

Annual Report on Migration and Asylum

FINLAND 2019



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Executive summary

With immigration policy in 2019 being dominated by the parliamentary election and the subsequent new Government Programme, the year could be characterised as a year of establishing immigration policy guidelines. Immigration policy was addressed in the Government Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government, *Inclusive and competent Finland – a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society*.¹ The main theme was invigorating the labour market with the help of labour migration e.g. by improving the labour market skills of those who have already migrated to Finland and increasing labour migration, particularly involving skilled labour.

With respect to asylum policy, the Government Programme emphasised increasing international cooperation e.g. by raising the annual refugee quota to 850 people and intensifying EU-level cooperation. A further stated goal is to make the asylum process swifter and smoother without compromising on the legal protection of applicants and promote the integration of asylum seekers by commencing integration at an earlier stage, even at reception centres.

The most significant organisational reform during the period took place in late 2019 with the decision to assign the task of managing labour migration to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. Following this decision, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is responsible for policy, legislation and the development of permit processes related to the migration of workers, students and researchers effective from the beginning of 2020. The change stems from the goal of making the processing of work permits more efficient.

There were also several legislative changes in 2019 that had various impacts on immigration policy. An amendment to the Aliens Act that entered into force in January 2019 expedited the removal process of persons who have been found guilty of criminal offences or are considered to pose a threat to public order and security. Further amendments to the Aliens Act took effect in June 2019 concerning subsequent applications filed by asylum seekers, taking possession of travel documents, family reunification and labour market testing. The amendments are aimed at preventing the misuse of asylum applications for the purpose of delaying removal, for example, and streamlining labour migration by eliminating

the labour market test requirement in the processing of extended permits. The Nationality Act was also amended, making it possible for people who are found guilty of certain criminal offences to lose their Finnish citizenship.

The number of asylum seekers continued its falling trend and, as in the previous year, most of the applications were subsequent applications. A noteworthy new phenomenon was the change in the applicant profiles of new applications. Whereas in the previous years asylum seekers mostly came from conflict regions, such as Iraq, Syria, Somalia and Afghanistan, the largest countries of origin for applicants in 2019 were Russia and Turkey. The grounds for application also became more diverse. In response to the declining number of applicants, the customer capacity of reception operations was reduced and a number of reception centres were closed.

With respect to legal migration, a significant change was that employment surpassed family ties as the most common grounds for a first residence permit application in 2019. Labour migration has grown significantly over the past few years and this trend continued in the year under review. In terms of the number of permits issued, however, family ties remained the most significant reason for migrating to Finland.

In integration policy, the preparation of a comprehensive action plan pertaining to the need to reform integration measures began in 2019. The State also actively supported the municipalities' centre of expertise activities to promote the shaping of immigrant services into multi-sectoral services. The multi-disciplinary operating model of the centres of expertise combines education, employment and social and health care services for adult immigrants. In 2019, as part of its Talent Boost programme, the Government also launched a cross-sectoral programme focused on the immigration of specialists, employees, students and researchers that also promotes the employment of international students and skilled workers who already reside in Finland.

Significant progress was achieved in efforts to combat trafficking in human beings, with the National Assistance System for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings having a record-breaking year. The number of

¹ Finnish Government (2019), Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government 10 December 2019, INCLUSIVE AND COMPETENT FINLAND – a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society, Publications of the Finnish Government 2019:33, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-811-3> (Cited 16 April 2020)

new customers accepted into the system was larger than ever before at 229, representing an increase of more than one-third compared to the previous year.

