</p> <p>Kehitysyhteistyöllä aikaansaattava lähtömaiden elinolojen parantaminen on Suomen kehityspolitiikassa tärkeä tavoite. Elinolojen parantuminen on avainasemassa myös muuttoliikkeiden hallinnan kannalta.</p> <p>Julkisessa keskustelussa on käsitelty eniten turvapaikkapolitiikkaa ja turvapaikanhakijoita, kotouttamisen ja maahanmuuton työllisyysnäkökulman jäädessä osaltaan niiden varjoon.</p> <p>Raportti on koottu sisäministeriön maahanmuutto-osastolla. Useat muut ministeriöt sekä virastot, kuten työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö, oikeusministeriö, sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö sekä ulkoministeriö ovat olleet mukana tuottamassa aineistoa omien vastualueidensa mukaisesti. Raportti on toimitettu OECD:lle englanninkielellä ja tästä syystä julkaistaan myös Suomessa ainoastaan englanniksi.</p>		
Kustantaja	Sisäministeriö		
Painopaikka ja vuosi	Lönnberg Print & Promo, 2017		
Julkaisun jakaja/myynti	Sähköinen versio: julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi Julkaisumyynti: julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi		

Presentationsblad

Utgivare	Inrikesministeriet	6.11.2017
Författare	Migrationsavdelningen	
Publikationens titel	Finlands rapport om migration till OECD 2016–2017	
Publikationsseriens namn och nummer	Inrikesministeriets publikation 28/2017	
Diarie-/ projektnummer		Tema Migration
ISBN tryckt	978-952-324-163-3	ISSN tryckt 2341-8524
ISBN PDF	978-952-324-164-0	ISSN PDF 2341-8524
URN-adress	http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-164-0	
Sidantal	54	Språk engelska
Nyckelord	migration, invandring, utvandring, migrationspolitik, statistik, OECD	
Referat	<p>Finland har fått i uppdrag att årligen utarbeta en nationell rapport om migration till OECD. Rapporten för 2016–2017 är en kortfattad presentation av politiska riktlinjer i anslutning till migrationen, viktiga lagändringar och aktuell statistik samt innehåller en medieöversikt.</p> <p>Till följd av migrationsituationen, som ändrats snabbt under de senaste åren, har statsminister Juha Sipiläs regering genomfört lagreformer som bl.a. syftar till en bättre hantering av invandringen och smidigare processer.</p> <p>Inrikesministeriet tillsatte i juli 2017 ett projekt för att utarbeta regeringens invandringspolitiska program. Statens program för integrationsfrämjande godkändes i september 2016. Inom flera politikområden, också inom migrationspolitiken, har man strävat efter att beakta främjandet av likabehandling och icke-diskriminering.</p> <p>Ett viktigt mål för Finlands utvecklingspolitik är att genom utvecklingssamarbete förbättra levnadsförhållandena i utreseländerna. Förbättrade levnadsförhållanden spelar en avgörande roll också med tanke på hanteringen av migration.</p> <p>Asylpolitik och asylsökande har behandlats mest i den offentliga diskussionen medan integration och invandring ur sysselsättningssynvinkel hamnar i skuggan av dem.</p> <p>Rapporten har sammanställts vid inrikesministeriets migrationsavdelning. Flera andra ministerier och ämbetsverk, t.ex. arbets- och näringsministeriet, justitieministeriet, social- och hälsovårdsministeriet och utrikesministeriet har varit med om att producera material i enlighet med deras ansvarsområden. Rapporten har sänts till OECD på engelska och därför publiceras den endast på engelska också i Finland.</p>	
Förläggare	Inrikesministeriet	
Tryckort och år	Lönberg Print & Promo, 2017	
Beställningar/ distribution	Elektronisk version: julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi Beställningar: julkaisutilaukset.valtioneuvosto.fi	

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1 Major developments in migration and integration policy

1.1 Policy programmes

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

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

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

Ministerial working group on migration

The Government set up a ministerial working group on migration in September 2015. Chaired by Minister of the Interior, Paula Risikko, the working group compiles and maintains

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

situational awareness of the asylum seeker situation and monitors implementation of the national integration programme. In December 2016, the ministerial working group adopted an Action Plan for the Prevention and Management of Illegal Stay. The plan focuses on the illegal residence in Finland of asylum seekers who have received a negative decision.

Government 's action plan on asylum policy²

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

Government 's migration policy programme

In June 2017, the Ministry of the Interior set up a project for the preparation of the Government's migration policy programme on the basis of decisions taken by the ministerial working group on migration and the Government in its mid-term policy review. The programme will lay down Finnish migration policy guidelines for the current government term. Planned for publication at the beginning of 2018, the programme outlines the key objectives of migration related to employment, integration, good relations and internal security.

The Government Integration Programme³

Every four years the Government adopts the Government Integration Programme. This programme was adopted for the first time for the period 2012–2015. The Government Integration Programme for 2016–2019 was approved on 8 September 2016. It includes areas of focus, objectives, measures, responsibilities and resources for integration. The goal of the Government Integration Programme is to promote equality and to ensure that the skills of immigrants benefit Finnish society. An effective initial integration phase and cooperation between authorities and other actors will help ensure a smooth transition for immigrants into the education system or working life. The Government Integration Programme has four focus areas, all of which are based on the Government Programme. The focus areas in-

2 Government action plan on asylum policy: http://vnk.fi/documents/10184/1058456/Hallituksen_turvapaikka-poliittinen_toimenpideohjelma_08122015+EN.pdf/3e555cc4-ab01-46af-9cd4-138b2ac5bad0

3 Government Integration Programme for 2016–2019 and Government Resolution on a Government Integration Programme; <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/79156>

clude a total of nearly 70 measures. Also contained within each focus area are measures to meet the integration challenge posed by the increased number of asylum seekers.

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 an international talents to support the growth and internationalisation of companies. It was decided in the Government's mid-term policy review session in April 2017 that the International talents boosting growth agenda be expanded into an intersectoral Talent Boost programme for the Government.

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

The Talent Boost programme aims to integrate international talents efficiently into companies to support growth and internationalisation. Another goal is to attract a 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 startups. Other objectives are to link international talents to the processes and services that foster growth and internationalisation and help companies to identify the added value in the skills and networks of international talents. The aim is that companies find international talents through business services.

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

1.2 New legislation

As a result of the rapidly changing migration environment in recent years, the Sipilä Government has implemented legislative reforms aimed at, for example, better manageability of migration and smoother processes. During the Government's term, changes have also been made to help attract international specialists to Finland. A well-functioning and reliable permission administration contributes to attracting specialists into the country. Some of the most important legislative amendments are mentioned below.

1.2.1 Duties of the Police and the Border Guard transferred to the Finnish Immigration Service

In June 2016, Parliament adopted a legislative amendment under which immigration administration duties performed by the Police and the Border Guard have been transferred to the Finnish Immigration Service, which assumed greater responsibility for Finnish Immigration Service in immigration affairs. This transfer of duties enabled the said authorities to concentrate on their respective key duties.

The Finnish Immigration Service assumed all duties related to travel documents, right of residence and nationality concerning aliens. It handles all permit matters concerning aliens. As applications may no longer be lodged at police stations, the Finnish Immigration Service established new customer service points in nine municipalities. The responsibility for asylum investigation was transferred from the Police to the Finnish Immigration Service in March 2016. Both the asylum investigation and the asylum interview, i.e. the establishment of the person's identity and investigating the travel route and possible grounds for international protection, are conducted during one meeting.

However, asylum applications are still submitted to the Police or the Border Guard, who are responsible for the registration of applicants. Duties related to the notification of decisions, monitoring of aliens and removal also remain with the Police and the Border Guard authorities. In asylum matters, only some of the duties were transferred to the Finnish Immigration Service; the Police and the Border Guard continued to perform the duties that are closely related to their key responsibilities. The above amendments entered into force in early 2017. The provisions on asylum matters have applied since July 2016.

1.2.2 The family reunification criteria reviewed

The government's proposal to tighten family reunification criteria was adopted by Parliament in June 2016. The legislative amendments came into force on 1 July 2016. According to these amendments to the Aliens Act, to exercise an alien's right to family reunification beneficiaries of international or temporary protection are also required to prove that they

have sufficient means to live in Finland, regardless of when the family was established. However, exceptions to the application of the income requirement are possible for valid reasons or if the best interest of a child so requires.

As a rule, a processing must be paid for residence permit application, but the applications of family members of beneficiaries of international protection were an exception as their applications used to be free of charge. As from May 2016, a fee is charged for applications by family members of beneficiaries of international protection.

1.2.3 Residence permits no longer granted on humanitarian grounds

In April 2016, Parliament adopted a legislative amendment to abolish the permit category for residence permits granted on humanitarian grounds. International protection now only means asylum or subsidiary protection.

Humanitarian protection has been purely a national category of international protection in Finland, with no obligations arising from international treaties or EU law. It has been granted only a few times in recent years because, for example, according to established European Court of Justice case law, those to whom humanitarian protection was to be originally granted are mainly persons under subsidiary protection.

1.2.4 Asylum appeals to be processed more swiftly

Legislative amendments to improve the handling of matters concerning international protection in Finland came into force on 1 September 2016. The aim is to accelerate the processing of asylum appeals. Asylum matters in the administrative branch of the Ministry of Justice include appeals to the administrative court and to the Supreme Administrative Court, as well as legal aid matters. The increase in the number of asylum applications has also significantly increased the number of appeals to Helsinki Administrative Court.

Legal proceedings themselves were streamlined by limiting the peremptory nature of further clarifications. In order to enable the Administrative Court and the Supreme Court to make better use of information technology, these courts were given the right use the online Register of Aliens. The processing of cases of detained aliens at district courts was streamlined in order to make them meet the provisions of the Coercive Measures Act.

The period for appealing asylum decisions made by the Finnish Immigration Service used to be 30 days and has now been reduced. Appeals to the administrative court must now be submitted within 21 days of notice of the decision. Both the administrative court and the Supreme Administrative Court must process appeals against decisions concerning international protection urgently. In addition, the provisions concerning the scope of le-

gal aid granted to asylum seekers and the qualification requirements of public legal aid attorneys were amended. These legislative amendments aim to enhance the effectiveness of the appeal procedures, while ensuring legal protection for beneficiaries of international protection. It is also important for those applying for international protection to have a final decision on their case as soon as possible.

On the basis of the law reform (1454/2015) that entered into force in January 2016, the Supreme Administrative Court is also competent in a two-member formation to cast a decision on a retrial appeal case, including any associated claims regarding asylum or other international protection, unless the nature of the case to be addressed requires a three-member formation.

Decentralisation of handling appeals of cases relating to international protection

An amendment to the Aliens Act (301/2004) decentralising the handling of appeals relating to international protection, formerly centralised at Helsinki Administrative Court, entered into force in February 2017. In addition to the Administrative Court of Helsinki, the administrative courts of Eastern Finland, Northern Finland and Turku will handle such appeals. The competent administrative court is determined according to the area of responsibility of the Finnish Immigration Service's Asylum Unit.

1.2.5 Amendment of legal aid in cases involving asylum

The provisions concerning the scope of legal aid granted to asylum seekers and the qualification requirements of public legal aid attorneys have been amended. These legislative amendments aim to enhance the effectiveness of the appeal procedures, while ensuring legal protection for beneficiaries of international protection.

The provisions of the Aliens Act regarding the special legal regime for the provision of legal aid were amended in an act (646/2016) entered into force on 1 September 2016. Legal aid includes the presence of a legal counsel at the asylum interview only if compelling reasons exist for the presence of such counsel. If the person seeking asylum is under 18 years of age and without a guardian in Finland, legal aid includes the presence of a legal counsel at the asylum interview. At the asylum interview, the applicant's grounds for international protection are established. The amendment did not touch aliens right for legal aid in administrative matters; rather, the right for legal aid is determined on the basis of the Legal Aid Act. At the administrative stage, legal aid is principally provided by public legal attorneys. Only an advocate or a licensed attorney may be appointed as a private attorney in asylum-related administrative and appeal matters. The amendment seeks to promote applicants' legal protection and to improve the quality of legal aid.

The amendment of the Legal Aid Act (650/2016) enabled a moderate per-matter fee to be paid to the private attorney for the performance of the attorney's duties. The use of per-matter fees will speed up and streamline the processing procedure and curb cost increases. The fees to be paid in asylum-related matters were laid down in Government Decree 761/2016, which entered into force on 15 September 2016.

1.2.6 New alternatives for detention

New provisions on residence requirements to the Aliens Act entered into force on January. The aim is to expand the range of interim measures applicable to asylum seekers, to reduce the use of detention, to promote the smooth running of the asylum procedure and ensure the deportations of persons whose asylum applications are rejected.

Asylum seekers could be ordered to reside in a specific reception centre and to report there between one and four times a day if this was deemed necessary for investigating their right to enter or reside in Finland or for ensuring their removal from the country. The imposition of residence requirements would make asylum seekers easier to locate when processing their application and especially for the purpose of inviting them to an asylum interview. The removal of unsuccessful applicants from the country would also become easier.

1.3 Legislation under preparation

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

1.3.1 The Seasonal Workers Directive

The Seasonal Workers Directive harmonises the conditions of entry and to improve the rights of seasonal workers across the EU. Seasonal workers mean those persons permanently residing outside the EU who come to stay in Member States for a short period to work temporarily in the sectors of employment which include activities depending on the passing of the seasons, such as agriculture and tourism. The Directive only applies to workers in an employment relationship; it does not apply to berry pickers for example. Today, 10 000-12 000 seasonal workers referred to in the directive come to Finland every year, and it is estimated that the figure will not be affected by the Directive. Implementation legislation includes Laws on Seasonal Work and ICT. Both laws are currently under discussion in relevant committees in Parliament and are estimated to enter into force in November 2017.

1.3.2 Making Finland more attractive for highly skilled migrants

A new type of residence permit is proposed for growth or startup entrepreneurs. At the same time, the application process for an extended permit would be simplified and the validity period of a first residence permit for specialists would be extended. The Government submitted a proposal for amending the Aliens Act to Parliament on 28 September 2017. The aim is to make it easier for entrepreneurs and experts to move to Finland and thereby to promote economic growth and employment. The amendments are scheduled to enter into force as soon as possible.

The aim is to make it possible for growth entrepreneurs to get a residence permit as quickly as possible. The residence permit would be issued by the Finnish Immigration Service but the applicant should obtain a business assessment from the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation, Tekes, before applying for a residence permit. Tekes would assess if the company's business model shows potential for rapid international growth. The role of Tekes is based on its role as a national authority and solid experience of startups. The Finnish Immigration Service would no longer assess business activities but make sure that the applicant has secure means of subsistence and there are no reasons related to national security that would hinder the issue of a residence permit. The residence permit would be issued for two years, after which it could be renewed. It would take no longer than a few weeks to issue a residence permit.

Finland has followed the example set by other countries such as Denmark in introducing a residence permit for startups. Several EU countries have introduced a separate residence permit for growth entrepreneurs. Studies show that it is not the residence permit systems that attract entrepreneurs but good business opportunities. The startup permit sends a message that Finland invests in growth entrepreneurship by all available means.

The residence permits other than the permit for growth entrepreneurs would be changed so that in the future it would also be possible to issue residence permits for entrepreneurs operating on a limited liability basis. At present, the permit can only be issued to self-employed people who have full personal liability for their business activities, for example self-employed people operating under a trade name. At the same time, the current name 'residence permit for a self-employed person' would be changed into 'residence permit for an entrepreneur'.

In the future, there would be two kinds of residence permits for entrepreneurs — a residence permit for a growth entrepreneur and a residence permit for an entrepreneur. A first residence permit for a specialist could be issued for a period of two years instead of the current one year. This would also apply to their family members. The requirement for issuing the permit is that the employment relationship is continuous and valid for at least two years.

The residence permit process would be streamlined so that applicants would no longer be fingerprinted when applying for an extended permit. It would thus be possible to apply for an extended permit online without visiting the Finnish Immigration Service. This would apply to all residence permits. This change would facilitate the residence permit process particularly for employees working in international companies as they have to travel a lot.

1.3.3 Reform of the integration act

As of 2020 a major administrative reform will take place in Finland, creating 18 regions. These regions are self-governing bodies with regional elections for selecting decision-makers. Among the areas of responsibility of the regions are social and health care services and employment service, which will be realized through the organizer-producer model in which the region is organizationally responsible. The region will also be responsible for promoting integration. Integration services will be organized within the social and health care services and growth services. There will also be coordination between the regions and municipalities to ensure that the services provided immigrants form a coherent entity.

1.3.4 Accelerated implementation of deportation decisions

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

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

In order to ensure the legal protection of deportees, it is proposed to issue provisions on the time limits allowed to submit an application to suspend/prohibit the enforcement of a deportation decision and the time for making a decision in respect of such an application. Deportees would have 30 days of having received the decision to submit an application to the administrative court to suspend or prohibit deportation. The deadline would be the same length as the time provided to appeal. Correspondingly, the administrative court would have 30 days to make a decision in respect of this application. Efforts will be made to submit the government proposal to Parliament at the end of 2017.

1.3.5 The state will compensate municipalities for the costs arising for services to persons remaining in the country after having received a negative decision on asylum

The government proposal aims to add a new provision to the Social Welfare Act (1301/2014), whereby the state would compensate municipalities and joint municipal authorities for the costs of emergency social services in situations where an indispensable social service has been given to a person who has received a final negative decision on asylum and who is no longer entitled to reception services. Under current legislation in force, municipalities and joint municipal authorities bear the costs, but the legislative amendment would transfer the costs of emergency social services to the state. The proposal is likely to be submitted in autumn 2017 and would enter into force from the beginning of 2018.

1.3.6 Implementation of the Directive applying to researchers, students and others

Finland will implement Directive (EU) 2016/801 (recast) of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing. Implementation with regard to Finland applies only to the mandatory sections, i.e. research, studies, training and voluntary service within the framework of the European Voluntary Service. The Directive is planned to take effect in spring 2018. In the same context, provisions on granting a residence permit on the basis of an au-pair placement will be issued, but this has nothing to do with the Directive.

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

This project seeks to clarify, assess and implement any amendments of legislation which are required to bring the legislation on the Register of Aliens in line to better address the changes that have taken place in the operational environment and to meet the requirements set for modern register legislation. Furthermore, the necessary amendments of legislation necessitated by the entry into force of the EU's Data Protection Directive must be implemented. The act on the register of aliens (1270/1997), the register regulations on the reception of people seeking international protection and on the identification and helping of the victims of human trafficking (746/2011), and the act on the detained aliens and the detention units (116/2002) will be replaced with a new act regulating the processing of personal data in the field of immigration administration. The objective is that provisions for the processing of personal data in the field of immigration administration will be laid down in a single act meeting the requirements of a modern act on personal data, which will supplement the EU's Data Protection Directive and the act on data protection that will supersede the Personal Data Act in 2018. A government proposal will be issued over the course of 2018.

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

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

The draft for the government proposal states that a new Section – 7b – on the violation of the prohibition to enter the country be added to Chapter 17 of the Criminal Code (39/1889), according to which such a violation will be punished with a fine or imprisonment of one year at maximum. At present, the violation of the right to enter the country is only punished with a fine in accordance with Section 185 of the Aliens Act (301/2004), which is the provision almost solely applied to such violations.

The draft for the government proposal has been out for comments. A summary of the statements was published on 6 June (reports and statements by the Ministry of Justice 30/2017), according to which a substantial proportion of those who had provided a statement either supported the draft mainly or exclusively or had no objections to it. After the circulation of the proposal for comment has been completed, the economic impacts of the proposal need to be assessed. The government proposal is due for presentation to Parliament by early December 2017.