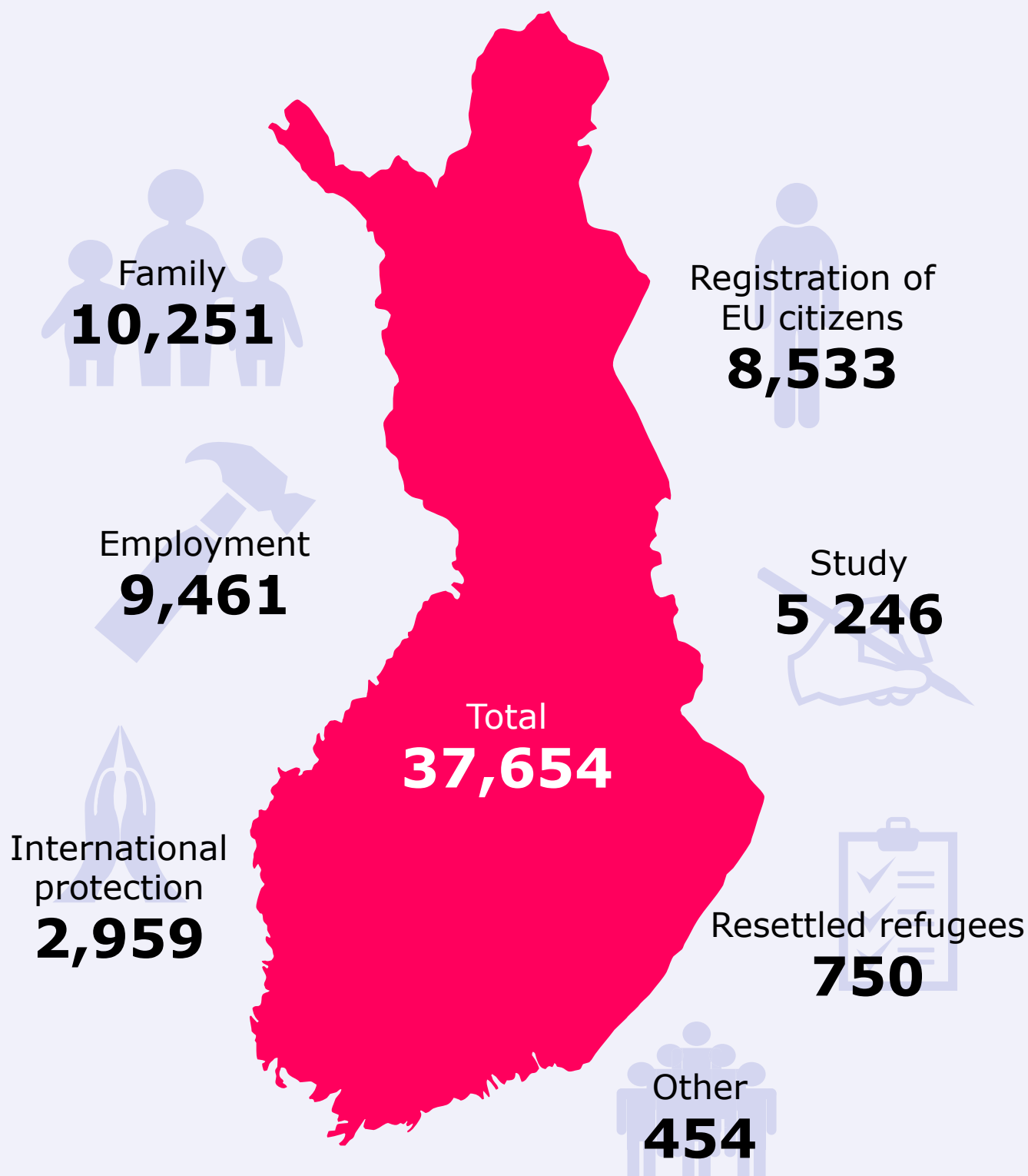
Immigration was actively discussed in the Finnish media in 2019. The issues that received the most media attention were irregular migrants, forced returns and labour migration. These themes were highlighted particularly in connection with the suspected sex crimes in Oulu, in the run-up to the parliamentary election and in connection with the formation of

the new Government and the publication of the Government Programme. During the latter part of the year, topics that received significant attention included a judgment issued by the European Court of Human Rights on the case of an asylum seeker returned to Iraq by Finland, who was killed in Iraq soon after his return, and the repatriation of Finnish citizens at the al-Hol refugee camp, which caused controversy on several occasions in November–December and led to the filing of an interpellation motion regarding the actions of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.



Overview 2019

The figure includes the first residence permits issued by the Finnish Immigration Service to third-country nationals as well as the registration of the right of residence of EU citizens and their family members. The largest group is third-country nationals who entered the country on the grounds of family ties (10,251). The second-largest group is third-country nationals who entered the country on the grounds of employment (9,461).



1. Introduction

The 2019 Annual Policy Report of the Finnish National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN) presents the key developments in migration in 2019. The reference period of this report is from 1 January to 31 December 2019.

The National Contact Points for the European Migration Network produce annual reports on migration and asylum that describe the development of migration and asylum policy and present annual statistics.² The reporting process has two stages. In the first stage of reporting, the National Contact Points collect monitoring information on migration and asylum matters for the European Commission. The Commission uses the data in compiling an annual report on migration and asylum for the EU as a whole, as well as Norway. The Finnish National Contact Point collected the monitoring information from official resources and by allocating the responsibility for reporting to the relevant authorities responsible for each area. The participants in the reporting included the Finnish Immigration Service, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Justice, the National Police Board, the Finnish National Agency for Education, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Finnish Border Guard, the Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. The Finnish National Contact Point for the European Migration Network was responsible for collecting statistical information.

This Annual Report on Migration and Asylum is the second part of reporting. It is primarily aimed at the national audience. It is the only document that annually reports compiled information on development

trends in migration-related matters in Finland. The key findings of the first part of the reporting process are included in this report. In addition, the report describes public debate on immigration in 2019 and presents key trends in immigration and asylum statistics. The media analysis concerning public debate in 2019 was conducted by Liana Technologies Oy in cooperation with the European Migration Network. The European Migration Network also publishes a separate statistical review, *Key figures on immigration 2019*.

The sources used in the report include various Internet-based reports by authorities in the field of migration, studies, statements and press releases. Pending legislative projects have been monitored using the Government Project Register and Parliamentary documents. In 2019, the National Contact Point also participated in various seminars related to migration in Finland and in other EU Member States in order to network with various producers of immigration research and to gather information on current national projects and international trends.

The Finnish National Contact Point of the European Migration Network produced this report in accordance with the network's general research guidelines. The terminology used in the report is based on the EMN Glossary published and maintained by the European Migration Network, the updated Finnish edition of which was created in February 2019.³ The structure and headings of the report are based on a model jointly agreed on by the European Migration Network. The division into topics follows the structure used by the European Commission, which has also been adopted by the European Migration Network.

² The reporting duty is stipulated by Council Regulation 2008/381/EC, which was also the basis for establishing the European Migration Network.

³ European Migration Network (2019), *Asylum and Migration Glossary 6.0: Finnish edition*. Helsinki: European Migration Network (EMN).

1.1. Structure of the immigration administration

The Finnish Government directs migration policy and its administration following the targets set in the Government Programme and the policies approved by the Government. The Prime Minister's Office is in charge of the coordination of EU issues in general.

The Ministerial Working Group on Internal Security and Strengthening the Rule of Law discusses matters relating to the development of judicial administration, prevention of exclusion, prevention of over-indebtedness, and realisation of fundamental rights. It also discusses matters of internal security and asylum and refugee policy. The ministerial working group is chaired by Minister of Justice Anna-Maja Henriksson. The other members are Minister of Local Government and Ownership Steering Sirpa Paatero, Minister of the Interior Maria Ohisalo, Minister of Social Affairs and Health Aino-Kaisa Pekonen and Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen.

The Ministry of the Interior, through the Migration Department, is in charge of immigration issues. Its tasks include the formulation of migration policy and the drafting of legislation on immigration and Finnish citizenship. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the performance guidance of the Finnish Immigration Service. Appropriations for the immigration administration are included in the Ministry of the Interior's budget proposal. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior coordinates activities related to migration between various branches of administration and represents Finland in migration issues in the European Union and on other international forums.

The Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) processes applications for residence permits, asylum and citizenship. The Finnish Immigration Service also guides the operations of reception centres, decides on refusals of entry and deportation, and is in charge of the granting of alien's passports. The Finnish Immigration Service operates under the Ministry of the Interior.

The Police monitor compliance with the Aliens Act, accept asylum applications and serve decisions. The Police also enforce decisions on deportation and refusal of entry. **The Ministry of the Interior's Police Department** is in charge of the strategic guidance and

supervision of the police sector. **The National Police Board** plans, leads, develops and supervises practical police operations carried out at **police departments**.

The Finnish Border Guard monitors entry into and departure from the country and carries out passport control. The Border Guard makes visa decisions at the border, if necessary, and receives applications for asylum. **The Headquarters of the Finnish Border Guard** operates under the Chief of the Finnish Border Guard and also acts as **the Ministry of the Interior's Border Guard Department**.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for visa policy. Finnish missions abroad grant visas and accept citizenship declarations and residence permit applications.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is responsible for directing integration matters. Together with the Ministry of the Interior, it monitors the volume and structure of labour migration and develops monitoring tools. Effective from the beginning of 2020, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is also responsible for policy, legislation and the development of permit processes related to the migration of workers, students and researchers. The responsibility for legislative projects related to the migration of workers, students and researchers is transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. Legislative drafting processes will be carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior.

The Centre of Expertise in Integration operates as part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. Its tasks include the creation of cooperation networks among the actors involved in integration across occupational and geographical boundaries. In order to lay a foundation for the planning and execution of integration activities, the Centre of Expertise compiles research, statistical and monitoring information, with the aim of enabling the development of integration effectiveness evaluation.

The administrative sector of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment encompasses **the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres)** that handle tasks related to immigration, integration and good ethnic rela

⁷ Government / Ministerial working groups and ministers responsible for key projects, updated on 12 February 2018. https://valtioneuvosto.fi/sipilan-hallitus/ministeriyoryhmat?p_p_id=56_INSTANCE_SSKDNE5ODInk&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-2&p_p_col_count=1&_56_INSTANCE_SSKDNE5ODInk_languageId=en_US. Cited 26 March 2019.

tions on a regional basis as well as **the Employment and Economic Development Offices** the work permit units of which make preliminary decisions on applications for a residence permit for an employed person before the Finnish Immigration Service processes and makes decisions on the applications.

Municipalities are responsible for integration at the local level. For instance, municipalities create, together with other parties in their area, an integration programme to promote integration and solidify cooperation. Municipalities provide basic services to immigrants living there permanently, in the same manner as to other residents of the municipality. In addition, municipalities decide independently on the reception of quota refugees and asylum seekers who have been granted a residence permit.

The Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI) are responsible for the planning, steering and supervision of the services promoting immigrant integration in matters coming under their authority. The Regional State Administrative Agencies steer municipal operations in various sectors, such as social and health care services, education and other cultural services. The Regional State Administrative Agencies operate under the steering of eight different ministries. Administratively, the operations of the Agencies are steered by the Ministry of Finance.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is tasked with the development of education provided to immigrants at different levels. The ministry's field of operation also includes matters related to immigrants' culture, sports activities, youth work and religion. **The Finnish National Agency for Education**, operating under the Ministry of Education and Culture, is responsible for immigrants' education issues and the recognition of foreign degrees.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is tasked with the promotion of immigrants' health and well-being. Issues related to immigrants' means of support fall within the responsibilities of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health supports the integration of immigrants into Finnish society e.g. by developing social and health services so that the needs of immigrants are taken into account in them.

The duties of the Unit for Democracy, Language Affairs and Fundamental Rights, operating under **the**

Ministry of Justice, include the promotion of equality and non-discrimination, among other things. Organisationally, **the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO)** has been placed under this Unit. ETNO is a broad-based expert body established by the government whose goal is to develop interaction between different groups and to assist ministries in developing a pluralistic society with ethnic equality.