1.4 Integration policy

1.4.1 The Government Integration Programme

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

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

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

2) Enhancing integration through cross-sectoral measures

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

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

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

4) Promoting a humane national discussion culture that rejects racism

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

1.4.2 Social impact bond model

The SIB model combines flexible training and work. Between 2016 and 2019, a KOTO-SIB experiment will be implemented, which is intended to help immigrants find employment as soon as possible. The target group of the experiment comprises 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 is that, after completing a study period of four to six months in length, focusing on Finnish and social studies, 2,500 immigrants would find employment over a period of three years. The TE office will direct its customers to participate in the SIB experiment.

The project administrator, hired by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment through competitive tendering, has established an investment fund for the experiment. In other words, the experiment is not financed by means of public funds. After the experiment ends, the investors are paid profit if the state has accumulated savings from the experiment. Savings are gained from the accumulated taxes paid by those participating in the experiment 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.

1.4.3 An example of integration projects

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

The Good Path –subproject aims at nationally extending the activities of the Centre of Expertise in Integration, based in the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The subproject also develops cooperation between various administrative sectors across municipal, regional and occupational borders. It spreads knowledge on integration and develops networks and processes. Seven regional coordinators, who are employees of the project, work in different ELY –centres (Centre for Economy, Traffic and Environment). The regional coordinators identify training needs of integration experts working in the public sector and within NGOs. They also identify best practices and effective processes, and disseminate research-based information and statistics on integration.

With the aid of eight regional pilot projects, the Good Start –subproject develops, a service model for all adult immigrants for the initial integration phase. The service model consists of guidance and counselling, initial assessment of vocational and language skills, and initial integration training. To ensure equal accessibility to the service, it is organised in co-operation with municipalities, local employment offices, economic offices and NGOs. As of autumn 2016, there will also be pilot projects for developing a post-integration service model for immigrants who have completed their integration training but have not yet found employment. Experiences gained from the pilot projects will be used to design a new, nation-wide model for integration services.

1.5 Non-discrimination and acceptance of diversity

1.5.1 Policy Programmes

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

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

Promoting a humane national discussion culture on immigration policy that will not tolerate racism is also one of the four key areas of **government's Integration program for 2016–2019**. The objective is a Finnish society where discussion on immigration is open and respectful of human dignity and where official forums will also have been created for dialogue between the authorities and immigrants and different population groups engage in well-functioning interaction.

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

As of April 2017, Finland is part of an EU funded project called **PROXIMITY**. The objective of the project is to increase the capacities of local authorities, and especially municipal policing, to identify and intervene in hate crime and other forms of intolerance. One goal is to identify best practices of awareness raising, training, specialised municipal services etc. at the local level in various European cities.

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

The national Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism (2016) was prepared through extensive participation between the authorities (incl. of education), organisations and communities. The Ministry of the Interior coordinates the implementation. The plan recognises that many factors influence the extent of violent extremism in society. Shortcomings in social policy areas such as upbringing, education, equality, wellbeing, livelihood and social participation, and weak social cohesion provide growth potential for violent radicalisation and extremism.

The Ministry of Justice together with the Ministry of Employment and Economy launched an initiative called **TRUST – Good Relations in Finland** in early 2016 to promote non-discrimination of asylum seekers in municipalities and regions that had received asylum seekers. The initiative was planned to develop and test good practices both in reception centres and in municipalities to strengthen and maintain good relations and mutual respect. The initiative is implemented in seven locations around the country during 2016–2018. The pilot locations represent newly established reception centres that have faced negative attitudes and resistance from the local community.

1.5.2 The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO)

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

The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) is a broad-based consultative body established by the government and is mandated to: 1) promote interaction between ethnic minorities, public authorities, employer and employee unions, NGOs and political parties in Parliament 2) monitor the state on ethnic relations, promote the participation of migrant and ethnic minorities, their sense of security and positive attitudes on diversity 3) provide expertise to all ministries on matters related to migration, integration and equality 4) partake in research related to the promotion of good relations 5) disseminate general information on good ethnic relations to society.

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

Under the new decree on ETNO (771/2015), on the 11.2.2016 the government established a new advisory board for a four-year period, until 10 February 2020. ETNO's annual theme for 2016 was Enhancing Decent Dialogue Culture. Themes for the ongoing ETNO period are yet to be finalised. ETNO organises one of the major annual forums on ethnic relations ETNO forum.

ETNO provides information and partakes in the capacity-building of migrant, ethnic and religious organisations. In addition ETNO publishes reports on matters related to ethnic

relations. ETNO has a number of Good Will Ambassadors who use their expertise and well established public profiles to further good ethnic relations around the country. ETNO is to establish a workgroup on cultural and religious dialogue for a third consecutive term: the working group aims to promote interreligious dialogue and co-operation between religious communities. During 2016–2017, the strategic focus of ETNO on developing good relations locally.

1.5.3 National system for monitoring on discrimination

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), 2) publishing an annual discrimination study and 3) publishing a general report on discrimination in Finland once in a parliamentary period. The first national report was published in 2014 and second one will be published by the end of 2017. As a new element the discrimination indicator website will be launched also in the autumn 2017.

The Ministry of Justice guides other authorities on equality planning and the assessment of equality impacts. Equality Plan covering all grounds of discrimination is obligatory for all employers that regularly employ more than 30 persons, for organisers of education, and for authorities. Equality planning is a platform to promote equality and non-discrimination, including measures to tackle racism, xenophobia and related intolerance. Some training sessions on equality planning have been organised around the country during 2016 and 2017. The Ministry of Justice has also published an online material on equality impact assessment⁴.

1.6 Migration and co-operation for development policies

Finland's current development policy was introduced in 2016. It recognizes the effect of refugees and migration on development policy.

Finland supports efforts to solve the situation in countries of origin in a comprehensive manner, not only through development cooperation but also by other means. Human rights and stability in these countries can be addressed with foreign and security policy,

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

through e.g. political dialogue or crisis management. The development of the economy and job creation can be furthered by means of EU trade policy by e.g. taking better account of export products vital to countries of origin. In the longer term, a strong Finnish and European climate policy will also help to reduce human migration caused by environmental changes. The 2030 Agenda as a whole addresses various root causes of refugee situations.

Development cooperation is a good way of influencing the development of societies in developing countries so that they will have the capacity to create sources of income and peaceful living conditions for their citizens. Securing this is an important goal in Finland's development policy. The living conditions in the countries of origin are a key issue.

More support will be channelled to the countries of origin of refugees and asylum-seekers to strengthen the conditions for peace, as well as human rights and income opportunities so that people do not have to leave their native countries, or they can return there. Finland will provide more support for countries that have received great numbers of refugees, and also transit countries, thus improving their capacities and refugee protection and preventing human trade and trafficking. Support will be given in the form of humanitarian aid and development cooperation. In the most difficult circumstances, Finland will when necessary provide support through experienced international organisations or development financing institutions (DFIs) to ensure an the best possible way to deliver Finnish aid.

The main target regions include Middle Eastern countries and regions bearing the consequences of the situations in Syria and Iraq, and countries suffering directly from the unrest in the volatile Horn of Africa region and countries hosting large numbers of refugees, such as Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. Support to Afghanistan will be continued also for refugee-related reasons. In these and many other countries, Finland will also support the valuable input of other development actors, which represent the Finnish society, such as NGOs.

Significant amounts of Finnish support for refugees, transit regions and countries of origin is also channelled through the EU. Finland promotes joint, well-planned and well-coordinated action in EU policy-making. Finland advocates joint solutions to the refugee situation and seeks to address its root causes.

In international organisations and fora, Finland advocates for the following: increased support for countries of origin and transit countries, more efficient coordination of the support, the protection of the rights of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants and their just treatment. Finland is active in developing approaches to resolve the issue of asylum-seeking by child refugees, and other related challenges.

2 International migration in the public debate

This chapter gives a short overview of the news and articles about immigration in the Finnish media from January to August 2017. Articles from the top ten newspapers by circulation were used in this report. The data was collected from *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Turun Sanomat*, *Aamulehti*, *Ilkka*, *Keskisuomalainen*, *Savon Sanomat*, *Etelä-Suomen sanomat*, *Kaleva*, *Satakunnan Kansa* and *Hufvudstadsbladet*. All the newspapers except the Swedish language *Hufvudstadsbladet* are in Finnish. Articles and news from the *YLE News website* were included to provide examples of news in English, selected on the basis of their similarity to the topics covered in the Finnish or Swedish language news. The data includes news, articles, columns and letters to the editor.

The reporting and discussions on immigration in the Finnish newspapers have been extensive. The topics dealt mainly with integration in different points of view and they covered both positive and negative sides. The effect of the so-called refugee crisis of 2015 could still be seen in the news, since most of the articles focused on refugees and asylum seekers. Despite this trend, articles have also occasionally discussed immigration more broadly.

International news also widely covered the politicians opposed to immigration. The presidential election in France and the popularity of the right wing candidate Marine Le Pen, as well as the comments on immigration by Donald Trump, the new President of the United States, were often in the headlines throughout the spring.

2.1 Discussion on asylum policies

A majority of news pieces on immigration touched upon politics surrounding migration. Especially migration and asylum policies were often covered in the news, and the discussion about undocumented immigrants was vibrant during the spring. Most newspapers

published critical columns and articles about the asylum policy and the officials were heavily criticized by many directions for their deportation policies.⁵

Challenges caused by the increase of negative asylum decisions and the rise in the number of undocumented people was one of the most discussed topics in the news in the beginning of 2017. In many articles journalists reported on the abuse of undocumented people. The officials were especially worried about prostitution, human trafficking and self-harm attempts. According to officials, these problems were seen as consequences of denied asylum applications.⁶ Challenges in preventing problems, such as crime, social exclusion and discrimination, were also widely discussed.

From February 2017 there have been two opposite demonstrations in Helsinki city centre. The one is organised by asylum seekers and their supporters and the other is counter-protest by Suomi Ensín (Finland first) –group. These demonstrations have been covered widely in the newspapers. Other demonstrations were also organised to demand more humane and just asylum policies. They continued throughout the year, although the Police broke up and moved the groups various times. The protests against forced returns spread to the Helsinki-Vantaa airport. Some smaller demonstrations were arranged also at the front of the Finnish Immigration Service and the office of the Ministry of Interior. Demonstrations were also arranged in smaller cities, such as Oulu, Jyväskylä and Turku.

2.2 Integration and employment

In many articles, employment was seen as an important part of integration to Finnish society. Many newspapers wrote about immigrants who had acquired education and succeeded in finding employment. However, the newspapers remarked that these migrants were a minority. Employment was mostly presented through individual success stories. For example, a few of the local papers covered stories about individual entrepreneurs who had succeeded in establishing their own company.

In the summer 2017, the newspapers reported that hiring foreign and immigrant labour had become more popular in some companies, and many now required the knowledge of English instead of Finnish. For example, popular events for startup companies, such as Shift and Slush, focused on attracting migrant employees in many ways.

5 https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/report_immigration_service_circulates_model_negative_asylum_decisions_for_assembly_line_use/9594858

6 https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/immigration_officials_asylum_denials_and_deportations_behind_rise_in_self-harm_attempts/9487884

Unemployment was covered by presenting statistics and problems. One issue covered by many newspapers was that the programmes helping migrants to find work were not functioning as planned. Unemployment was often seen as a result of unsuccessful integration and problems in social work, but sometimes the media focused on the reasons why some immigrants are unwilling or unable to look for a job. For example, the media discussed culture-bound reasons behind some women's decision to stay at home.

Besides employment, other issues related to integration were covered especially in the bigger newspapers like Helsingin Sanomat, Turun Sanomat and Aamulehti. The most popular topics discussed were education and cultural accommodation. From the educational point of view, the newspapers wrote about the challenges immigrants faced when going through the Finnish school system and when learning the Finnish language. Language issues were discussed in relation to both education and employment. Furthermore, the lack of qualified interpreters in the Social Insurance Institution (Kela), municipalities and Finnish Immigration Service was a widely covered problem in the news.⁷ Regionally, the newspapers reported about the integration assistance provided by the Evangelical-Lutheran Church and its congregations. They provided education, group activities, and other non-profit work in reception centres for asylum seekers. The newspapers highlighted individually tailored education, work, and family reunification as the most efficient ways to promote integration of immigrants.

Culture-bound issues rose as an important matter, especially when the news covered issues on schools. For example, the newspapers occasionally discussed the issue of sports education, particularly in connection to Muslim girls' participation in swimming lessons. This question, and girls' rights more broadly speaking, came up in a readers' survey on what migrants should know and learn about Finland and Finnish culture conducted by Helsingin Sanomat in July 2017. According to the respondents, one of the most important things that migrants should learn was the Finnish idea of gender equality. The respondents did not see culture-bound issues as important for integration as attitudes and values. The newspapers also covered other culture-bound issues related to schools and day-care centres. A big challenge for many schools and day-care centres seems to be the possibility to enable multicultural and multilingual education for the children.

Especially smaller and more local newspapers covered cultural issues frequently. Many advertised different kinds of culture events and art exhibitions. These were either organised by immigrants or they dealt with immigrants in some way. In most cases, these event advertisements included a story of the artist who was an immigrant. The person present-

7 https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/fridays_papers_inept_interpreters_persistent_family_reunification_applicants_and_first_graders/9757182

ed was usually a local young immigrant who had succeeded in learning the Finnish way of life. Although these kinds of articles were written in a positive tone, they also discussed the racism immigrants had experienced in Finland.

2.3 Attack in Turku

The atmosphere of the discussions on immigration changed after a knife attack in Turku in August 2017. A young man, later reported to be a young Moroccan asylum seeker, harmed several and killed two people on Friday, August 18 in the Turku market square and was caught shortly after by the police. The incident shocked the whole country and sparked discussions about inadequacies in the Finnish asylum policies.

Right after the attack, all the newspapers covered the tragedy and its aftermath extensively, but after a few days only Turun Sanomat, Helsingin Sanomat and YLE continued to cover the incident extensively. The police investigation and the discussion on the attack more broadly will likely go on for months.

This tragedy further polarized discussions surrounding immigration. Security concerns and the fear of terrorism were widely discussed after the attack. Some politicians suggested that the asylum seekers who receive a negative asylum decision should be detained until their return to their home country. At the same time, politicians, priests, and reporters wrote about solidarity and about ways to make asylum policies more effective without jeopardizing human rights. The newspapers reported that many cities in Finland will develop their city centers to be safer against terrorism.

2.4 Racism and hate speech

Combating hate speech and racism especially in the social media, is very topical in Finland at the moment. The debate consists of several concepts: protests against multi-culturalism, violent forms of xenophobia, fear of terrorism, negative phenomena caused by the increase of asylum seekers and hate speech in social media, which drives away potential participants who are looking for correct exchange of opinion or look for further information.

During the beginning of 2017, racism and hate speech was widely discussed throughout the media. The municipal election, forced returns, and other political issues prompted racist statements mainly in social media but also in letters to the editor. The newspapers themselves did not publish any racist commentary or hate speech, but the topics dis-

cussed in social media provoked many articles, columns, and other conversation in newspapers. Especially the growing number of right-wing nationalist opinions in the social media and in politics was covered in many newspapers.

In the beginning of 2017, the Ministry of Justice published a survey study "How are we doing?"⁸ of good relations between population groups in Finland, with focus on municipalities with reception centres for asylum seekers. It gave new information on how hate speech influences people's sense of security. Religious groups like Muslims are targets of hate speech especially on the internet but also on the streets. Islam and Muslims are often used in social media as a synonym for asylum seekers in hate speech and racist comments.

2.5 Discussion on dual citizenship

One specific topic in the public debate about immigration during the past year was the discussion about dual citizenship. This discussion about citizenship was exceptional because it was the only widely discussed topic in the media related to immigration but not directly linked to refugees or asylum seekers.

The conversation started in late January when YLE wrote about a case in which a person with dual citizenship in Finland and Russia was declined an army position. The conversation continued for a few months in the letters to the editor and columns. The discussion focused on security issues and the question of equality between Finnish citizens. Many writers of letters to the editor were concerned about the position of Finnish and Russian dual citizens, since Russia does not recognise dual citizenship. This unclear position of dual citizens raised the question about loyalty to the home country. Writers of some letters to the editor were worried that a person with dual citizenship cannot be loyal to both countries.

8 Jauhola, Keinänen, Oosi & Roos (2017) How are we doing? A survey of good relations between population groups in Finland, with focus on municipalities with reception centres for asylum seekers

<https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/80007>

3 Recent migration statistics

3.1 Immigration explains population growth in Finland

According to Statistics Finland's preliminary data⁹ at the end of 2016, the population of Finland stood at 5,503,000. Population growth during the year exceeded almost 16,000 (+0.3%). Net immigration accounted for the whole population growth for the year.

According to Statistics Finland's preliminary data¹⁰, except for 1918 and 1940, last year was the first time that the number of births was lower than the number of deaths during 1900–2016. Since there was no natural population increase, the population grew only as a result of international net migration.

Table 1 shows the migration movements in Finland in 2015 and 2016. A total of 34,905 people migrated to Finland in 2016. Of these, 27,274 (78%) were foreign nationals. A total of 18,082 persons emigrated from Finland to foreign countries during 2016, 11% more than in 2015. During 2016, net immigration totalled 16,823 persons, 35% more than in 2015.¹¹

Immigration from other than EU countries rose significantly (+ 46 %), whereas immigration of EU citizens has been decreasing every year since 2012.

9 Official statistics of Finland: Preliminary population statistics http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin__vrm__vamuun/?tablelist=true#_ga=2.215996821.387454541.1503558096-1997199454.1503558096 (referred 24.8.2017)

10 Official Statistics of Finland: Births. ISSN=1798-2413. 2016. Helsinki: Statistics Finland (referred 17.8.2017). Access method: http://www.stat.fi/til/synt/2016/synt_2016_2017-04-11_tie_001_en.html

11 Official statistics of Finland: Migration http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin__vrm__muuti/?tablelist=true&rxid=9bbb4c34-53ab-4b65-b238-81e05d2cf54b (referred 24.8.2017)

Table 1. Immigration and emigration in 2015 and 2016

	Immigration to Finland			Emigration from Finland			Net Migration		
	2015	2016	change %	2015	2016	change %	2015	2016	change %
Total	28,746	34,905	+ 21 %	16,305	18,082	+ 11 %	12,441	16,823	+ 35 %
Finnish citizens	7,332	7,631	+ 4 %	9,628	10,603	+ 10 %	-2,296	-2,972	- 29 %
Foreign citizens	21,414	27,274	+ 27 %	6,677	7,479	+ 12 %	14,737	19,795	+ 34 %
EU citizens (28)	7,624	7,072	- 7 %	3,131	3,483	+ 11 %	4,493	3,589	- 20 %
Non-EU country citizens	13,790	20,202	+ 46 %	3,546	3,996	+ 13 %	10,244	16,206	+ 58 %

Source: Statistics Finland

3.2 Iraqi, Afghan and Syrian nationals accounted for the biggest changes in numbers of people moving to Finland in 2016

Table 2 shows an increase in people moving from Iraq and Afghanistan in particular during 2016. A total of 3,142 immigrants coming from Iraq to Finland were registered in 2016, more than four times the number registered in 2015. This phenomenon is explained by the exceptional number of asylum seekers in 2015, when a total of 32,477 people applied for asylum in Finland. Of these, more than two thirds, a total of 20,484 people, were Iraqi.