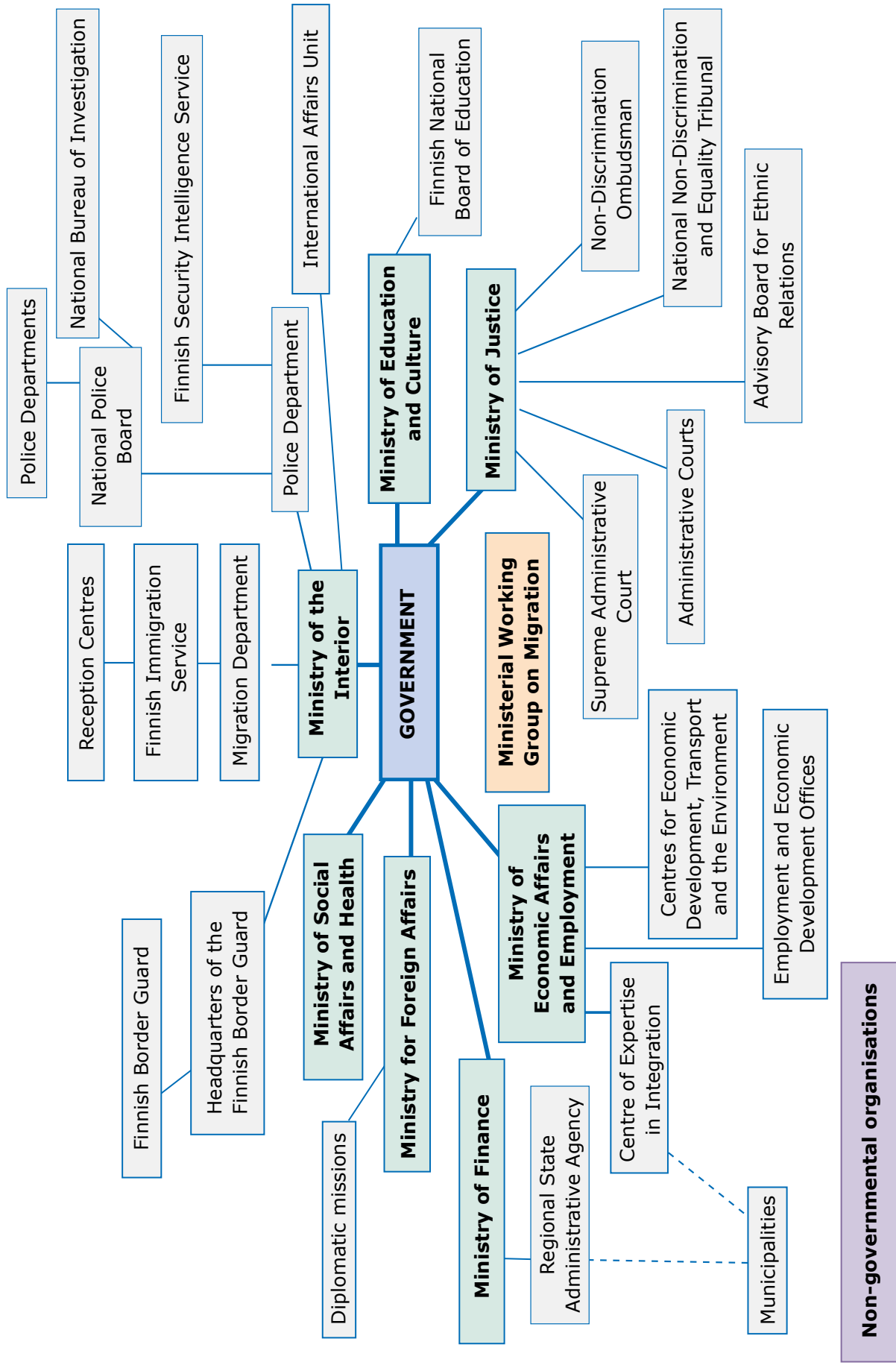
The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, operating under the Ministry of Justice, promotes equal treatment and takes action to intervene in cases of discrimination. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman is also responsible for promoting the rights and position of foreign nationals. In addition, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman has a special task of monitoring the enforcement of removal decisions concerning foreign nationals and acting as the national rapporteur on trafficking in human beings.

The administrative sector of the Ministry of Justice also includes **the administrative courts**, which are responsible for processing appeals against the Finnish Immigration Service's decisions. The processing of asylum-related appeals has been concentrated in the Administrative Court of Helsinki and the Administrative Courts of Eastern Finland, Northern Finland and Turku. In asylum-related matters, the competent Administrative Court is determined on the basis of the Finnish Immigration Service's operating area (Southern, Northern, Western or Eastern). In other appeals against the Finnish Immigration Service's decisions, the competent Administrative Court is the one in whose judicial district the person concerned lives. A decision of an Administrative Court may be appealed to the Supreme Administrative Court, provided that the Supreme Administrative Court gives leave to appeal.

The National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal is an autonomous and independent legal protection body appointed by the Government. It monitors compliance with the Non-Discrimination Act and the Act on Equality both in private activities and in public administrative and business operations.

Non-governmental organisations produce various services, offer help and counselling to asylum seekers and contribute to integration activities. The immigration expertise of non-governmental organisations is needed in the development of legislative drafting and immigration policy.