Table 2. Immigration to Finland in 2007–2016, by country of origin

Country of Origin	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Iraq	118	313	389	644	824	511	528	869	758	686	3,142
Estonia	2,734	3,145	3,315	3,525	4,043	5,014	6,422	6,285	5,071	3,684	2,933
Russia	2,229	2,554	3,044	2,445	2,353	2,852	3,096	2,901	2,467	2,155	2,640
Sweden	3,448	3,353	3,715	3,456	2,875	3,321	2,793	2,681	2,694	2,448	2,610
Afghanistan	53	160	160	149	251	196	300	275	185	172	1,111
United Kingdom	1,004	1,072	1,181	1,011	928	1,163	1,077	1,061	1,100	951	1,085
Iran	272	191	146	153	240	411	562	557	551	417	1,053
Syria	34	65	140	294	169	231	182	193	243	200	1,047
Vietnam	200	248	319	295	270	362	382	410	506	669	944
China	633	832	1,083	920	677	882	906	962	884	859	880
United States	933	972	955	926	837	929	861	895	903	803	874
Germany	981	1,045	1,064	871	755	903	808	799	897	764	793
Turkey	515	446	570	528	306	370	443	603	510	427	764
Spain	702	782	760	673	604	742	912	1,151	1,031	744	720
India	493	539	599	590	473	541	558	679	819	764	643
Unknown	183	155	198	217	292	329	411	321	329	539	238
EU (28) Countries	11,599	12,915	13,918	12,653	12,209	14,948	16,357	16,202	15,380	13,095	12,913
Total	22,451	26,029	29,114	26,699	25,636	29,481	31,278	31,941	31,507	28,746	34,905

Source: Statistics Finland

In 2016, Iraqi, Afghan and Syrian nationals accounted for the biggest changes in numbers of people moving to Finland (Table 3). In 2016, there were more Iraqis (3,235) than any other immigrants. Next came Estonians (2,933) and Russians (2,640), followed in fourth place by Afghans (1,864) and Syrians (1,716) in fifth place.

Until 2015, the top two immigrating nationalities remained the same. For many years Russians and Estonians have constituted the biggest share of the yearly inflow of foreign population to Finland. Over the past four years, the number of Estonians migrating has decreased so that in 2016 only 2,596 Estonians moved permanently to Finland. This is about the same level of Estonians than ten year ago, in 2006.

Table 3. Inflows of foreign population by nationality, 2006–2016, top 15 nationalities

Nationality	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Iraq	129	358	520	907	1,057	719	584	910	776	754	3,235
Estonia	2,468	2,896	3,038	3,176	3,909	4,704	6,041	5,856	4,663	3,355	2,596
Russia	2,146	2,488	2,950	2,336	2,297	2,795	3,050	2,875	2,420	2,086	2,540
Afghanistan	261	242	219	226	321	373	593	627	515	394	1,864
Syria	13	19	26	13	21	46	150	173	570	578	1,716
Vietnam	209	262	317	300	272	360	379	402	506	679	942
China	512	727	963	771	566	763	748	807	696	732	768
Somalia	287	583	601	840	1,041	745	445	724	633	654	693
India	504	534	623	612	486	573	572	676	826	821	676
Sweden	749	741	884	836	671	674	593	624	604	547	579
Ukraine	141	196	249	236	203	271	333	368	445	502	517
Thailand	443	569	562	628	599	625	589	602	552	576	511
Iran	221	189	231	150	209	268	333	403	414	265	440
Romania	111	211	197	164	206	258	302	257	400	355	440
Poland	221	443	562	321	250	325	538	506	513	395	432
Others	4,453	7,046	7,964	6,571	7,145	6,917	8,084	8,063	9,114	8,721	9,325
Total	13,868	17,504	19,906	18,087	18,212	20,416	23,334	23,873	23,647	21,414	27,274

Source: Statistics Finland

Table 4 shows the migration movements and permanent settlings of the citizens of OECD countries in 2016. The total net migration from OECD countries to Finland was 3,709 which was 855 fewer than in 2015. Estonians have for several years been the largest OECD nationality immigrating to Finland.

Table 4. Migration movements and permanent residents of citizens of OECD countries in 2016

Nationality	Immigration to Finland	Emigration from Finland	Net migration	Permanent residents in 2016		
				Total	men	women
Estonia	2,596	1,483	1,113	50,367	25,189	25,178
Sweden	579	390	189	8,174	4,789	3,385
Turkey	311	53	258	4,595	3,045	1,550
United Kingdom	378	202	176	4,427	3,555	872
Germany	318	232	86	4,112	2,424	1,688
Poland	432	171	261	3,959	2,335	1,624
United States	381	203	178	2,946	1,862	1,084
Spain	269	119	150	2,434	1,533	901
Italy	272	113	159	2,405	1,718	687
France	255	137	118	2,031	1,321	710
Hungary	151	112	39	1,968	1,081	887
Latvia	195	40	155	1,791	861	930
Netherlands	104	66	38	1,313	1,039	274
Japan	132	99	33	1,159	416	743
Greece	262	46	216	931	646	285
Norway	78	47	31	799	477	322
Canada	59	47	12	750	450	300
Denmark	72	51	21	724	487	237
Portugal	65	23	42	611	415	196
Australia	76	46	30	588	412	176
Ireland	45	25	20	584	460	124
Mexico	75	17	58	563	340	223
South Korea	105	43	62	558	240	318
Czech Republic	69	29	40	529	242	287
Austria	55	21	34	481	272	209
Switzerland	47	18	29	480	322	158
Belgium	42	19	23	424	307	117
Slovak Republic	91	21	70	419	220	199
Israel	34	14	20	366	253	113
Chile	20	4	16	248	134	114
New Zealand	15	6	9	146	109	37
Iceland	21	23	- 2	144	94	50
Slovenia	28	2	26	124	64	60
Luxembourg	2	3	- 1	20	9	11
Total	7,634	3,925	3,709	101,170	57,121	44,049

Source: Statistics Finland

3.3 Emigration from Finland

Table 5 shows that a total of 10,603 Finnish citizens left the country in 2016. In recent years more Finns have emigrated than have returned to the country. Most Finnish emigrants headed for other EU and OECD countries. The main destination for Finnish emigrants was Sweden. About 2 000–3 000 Finns move to Sweden every year. This relatively steady migration flow represents approximately a quarter of annual Finnish emigration. Other significant destination countries are the United Kingdom and the United States. Almost 90% of the Finnish emigrants moved to other OECD countries in 2016.

Table 5. Emigration, immigration and net migration of Finnish citizens 2014–2016, by top 5 countries

	Emigration of Finnish citizens			Immigration of Finnish citizens			Net migration of Finnish citizens		
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Sweden	2,539	2,363	2,607	1,995	1,836	1,944	-544	-527	-663
United Kingdom	1,067	991	1,189	648	573	663	-419	-418	-526
United States	719	695	861	526	462	483	-193	-233	-378
Germany	755	623	714	521	405	401	-234	-218	-313
Spain	462	495	549	477	406	406	15	-89	-143
Others	4,474	4,461	4,683	3,693	3,650	3,734	-781	-811	-949
Total	10,015	9,628	10,603	7,860	7,332	7,631	-2,155	-2,296	-2,972
EU(28) countries	7,040	6,700	7,357	5,195	4,829	5,121	-1,845	-1,871	-2,236
OECD countries	9,055	8,471	9,345	6,640	6,195	6,475	-2,415	-2,276	-2,870

Source: Statistics Finland

The Government Policy Programme for Expatriated Finns 2017–2021 sets out the guidelines and procedures to reinforce the interaction between expatriates and Finland. One important area is supporting and preserving the culture among expatriate Finns. Suomi Schools, or "Finnish Schools", have a key role in this field. The schools help teach children the Finnish and Swedish languages and Finnish culture. The preparation of the Programme was coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament (the FEP) promotes the interest of all expatriate Finns. The FEP is the expatriate Finns' direct link to Finnish society. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament is a non-political forum. 530 Finnish expatriate organizations in 39 countries have ratified the by-laws of the parliament. Every 2 or 3 years the Finnish Expatriate Parliament gathers representatives of expatriate Finnish organizations to a parliamentary session in Helsinki.

A total of 18,082 persons emigrated from Finland in 2016. Of these, 41% (7,479) were foreign citizens (Table 6). Estonians have been the largest group of foreign citizens emigrat-

ing from Finland in recent years and their numbers have been growing over the past seven years.

The second largest group of people emigrating from Finland were people whose nationality is unknown. The number of people whose nationality is unknown increased substantially in 2015 and remained relatively high in 2016. This is mostly explained by the fact that many asylum seekers have left the country voluntarily before receiving their decision on asylum and without informing officials about their departure.

Table 6. Foreign citizens emigrating from Finland 2006–2016, top 10 nationalities

Nationality	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Estonia	380	585	548	620	369	490	665	788	1 177	1 387	1 483
Unknown	15	10	16	15	26	17	31	26	27	1 415	1 251
India	158	211	269	200	166	239	296	297	398	495	514
Russia	159	147	301	252	264	198	275	292	393	278	446
Sweden	449	392	444	523	464	405	381	392	430	361	390
China	85	83	278	195	149	135	240	224	206	233	289
Germany	145	142	221	221	184	193	160	194	193	195	232
USA	119	151	245	153	144	145	180	197	230	157	203
UK	132	110	217	160	122	113	165	139	168	154	202
Poland	42	87	139	163	77	119	123	70	117	125	171
Others	1 029	1 195	1 818	1 535	1 158	1 280	1 710	1 616	2 132	1 877	2 298
Total	2 713	3 113	4 496	4 037	3 123	3 334	4 226	4 235	5 471	6 677	7 479

Source: Statistics Finland

3.4 Residence permits of third-country nationals

Applications

According to the Finnish Immigration Service¹², a total of 26,071 persons (2015: 22,876) applied for a first residence permit in 2016. Table 7 shows that the most common grounds in the residence permit applications filed were family ties, which accounted for a total of 10,579 applications, or 41% of all applications received. The second most common ground was employment (7,445, 29%), and the third was studying (7,161, 27%).