Structure of the migration administration in Finland



KEY ACTS AND DECREES CONCERNING IMMIGRATION IN FINLAND

- [Aliens Act \(301/2004\)](#)
- [Nationality Act \(359/2003\)](#)
- [Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings \(746/2011\)](#)
- [Act on the Treatment of Aliens Placed in Detention and Detention Units \(116/2002\)](#)
- [Act on the Register of Aliens \(1270/1997\)](#)
- [Administrative Procedure Act \(434/2003\)](#)
- [Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration \(1386/2010\)](#)
- [Act on the Finnish Immigration Service \(156/1995\)](#)
- [Act on Security Measures in the Finnish Immigration Service \(717/2018\)](#)
- [Act on the Conditions of Entry and Stay of Third-country Nationals on the Grounds of Research, Studies, Training and Voluntary Service \(719/2018\)](#)
- [Act on the Conditions of Entry and Stay of Third-country Nationals for the Purpose of Employment as Seasonal Workers \(907/2017\)](#)
- [Act on the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Third-country Nationals in the Framework of an Intra-corporate Transfer \(908/2017\)](#)
- [Non-Discrimination Act \(1325/2014\)](#)
- [Act on the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman \(1326/2014\)](#)
- [Act on the National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal \(1327/2014\)](#)
- [Act on Home Affairs Funds \(903/2014\)](#)
- [Government Decree on Nationality \(293/2013\)](#)
- [Government Decree on the Finnish Immigration Service \(193/2002\)](#)
- [Government Decree on Fees and Compensations for the Representatives of Unaccompanied Children \(1394/2014\)](#)
- [Ministry of the Interior Decree on Fees for Services Provided by the Finnish Immigration Service in 2019 \(1256/2018\)](#)

KEY INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION AND INTERNATIONAL TREATIES

- [Dublin III Regulation \(EU No 604/2013\)](#)
- [Schengen Agreement and Convention \(23/2001\)](#)
- [European Convention on Human Rights](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [The Refugee Convention](#)
- [Convention against Torture](#)

WEBSITES OF THE KEY IMMIGRATION ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITIES

- Prime Minister's Office
www.vnk.fi/en
 - Ministry of the Interior
www.intermin.fi/en
 - Finnish Immigration Service
www.migri.fi/en
 - The Police
www.poliisi.fi/en
 - The Finnish Border Guard
www.raja.fi/en
 - Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment
www.tem.fi/en
 - Centre of Expertise in Integration
www.kotouttaminen.fi/en
 - Ministry for Foreign Affairs
www.formin.fi/english
 - Ministry of Education and Culture
www.minedu.fi/en
 - Finnish National Agency for Education
www.oph.fi/english
 - Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
www.stm.fi/en
 - Ministry of Justice
www.om.fi/en
 - Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations
<https://oikeusministerio.fi/en/the-advisory-board-for-ethnic-relations>
 - Non-Discrimination Ombudsman
www.syrjinta.fi/web/EN/frontpage
 - National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal
www.yvtltk.fi/en
 - Supreme Administrative Court
www.kho.fi/en
 - Administrative Courts
www.oikeus.fi/tuomioistuimet/hallintooikeudet/en
-

2. Context for asylum and migration policy developments

2.1. Immigration policy

Finnish immigration policy was shaped by the parliamentary election held in spring 2019 and the Government of Prime Minister Antti Rinne formed thereafter as well as the Government of Prime Minister Sanna Marin, which took office on 10 December 2019 following Rinne's resignation. The main themes were expediting permit processes in the area of labour migration and international protection as well as the promotion of labour migration.

The Government of Prime Minister Antti Rinne published its Government Programme, **Inclusive and competent Finland – a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society**⁴ on 6 June 2019. The Government of Prime Minister Sanna Marin, which took office following Rinne's resignation, adopted practically the same Programme.

The Programme highlights labour migration as a significant factor in ensuring the sustainability of public finances in Finland in the future. The Programme states that Finland needs active labour migration and the Government aims to increase the work-based immigration of experts. The priorities of labour migration are identified as sectors suffering from labour shortages and the specialists, students and researchers who are essential for leading and growing fields of research, development and innovation.

In a significant organisational reform, the administration of labour migration was transferred to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment to improve the efficiency of handling. Following this decision, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is responsible for policy, legislation and the development of permit processes related to the migration of workers, students and researchers effective from the beginning of 2020. Efforts will be made to simplify the process in order to achieve the processing time of one month specified in the Government Programme. Processing times for work-based residence permits will also be shortened by reinforcing the network of foreign missions and applying the recommendations of reports on eliminating processing bottlenecks.

The decision was made to change the division of responsibilities in such a way that the Ministry of the Interior is still in charge of the big picture of immigration policy and legislation and the general permit conditions as well as the performance guidance of the Finnish Immigration Service and ensuring resources for the Finnish Immigration Service. Performance guidance pertaining to labour migration will be the joint responsibility of the two ministries going forward.⁵

Other policies in the new Government Programme included the continuation and reinforcement of the Talent operations of Business Finland to support the placement of international talent in Finland and the use of expertise in enterprise growth, globalisation and renewal, and growth of investment. The employment of international degree students was highlighted as an important goal. To incentivise this, the Government Programme proposes compensating the tuition fees of non-EU/EEA students studying in Finland if they stay on to work in Finland after graduation. Furthermore, the post-graduation residence permit will be prolonged to two years and will allow the permit holder to take short-term work.

The Programme also highlights seasonal workers as a resource for many Finnish enterprises and the need to ensure sufficiently rapid processing of work-based residence permits for seasonal workers to ensure the need for labour is satisfied. Efforts will also be made to improve the rights of seasonal workers by providing them with better opportunities to change their employer. The Programme further states that the misuse of tourist visas will be prevented by ensuring that seasonal workers enter Finland with a residence permit for the purpose of employment. The status of foreign seasonal workers working independently (e.g. berry pickers) will be protected by legislation.

The Government also set a goal of improving the recruitment and diversity skills of employers, recognising the skills of immigrants and their development at workplaces as well as increasing flexibility with regard to labour mobility, the matching of supply and demand in the labour market and labour market testing.

⁴ Finnish Government (2019), Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government 10 December 2019, INCLUSIVE AND COMPETENT FINLAND – a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society, Publications of the Finnish Government 2019:33, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-811-3> (Cited 16 April 2020)

⁵ https://tem.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/tyoperaisen-maahanmuuton-hallinto-siirtyy-tyo-ja-elinkeinoministerioon (Cited 17 April 2020)

With regard to refugees, the Government's budget session on 17 September decided to increase the annual number of quota refugees from 750 to 850 in line with the Government Programme. The Finnish authorities select refugees to be admitted to Finland on the basis of a submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.⁶

In respect of the asylum process, the new Government emphasised a smooth asylum process and the implementation of fundamental rights as well as a reasonable standard of proof. The Government underscored that asylum applications must be considered without undue delays in a procedure that guarantees legal protection and set a target processing time of six months.

In addition, the Government stated it aims to further develop the system of voluntary return as the primary option for securing the departure of unsuccessful applicants while supporting sustainable return. According to the Government Programme, returns need to be effectively enforced while fully respecting the principle of non-refoulement under the Constitution and international human rights treaties. The Government will seek to conclude return agreements with all key third countries whose citizens Finland can safely return.

The Government indicated it will initiate a process of amending the Aliens Act to lay down provisions on technical monitoring of persons whose applications have been refused. This will be an alternative to detention and the residence obligation, constituting a less restrictive and more appropriate precautionary measure from the point of view of society. The Government also committed to conducting an assessment of alternatives to the detention of children over 15 years of age.

Additionally, the Government will further develop legislation and practices to provide more flexible opportunities to secure a residence permit based on employment for those whose applications have been refused but who have found work.

The Government will also examine problems relating to family reunification and the reasonable income limits applied to family reunification sponsors who have been granted international protection, having regard to respect for family life, the best interests of chil-

dren, and the standards and practices governing the requirement for sufficient financial resources that are applied in other Nordic countries. The application of a requirement for sufficient financial resources to minor family reunification sponsors who have been granted a residence permit due to a need for international protection will be discontinued.

The Presidency of the Council of the European Union was handed over to Finland by Romania on 1 July 2019 and Finland's Presidency ended on 31 December 2019. Migration issues have featured prominently on the EU's agenda in recent years and the discussions continued during Finland's Presidency, which fell on a transition period between legislatures due to the European Parliament election. The priorities of Finland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union as regards migration included treating all migration routes in a balanced and comprehensive way, discussing the core objectives of the common European asylum system, making better use of information in policy preparation and highlighting the importance of partnerships with third countries, particularly in Africa. In addition, Finland's Presidency was the first to launch substantive discussions on the links between migration and trade policy.⁷

During Finland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Finnish National Contact Point for the EMN partnered with the Odysseus Network and the European Policy Centre (EPC) to organise the "From Tampere 20 to Tampere 2.0" conference in Helsinki on 24–25 October, with participants including migration and asylum policy experts, policymakers and representatives of international NGOs from around of the world. The conference highlighted the underlying principles of the 1999 Tampere European Council conclusions and, based on the content of their various pillars, issued relevant recommendations and ideas for the new European Commission to use in drafting the next asylum, migration and integration programmes. The aim was to use the international conference to promote evidence-based decision-making, policy-linked research and networking between the relevant parties to achieve the shared European objectives with regard to migration-related issues. The conference publication "From Tampere 20 to Tampere 2.0 – Towards a new European consensus on migration"⁸, published after the conference, presents the proposals to the new European Commission.

⁶ https://intermin.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/suomi-vastaanottaa-850-pakolaista-vuoden-2020-pakolaiskiintiössä (Cited 17 April 2020)

⁷ https://eu2019.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/maahanmuutto-ja-turvapaikkapolitiikan-seka-sisaisen-turvallisuuden-tulevaisuus-aiheina-sisaministereiden-kokouksessa (Cited 17 April 2020)

⁸ http://www.emn.fi/files/1987/Publication_Final.pdf

2.2. Migration in public dialogue and the media

Immigration was actively discussed in the Finnish media in 2019. The issues that received the most media attention were irregular migrants, compulsory returns and labour migration. These themes were highlighted particularly in connection with the suspected sex crimes in Oulu, in the run-up to the parliamentary election and in connection with the formation of the new Government and the publication of the Government Programme. The tone of the media coverage was mostly neutral, with the majority of the negative articles being related to the first two of the aforementioned themes. The tone in the national media was more neutral than in local media, where there was greater variation in tone, particularly in editorials. The national media focused more on reporting statistics, reports and political events, while local media highlighted issues of local relevance in addition to news of national interest.