12 Finnish Immigration Service: [statistics.migri.fi](https://www.migri.fi)

Table 7. Applications for residence permits by application type in 2011–2016

Grounds for the application	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Family ties	10 288	8 614	8 950	9 197	9 471	10 579
Employment	6 492	5 744	5 800	6 050	6 418	7 445
Studies	5 806	6 023	5 755	6 046	6 297	7 161
Other grounds	1 078	883	754	783	690	886
Total	23 664	21 264	21 259	22 076	22 876	26 071

Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

In 2016, majority of residence permit applications were submitted by Russian (3,730), Chinese (1,948) and Indian (1,743) citizens (Table 8).

Table 8. Applications for residence permits in 2016, top 10 nationalities

Nationality	2015	2016
Russia	3 321	3 730
China	1 791	1 948
India	1 670	1 743
Ukraine	1 520	1 692
Vietnam	1 196	1 511
Iraq	591	1 228
USA	989	1 091
Thailand	973	946
Turkey	634	662
Nepal	595	647

Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

Decisions

According to Finnish Immigration Service, a first residence permit was granted to 20,965 applicants in 2016 (2015: 19,800). The number of resident permits granted was 6% higher than in the previous year. Most of the permits were granted on the grounds of family ties, studying or employment.

Family ties accounted for 39% of all residence permits granted (8,171 people). The second largest group was those applying for a residence permit on the grounds of studying, which accounted for 30% of all residence permits granted (6,438 people), followed by residence permits approved on the grounds of employment 28% (5,770 people).

Table 9 shows the number of decisions for third-country nationals by permit type. A residence permit was approved in the case of 86% of all applicants who received a decision in 2016. The ratio of favourable and unfavourable decisions varies by application type. For example, a student residence permit was granted to 91% of relevant applicants, while approximately 86% of relevant applicants were granted a residence permit on the basis of family ties.

Most applications were submitted by Russians (3,748), who received a positive decision in 93% of cases. This was followed by applications (1,875) from Chinese citizens, who received a positive decision in 95% of cases. The third most applications (1,648) were submitted by Indian citizens who received positive decision in 91% of cases. A total of 20,965 applications (86.3%) were accepted and 3,325 (13.7%) were refused.

Table 9. Decisions on applications for first residence permits in 2016

Grounds for the application	positive	negative	Total
Family ties	8 171	1 375	9 546
Employment	5 770	1 192	6 962
Studies	6 348	615	6 963
Other grounds	676	143	819
Total	20 965	3 325	24 290

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

3.5 Free movement from EU countries

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

According to Statistics Finland, 12,913 people moved to Finland from other EU countries in 2016 (2015: 13,095; 2014: 15,380). Immigration from EU countries to Finland has decreased every year since 2012 when the number of people moving from other EU countries was 16,357.

The number registration applications from EU-citizens was 10,098 (Table 10), which is almost 900 fewer than in 2015, when there were 10,976. Highest number of applicants are Estonians followed by Poles and Germans.

Table 10. Registrations of EU citizens- right of residence, top 10 nationalities in 2016

	Applications	Decisions in Total	Positive	Negative
Estonia	3 410	3 468	3 263	205
Poland	771	784	769	15
Germany	662	668	664	4
Romania	550	554	523	31
France	475	490	486	4
United Kingdom	453	465	449	16
Italy	409	407	400	7
Spain	363	379	368	11
Greece	300	290	277	13
Latvia	287	288	287	1
Others	2 418	5 904	2 372	64
Total	10 098	10 229	9 858	371

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

In 2016, Finnish Immigration Service made a decision in respect of registrations of 10,229 EU citizens. Almost all, 96.4%, of these decisions were positive and the remaining 3.6% were negative. Of the EU citizen registration decisions issued, employment was the ground in 54% of decisions, family ties in 22.9%, studies in 9.1% and other things in 8.7% of decisions.¹³

3.6 Labour migration

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

¹³ Finnish Immigration Service: statistics.migri.fi

According to the estimates there are approximately 130,000 foreigners working in Finland in 2017. Of these, 80,000 are living and working permanently and 50 000 are temporary foreign workers. Temporary workers are mainly from Estonia and other EU countries close to Finland. Monitoring of labour migration as a whole is difficult, because short-term temporary jobs, for example, are not registered. The top nationalities of foreign labour force living permanently in Finland are Estonia, Russia, Sweden, China, Thailand and Germany.

According to the Government Programme and the Migration Strategy 2020, the residence permit system will be developed to promote labour migration and to reflect Finland's attractiveness as country of destination for skilled labour. In 2017 a preparation for the new programme for migration was started.

3.6.1 Labour migration from outside the EU/EEA

Finland does not apply quotas or a points-based system to labour migration. Instead, Finland applies the determination of the availability of labour on the market, when issuing a residence permit for an employed person. This labour market is applied to the blue-collar jobs. For employment in vacancies where higher skills are needed only salary threshold is applied.

Labour migration from third countries can be followed by the number of residence permits. In 2016, a total of 8,186 residence permit applications were submitted for employment, including labour market tests. The figure includes both first applications and extensions. The corresponding figure in 2015 was 7,782, which means a year-on-year increase of approximately five per cent. The largest nationalities in employment requiring a labour market test are Ukraine, Russia and Philippines (sectors: gardening, chefs and other kitchen personnel, agricultural workers, cleaning personnel).

The amount of applications for residence permit without a labour market test was in 2016: specialists 1,153, research 599, professional athletes and coaches 374. The corresponding figures for 2015 were 1,111, 667 and 334. The most foreign specialists come from India and to the IT sector.

3.6.2 Seasonal workers

If the working period is up to three months no residence permit is required for berry-picking work. According to the estimate of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, each year roughly 14,000 berry pickers from countries with visa requirements arrive in Finland. Accurate statistics are not available. Of these, about 9,000 worked at berry farms and the rest have picked wild berries under the so-called everyman's right. Most berry pickers in the farms come from Ukraine, and most wild berry pickers come from Thailand. They come with a tourist visa, which is marked with Seasonal Work FI.

From the end of July 2014 on, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy has appointed the TE Office for North Ostrobothnia to be in charge of the provision of general advisory, guidance and information services to foreign berry pickers in cooperation with various government authorities. An email service responding to the queries of clients has been initiated for the advisory service.

In February 2014, the European Parliament approved the Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of seasonal employment (2014/36/EU). The directive will be implemented by the Seasonal workers' Act and is estimated to enter into force in November 2017.

3.6.3 EURES regulation

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

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

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

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

3.7 Foreign students

In 2016, there were over 21,000 foreign students studying for a degree at Finnish institutes of higher education. This figure accounts for 7% of all students taking a degree in Finland.¹⁴

Of international students, 6,013 were new, first-year students. The proportion of foreign students studying for the attainment of a degree has remained stable over the past few years. Around 77% of the foreign students came from outside the EU/ETA area. In 2016, the students most frequently came from Russia, Vietnam, China and Nepal.¹⁵

Table 11. Foreign degree students in Finnish institutes of higher education in 2016, top 10 nationalities

Students in Finland	University of Applied Sciences	University	Total
Russia	2,011	948	2,959
Vietnam	1,895	621	2,516
China	565	1,223	1,788
Nepal	846	320	1,166
India	94	685	779
Pakistan	132	580	712
Estonia	406	289	695
Iran	65	559	624
Germany	242	379	621
Nigeria	301	269	570
Other	3,310	6,269	11,590
Total	9,867	11,194	21,061

Source: Statistics Finland

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

EU citizens who come to Finland to study for more than three months are required to register their stay in Finland. In 2016, 922 EU citizens submitted registration applications based on studies. In 2015, the corresponding figure was 1,201. Almost all, 98.7%, of the

¹⁴ Finnish National Agency for Education: <http://www.cimo.fi/services/statistics> (18.8.2017)

¹⁵ Finnish National Agency for Education: <http://www.cimo.fi/services/statistics> (18/8/2017)

applications received a positive decision on registration. The main nationalities applying for registration were German (172), French (124) and Italian (104) students.

A foreign student who is a non-EU/EEA-citizen requires a residence permit if the period of study in Finland is longer than three months. According to Finnish Immigration Service¹⁶, in 2016 there were 7,161 applications for residence permits from foreign students from outside the EU/EEA. There were 864 more applications than in the previous year. In 2016, the top three applicants for student residence permits were the Chinese (993), Russians (942) and Vietnamese (892) students (Table 12). The Chinese and Russians have been the top two nationalities for several years.

Table 12. The number of resident permit applications based on studies 2012–2016, top 5 nationalities

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
China	839	895	890	882	993
Russian federation	1 280	1 268	1 180	1 004	942
Vietnam	370	367	460	638	892
Korea, Republic of	296	297	317	332	367
United States	258	244	257	255	308
Others	3 066	2 860	2 963	3 186	3 659
Total	6 109	5 931	6 067	6 297	7 161

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The Finnish Immigration Service treats all residence permit applications for studies as urgent and processes and decides upon them accordingly. In 2012, applying online for a residence permit for studies considerably shortened the average application processing time. Whereas in 2011 the average processing time for a residence permits for studies was 38 days, in 2014 the time had already almost halved to just 20 days. In 2016 the average processing period was 27 days.

Table 13 shows that there were 6,963 decisions made on residence permit applications submitted by foreign students. Of the decisions made, 91.2% (6,348) were positive and 8.8% (615) were negative.

16 Finnish Immigration Service: statistics.migri.fi

Table 13. Decisions on first residence permit applications based on studies, top 5 nationalities in 2016

	Positive	Negative	Total
China	989	11	1 000
Russian Federation	900	24	924
Vietnam	829	21	850
Korea, Republic of	366	1	367
United States	297	10	307
Others	2 967	548	3 515
Total	6 348	615	6 963

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

3.8 Foreign nationals living in Finland

Statistics Finland publishes annual statistics on people living in Finland. Statistics on the foreign population are based on country of birth, citizenship, background country and native language. Here statistics of the Finnish population with a foreign background are presented by country of birth, nationality and language.