RETURN OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

The forced return of asylum seekers guilty of criminal offences became a prominent topic in the media and the public debate early in the year when the suspected sex crimes in Oulu and the foreign origin of the suspects became public knowledge. The Government parties expressed opinions on forced return, which was noted in local as well as national media⁹. The subject also drew comments from experts¹⁰. The expedited deportation of criminals was also reported on¹¹.

The topic of returns again came to the fore as part of the parties' election platforms in the run-up to the parliamentary election¹² and in statements made by, and interviews with, party representatives and chairs¹³. The debate continued in a political context after the parliamentary election, in connection with e.g. the new Government Programme¹⁴ and discussions at the EU level concerning refugee quotas and returns¹⁵.

The judgment issued against Finland in November by the European Court of Human Rights on the case of an Iraqi man who was returned to his home country in 2017 and killed soon thereafter received a lot of media attention¹⁶, as did the decision of the Police to suspend returns to Iraq¹⁷. The Finnish Immigration Service acknowledged its failure in the matter¹⁸.

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

The issue of people who have received a negative asylum decision and other people residing in Finland without documentation came under the spotlight early in the year in connection with the sex crimes in Oulu, forced returns and a risk assessment conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation¹⁹. The Police also announced that the monitoring of irregular entry and stay would be enhanced²⁰.

An amendment to the Aliens Act introduced at the beginning of June caused confusion regarding the right to employment of asylum seekers who have been refused asylum. The Finnish Immigration Service disseminated erroneous information related to the topic and commented on the legislative amendment when issuing a correction²¹.

⁹ [SS 12 January](#): *Siniset vaatii hallitusta hätäkokoukseen Oulun tapausten takia* / [HS 15 January](#): *Oikeusministeri: seksuaalirikoksia koskeva lainsäädäntö uudistetaan – suostumuksen rooli korostuu raiskaustapauksissa ja lapsen hyväksikäyttö rangaistavaksi raiskauksena* / [Yle 18 January](#): *Hallitus kuuli tilannekatsauksen Oulun ja Helsingin seksuaalirikosepäilyistä – palautuksia Irakin kanssa halutaan tehostaa ja kansainväliset sopimukset käydä läpi*

¹⁰ [TS 16 January](#): *Siniset ehdottavat seksuaalirikoksen tehneen palauttamista myös turvattomaan maahan – Professori: Ei onnistuisi edes perustuslakia muuttamalla*

¹¹ [TS 10 March](#): *Rikollisia karkotettu nopeutetusti jo muutama – Kansallisen turvallisuusuhan perusteella karkotetaan vuosittain kymmenkunta ulkomaalaista*

¹² [Kaleva 10 March](#) & other Lännen Media outlets: *Analyysi: Lähes kaikki puolueet sanovat kiintiöpakolasille kyllä – perussuomalaiset ei päästäisi heitäkään Suomeen*

¹³ [HS 30 March](#): *Pekka Haavisto: "Ei ole mitään järkeä tehdä ihmisistä paperittomia"* / [Kaleva 30 March](#): *Kärkipuolueet: Hallitukseen tuskin perussuomalaisten kanssa, arvot poikkeavat liikaa – "Arvioin, että ihmiskäsityksemme poikkeaa toisistaan"*

¹⁴ [HS 30 May](#): *HS:n tiedot: Rinteen hallitus aikoo mahdollistaa jalkapantojen käytön kielteisen päätöksen saaneille turvapaikanhakijoille*, / [TS 3 June](#): *Perussuomalaisten eduskuntaryhmä rökittää hallitusohjelmaa: "Tulopuoli haihattelua, Bernerin politiikka jatkuu ja häittamaahanmuutto lisääntyy"* / [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 3 June](#): *Näin hallitusohjelma muuttaa arkeasi – hallituspuolueiden johtajat julkistavat ohjelmaa juuri nyt*

¹⁵ [Yle 7 June](#): *Maria Ohisalon mahdollon tehtävä: EU:n maahanmuuttajien kiintiöistä ja palautuksista riideltä jo neljä vuotta, nyt on Suomen vuoro yrittää*

¹⁶ [Yle 14 November](#): *Suomi käännäytti irakilaismiehen, joka tapettiin pian paluunsa jälkeen – Euroopan ihmisoikeustuomioistuimien tuomitsi Suomen ihmisoikeussopimuksen rikkomisesta* / [Kaleva 16 November](#): *Suomelle häpeätuomio ihmisoikeustuomioistuimelta – tapahtui juuri se, mitä ei pitäisi tapahtua*

¹⁷ [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 16 November](#): *Poliisi keskeytti palautukset Irakiin – sisäministeri Ohisalo Suomen palauttaman irakilaisen kuolemasta STT:lle: Karuimmillaan virheet voivat johtaa tällaiseen*

¹⁸ [Yle 14 November](#): *Maahanmuuttovirasto Migri myöntää: Kaikki oikeusasteet epäonnistuivat irakilaismiehen riskianalyyssissa, mies olikin hengenvaarassa*

¹⁹ [Yle 18 January](#): *KRP tehnyt riskiarvion 9 000 kielteisen päätöksen saaneesta turvapaikanhakijasta – yli 200 arvioitu mahdollisesti vaarallisiksi*

²⁰ [Kaleva 17 May](#): *Poliisi tehostaa laittoman maahantulon ja maassaoleskelun torjuntaa – Suomessa tavataan vuosittain noin 3000 maassa laittomasti olevaa*

²¹ [Ilkka-Pohjalainen](#): *Migri jakoi virheellistä tietoa turvapaikanhakijoiden työoikeudesta - Moittii lakimuutosta mutkikkaaksi ja hankalasti tulkittavaksi*

The Government's plan concerning the use of ankle transmitters to monitor asylum seekers who have been refused asylum received attention from the media, as did a study on the plan published later in the year²².