The table below presents the ten largest groups of people in Finland with a foreign background, broken down by country of birth and gender distribution. In 2017, 357,541 people with a foreign origin lived in Finland. This amounts to a total of 6.5% of Finland's population. The gender distribution of the people of a foreign origin was fairly even, with females accounting for 49% and males 51% of the immigrants. However, the gender distribution greatly varied based on the country of birth. For example, of the people born in Thailand and living in Finland, 79% are female. By contrast, of those born in Iraq, 36% are women.

Table 14. Foreign-born population by country of birth in 2013–2017, ten biggest countries

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Of which women in 2017
Former USSR	52,339	53,740	54,742	55,552	56,476	62% (35,269)
Estonia	34,984	39,488	42,652	44,481	45,659	50% (22,932)
Sweden	31,601	31,777	31,894	31,994	32,147	48% (15,399)
Iraq	8,404	9,275	10,001	10,723	13,825	36% (4,921)
Russia	10,020	11,058	12,005	12,766	13,668	55% (7,536)
Somalia	9,079	9,618	10,054	10,570	11,102	47% (5,234)
China	8,272	8,894	9,433	9,956	10,447	58% (6,072)
Thailand	8,050	8,699	9,240	9,742	10,184	79% (8,022)
Unknown	5,728	6,467	7,121	7,943	8,555	43% (3,714)
Vietnam	5,176	5,531	5,984	6,603	7,468	55% (4,107)
Others	111,808	149,282	128,977	136,832	148,010	41% (60,784)
Total	285,461	304,268	321,977	337,162	357,541	49% (173,990)

Source: Statistics Finland

At the end of 2016, a total of 243,639 foreign nationals lived permanently in Finland, representing 4.4% of the entire population. The number of foreign nationals grew 4.6 % compared to 2015. The number of men was 131,299 (54%) and the number of women 112,340 (46%). At the end of 2016, almost 180 different foreign nationality groups lived in Finland. Estonian citizens (51,499) were by far the largest of these nationality groups. They were followed by Russian citizens (30,970). In 2016, Iraqi citizens (9,813) rose to become the third largest nationality group in Finland. The Chinese, Swedes, Thais and Somalis are the largest foreign nationality groups living in Finland after the Iraqis.

Table 15. Stock of foreign population by nationality 2010–2016

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Estonia	25,510	29,080	34,006	39,763	44,774	48,354	50,367
Russia	28,210	28,426	29,585	30,183	30,757	30,619	30,813
Sweden	8,506	8,510	8,481	8,412	8,382	8,288	8,174
China	5,180	5,559	6,159	6,622	7,121	7,559	8,042
Somalia	5,570	6,593	7,421	7,468	7,465	7,381	7,261
Thailand	4,497	5,021	5,545	6,031	6,484	6,864	7,229
Iraq	3,978	5,024	5,742	5,919	6,353	6,795	7,073
India	3,168	3,468	3,793	4,030	4,372	4,728	4,992
Turkey	3,809	3,973	4,159	4,272	4,398	4,508	4,595
Vietnam	2,548	2,783	3,083	3,345	3,595	3,993	4,552
Others	76,978	84,696	87,537	91,466	95,974	100,676	110,541
Total	167,954	183,133	195,511	207,511	219,675	229,765	243,639

Source: Statistics Finland

According to Statistics Finland, the number of foreign nationals and foreign-language speakers has grown steadily in recent years (Figure 1). At the end of 2016, there were 353,993 foreign-language speakers living in Finland. This corresponds to 6.4% of the entire population. Foreign-language speakers are considered as persons whose first language is other than Finnish, Swedish or Saami, which are the national languages of Finland. The number of foreign-language speakers rose by 7.4% compared to the previous year.

Russian is the most common foreign first language in Finland. In 2016, more than 75,000 persons spoke Russian as their first language. The next most common foreign first language is Estonian, which is spoken by about 49,000 people. Arabic overtook Somali and English to become the third largest foreign language group in 2016.

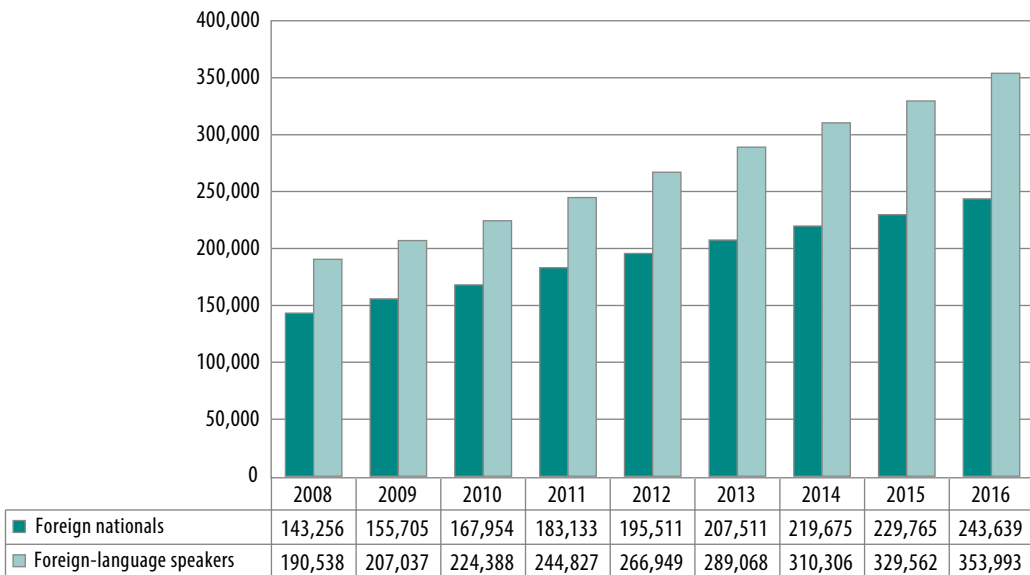


Figure 1. Foreign nationals and speakers of foreign language in Finland 2008–2016

Source: Statistics Finland

3.9 Record number of Finnish citizenships granted in 2016

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

Finnish legislation accepts dual or multiple nationality. According to Statistics Finland, a total of 105,000 persons with dual citizenship were living permanently in Finland in 2016. A Finnish national who acquires a foreign nationality will not lose his Finnish nationality, nor will foreigners who acquire Finnish nationality be obliged to renounce their current nationality. It should be noted, however, that the nationality legislation of the country in question does not necessarily accept multiple nationality.

According to the Finnish Immigration Services, a total of 13,023 persons applied for Finnish citizenship in 2016. This figure is about the same as in 2015, when 12,949 persons applied for Finnish citizenship (Table 16).

Table 16. Persons who applied for Finnish citizenship in 2015 and 2016, top 10 nationalities

Former citizenship	2015	2016
Russian Federation	2 394	2 430
Somalia	1 368	1 223
Iraq	1 014	930
Not known	821	953
Estonia	543	612
Afghanistan	524	535
Turkey	441	352
Sweden	339	339
Iran	281	308
Niger	254	279
Total	12 949	13 392

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

Table 17 shows that 83.8% of persons applying for Finnish citizenship were granted it and 16.2% of applicants received a negative decision. In 2016, Finnish citizenship was granted to 9,644 applicants or 1,363 more than in 2015, when the number was 8,281. The number of negative citizenship decisions in 2016 was 2,443.

Most Finnish citizenships were granted to Russian citizens (2,047) and accounted for 21% of all citizenships granted in 2016. Somali citizens were the second largest group of recipients of Finnish citizenship (1,068) and accounted for 11% of all citizenships granted in 2016. The third largest group of recipients of Finnish citizenship were citizens of Iraq (534), who accounted for 5.5% of citizenships granted and the fourth largest group was Estonian citizens (468), who accounted for 4.9% of all Finnish citizenships granted in 2016.

Table 17. Persons who were granted Finnish citizenship in 2015 and 2016, top 10 by former citizenship

Former citizenship	2015	2016
Russian federation	1 739	2 047
Somalia	953	1 068
Iraq	562	534
Estonia	433	468
Afghanistan	241	378
Turkey	227	266
Sweden	318	315
Vietnam	147	227
Iran	137	222
Kosovo	146	204
Total	8 281	9 644

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The average age of persons having received Finnish citizenship was under 34 years. From all the persons who received Finnish citizenship, 67% were under 34 years (Table 18). Only 2.9% (277) were older than 65.

Table 18. Naturalised foreigners by age structure 2016

Age group	Naturalised foreigners	Naturalised foreigners, %
Age groups total	9 644	100 %
0–13	2 480	26 %
14–17	502	5,2 %
18–34	3 441	36 %
35–64	2 943	31 %
65-	277	2,9 %

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

3.10 International protection

3.10.1 Quota refugees

For over 30 years, Finland has been receiving quota refugees in partnership with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Under the refugee quota, Finland accepts persons whom the UNHCR has designated as refugees or other foreign nationals

who are in need of international protection. To receive quota refugees is a voluntary assignment that is principally offered to any country.

In Finland, Parliament decides annually, in conjunction with approving the state budget, the number of quota refugees Finland commits to receive the next year. Since 2001, the number of quota refugees accepted in Finland has been 750 persons a year. Parliament can make a decision on an additional quota. The refugee quota was increased by 300, in 2014 and 2015 due to the dire situation in Syria and altogether 1,050 quota refugees were admitted these years.

In the refugee quota for 2016, a total of 749 quota refugees were selected among the refugees registered by UNHCR in Turkey (533) and Lebanon (135). The quota included 91 refugees categorised as emergency cases. Almost all (748) of the quota refugees accepted were Syrians.

In December 2016, the Ministry of the Interior announced that the quota for 2017 will consist of Syrian refugees staying in Turkey (530) and Congolese from southern Africa (120). If the reception of Syrians from Turkey is not possible, Syrian refugees can be accepted in the quota from other parts of the Middle East. In addition, Finland will prepare to receive 100 refugees categorised as emergency cases.

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

Finland decided to meet part of its relocation obligations by resettling 1035 Syrians from Turkey as part of the 1:1 scheme between EU and Turkey. By the end of August 2017 Finland has received 754 Syrians under this scheme.

3.10.2 Asylum seekers

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

Applications

A total of 5,657 individuals sought asylum in Finland in 2016. This is almost only one fifth of the asylum seekers registered during the previous year. In 2015, 32,477 people sought asylum in Finland.

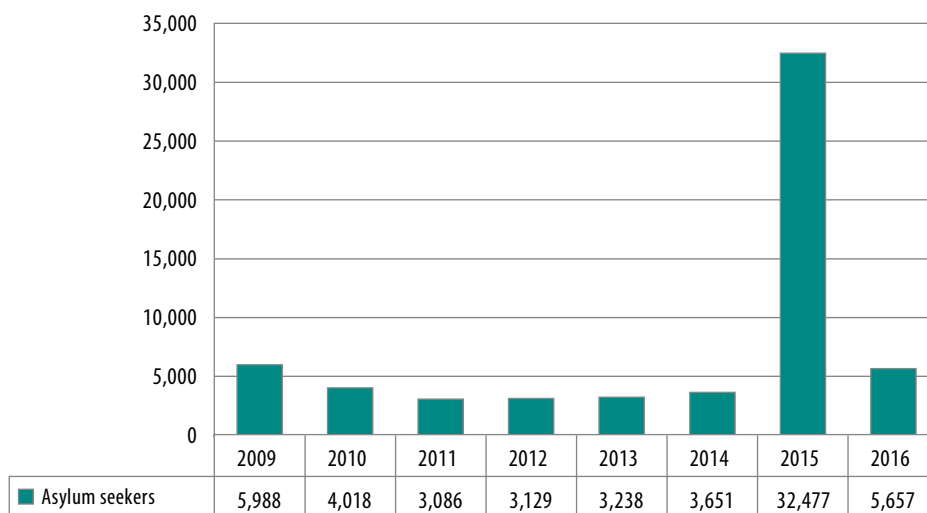


Figure 2. The number of asylum applicants in Finland, 2009–2016

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

During the early part of 2017, the number of asylum seekers was moderate. Between January and the end of August 2017, a total of 3,560 people sought asylum in Finland. It has been estimated that the total number of asylum seekers would be 7,000 by the end of this year.

Most of the asylum seekers came from a few different countries in 2016: from Iraq, Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan. Specially the number of asylum seekers from Iraq has fallen after peaking in 2015 (Table 19).

Table 19. 5 biggest groups of asylum seekers in 2014–July 2017, by country of origin

	2014	2015	2016	1.1.–31.8.2017			
Iraq	826	Iraq	20,484	Iraq	1,247	Iraq	800
Somalia	411	Afghanistan	5,214	Afghanistan	757	Syria	691
Ukraine	302	Somalia	1,981	Syria	602	Eritrea	416
Afghanistan	205	Syria	877	Somalia	432	Afghanistan	314
Russia	198	Albania	762	Eritrea	279	Russian Fed.	248
Total	3,651	Total	32,477	Total	5,657	Total	3,064

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The temporary emergency relocation scheme was established in two Council Decisions in September 2015, in which Member States committed to relocate 160,000 people from Italy and Greece by September 2017. Finland has been active in these and by the end of August 2017 received 755 asylum seekers from Italy and 1,951 from Greece. Altogether that makes 2,706 relocations.

The number of residence permit applications from family members of persons who had been granted international protection more than doubled in 2016 (2015: 770 applications and 2016: 1,675 applications).

Decisions

In 2016, a total of 28,208 decisions on asylum applications were made. The number of decisions is significantly higher than in the previous year. In 2015, The Finnish Immigration Service made 7,466 decisions on asylum applications. In 2016, the Finnish Immigration Service hired a considerable number of new employees to help defuse the backlog in asylum applications and to deal with organizing the reception of the asylum seekers. The amount of full-time equivalent (FTE) of the Finnish Immigration Service more than doubled compared to 2015 from 330 to almost 800 FTE. In 2016, the average processing time for an asylum application was 261 days (2015: 117 days).

The record number of asylum seekers who arrived in Finland in 2015 had a significant impact on asylum seekers' reception in 2016. First, the number of beds at the asylum reception centres was rapidly increased, and these were then adapted to the number of asylum seekers. In the end of 2015 Finland had more than 200 reception centres. By the end of August 2017 the number was 63. In early 2016, the reception system had registered more than 30,000 asylum seekers. More than 1,200 of them were placed in private accommodation. At the end of the year, the reception system had registered 19,500 persons, of which 3,700 were in private accommodation.

At the end of 2015, Finland had more than 200 reception centres, whereas by the end of August 2017 the number of reception centres was 65. Following these massive changes, the reception costs of asylum seekers in 2016 increased significantly. In 2016, the cost incurred by the reception of asylum seekers amounted to more than EUR 619 million. The average daily cost of an asylum seeker for the reception system was EUR 65/person/day. The high daily cost was explained, for example, by the haste at which the reception centres were set up, the establishment of new reception centres and the discontinuation of others.

Table 20 shows that in 2016, positive asylum decisions (7,734) accounted for 27% of all decisions. International protection was granted to 6,375 persons, of whom 4,586 were granted asylum and the rest were granted protection based on either humanitarian protection

or subsidiary protection. In addition, 1,359 asylum seekers were issued a residence permit on grounds other than international protection.

In 2016, the number of negative decisions (14,282; 51% of all decisions) was significantly higher compared to previous years. This can be explained by not only the sharp rise in numbers of asylum seekers in 2015, but also by the revised asylum-seeker profile as well as a certain tightening of the asylum policy. The large number of negative decisions has congested the appeal process in the courts. Returns and removals are also highlighted.

Table 20. Decisions on asylum applications in 2011–2016

Year	Positive decisions Total	Asylum	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian protection	Other grounds	Total negative	Expired matter
2011	1,271	169	714	143	245	1,890	406
2012	1,601	553	670	112	266	1,738	441
2013	1,827	556	780	11	480	1,903	325
2014	1,346	501	488	4	353	2,050	310
2015	1,854	1,112	397	119	226	1,222	1,186
2016	7,734	4,586	1,739	50	1,359	14,282	3,855

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

Most (16,308) decisions were given for Iraq applications of which 18% of decisions were positive and 57% negative (Table 21). Afghans were the second largest group with 5,192 decisions given, of which 36% were positive and 49% negative. Almost all the asylum applications of Syrians (90%) and Eritreans (98%) were given positive decisions.

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

Table 21. Decision on asylum application in 2016, by ten largest countries of origin

Country of origin	Positive	Negative	Expired matter	Dismissed	Total	Percentage of all
Iraq	2,977	9,371	2,996	964	16,308	57.8
Afghanistan	1,864	2,537	229	562	5,192	18.4
Somalia	482	922	19	125	1,548	5.5
Syria	1,118	3	33	90	1,244	4.4
Iran	231	128	53	70	482	1.7
Eritrea	315	0	1	7	323	1.1
Russian Federation	232	108	22	46	232	0.8
Nigeria	69	80	7	72	228	0.8
Stateless	138	29	6	18	191	0.7
Other	308	1,104	859	383	2,460	8.7
Total	7,734	14,282	3,855	2,337	28,208	

Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

3.11 Irregular migration

The number of people with no right of residence, in other words, those who reside without permit in the country, has traditionally been fairly low in Finland. According to the statistics maintained by the Finnish National Bureau of Investigation, the number of people staying illegally in Finland has remained at around 3,000 on an annual level. In 2015, due to the significantly increased number of asylum seekers, also the number of people detected staying illegally in the country also multiplied, amounting to more than 14,000.

In 2016, the number amounted to 2,300 foreigners. And between January and July 2017, the number amounted to 1,300. In the previous years, the majority of foreigners detected staying illegally in Finland had been asylum seekers who had filed their applications inland, with no documents giving them the right to enter the country. This explains the notable peak in 2015. Another significant group consists of nationals of the nearby areas banned from entering Finland.

Following the significantly increased number of asylum seekers in 2015, the number of enforceable negative decisions also increased significantly, starting from late 2016. As some of the people who have received a negative residence permit decision cannot be as yet returned, the number of people who are staying illegally in Finland is expected to increase. Preparations are in place for this. In December 2016, the government published an action plan on measures for preventing illegal stays in Finland, including its control. This plan

seeks to ensure that authorities have access to a continuous and up-to-date situation picture which is more comprehensive than the previous one and which supports the operations of authorities and help them to direct measures in the right direction.¹⁷

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

The government has taken significant efforts to develop the system of voluntary return. In 2016, work related to voluntary return was actively carried out within the scope of an AMIF-funded project named the "Normalisation of voluntary return", both at reception units and reception centres. In early 2016, the focus was shifted to returning Iraqis on flights chartered by the police; in late 2016, more traditional arrangements involving voluntary return were employed in collaboration with the IOM. In 2016, a total of 1,400 people returned to Iraq on flights chartered by the police. Under the programme of voluntary return and through the mediation of the IOM, a total of 2,113 people returned to 39 different countries, of who 1,527 went to Iraq and 144 to Afghanistan. Between January and July 2017, a total of 960 people returned voluntarily. Of these, 760, or a total of 79%, were Iraqis.

If a person refuses to leave Finland voluntarily, the police is responsible authority for handling his/her return. In 2015, the police was either involved in or returned 3,180 people with no legal residence permit in Finland. In 2016, the corresponding figure stood at more than 6,600, and between January and July 2017, the number of people who returned voluntarily amounted to around 2,500.

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

17 Toimenpidesuunnitelma laittoman maassa oleskelun ehkäisyyn ja hallintaan: <http://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10616/1266558/TpsuunnitelmaLAMA.pdf/c5b16a1b-8418-4fe0-a3ba-3fe3663ef67f>



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