The number of people deported and refused entry by Finland in 2019 was highlighted in the media shortly before Christmas²³. The Finnish Immigration Service's representative issued a comment saying that the increase compared to the previous years was not attributable to changes in policy. The topic was also addressed in several news articles concerning returns of asylum seekers.

TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

The Finnish Immigration Service's releases concerning the record-high number of victims of trafficking in human beings in Finland²⁴ and cases of forced begging in Finland received media attention²⁵. The report by HEUNI on trafficking in children and young people²⁶ in Finland also received attention.

The decision on the refusal of entry in the case of Itohan Okundaye received considerable media attention²⁷ and the case was referred to in connection with the amendments to the legislation pertaining to trafficking in human beings planned by the Minister of the Interior²⁸.

Employment-related trafficking in human beings was also under the media spotlight, most visibly in connection with cases of exploitation involving Thai ber-

ry pickers²⁹ and employees of Nepali restaurants in Helsinki³⁰.

The arrest of Veijo Baltzar on a charge of aggravated human trafficking was the subject of significant media attention in November–December³¹. Trafficking in human beings was also highlighted as one source of income for organised crime³².

ASYLUM-SEEKING UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Unaccompanied asylum seekers were highlighted in articles written on the topic of the fees of lawyers who assist asylum seekers³³. Unaccompanied minors were also a key focus area in a report on trafficking in children and young people¹⁸. In October, the issue of unaccompanied minors at refugee camps in Greece and Italy was covered by the media, and editorials expressed support for the children³⁴.

INTEGRATION

The integration of immigrants and asylum seekers came under the spotlight early in the year in connection with the suspected sex crimes in Oulu, as did the effect of the suspicions on rehabilitation and multiculturalism activities in the area³⁵. The Chair of the Immigrants Council of the City of Oulu encouraged other people with immigrant backgrounds to help with the integration effort³⁶, and the authorities also underlined the importance of assistance from local residents³⁷.

²² [HS 1 June](#): Rinteen hallitus haluaa kielteisen turvapaikkapäätöksen saaneille jalkapannat, jollaisia kantavat päivittäin sadat ihmiset jo nyt / [HS 22 July](#): Sovittiinko hallitusneuvotteluissa turvapaikanhakijoiden jalkapannoista vai ei? Hallituspuolueiden kina kirjauksista jatkuu / [Aamulehti 31 October](#): Turvapaikanhakijoiden sähköinen valvonta olisi kallista, eikä välttämättä korvaisi säilönottoa – Selvitys nilkkapannoista ja sim-korttivalvonnasta valmistuu pian

²³ [HS 17 December](#): Suomi on karkottanut ja käännäntänyt tänä vuonna poikkeuksellisen paljon ihmisiä – Migrin mukaan linja ei ole muuttunut

²⁴ [TS 17 January](#): Ihmiskaupan uhreja Suomessa ennätysmäärä – seksikaupan tapaukset lisääntyneet nopeasti / [HS 17 January](#): Migri: Suomessa viime vuonna ennätysmäärä ihmiskaupan uhreja

²⁵ [HS 5 August](#): Maahanmuuttovirasto: Suomessa on paljastunut kerjäämään pakottamista

²⁶ [Yle 21 March](#): Myös suomalaisia lapsia ja nuoria joutuu ihmiskaupan uhreiksi – "Emme ole heränneet tähän asiaan"

²⁷ [Yle 15 February](#): Pakkoprostituution uhri Itohan Okundaye joutuu lapsensa kanssa takaisin Italiaan – ihmiskaupan valvoja kyseenalaistaa Suomen viranomaisten palautuspäätökset

²⁸ [Yle 27 March](#): Sisäministeri Kai Mykkänen ehdottaa Suomeen uutta ihmiskauppalakia

²⁹ [Kaleva 25 January](#): Thaimaalaiset poimivat Suomen metsämarjat teollisuuskäyttöön, mutta mikään laki ei määrittele heidän työtään tai kohteluaan / [Yle 18 August](#): Thaipöimijöiden ensimmäinen kapina johti taisteluun, jossa jokainen hävisi – ihmiskauppiaksi syytetty marjakeisari tuntee kaunaa joka päivä / [HS 28 August](#): "Hän ei ole paha ihminen" – Suomalainen marjayrittäjä muutti Somthawin Misukin elämän velkahelvetiksi, nyt Misuk on surullinen myös yrittäjän puolesta

³⁰ [HS 31 March](#): Nepalilaisravintoloissa paljastuneet väärinkäytökset herättivät kysymyksen: Voiko asiakas huomata työntekijöiden hyväksikäytön? / [HS 22 April](#): Rikosuhripäivystys: Kymmenet nepalilaiset kokit ovat hakeneet apua HS:n artikkelin jälkeen – Jotkut ovat kertoneet parantuneista työoloista

³¹ [Yle 21 November](#): Kulttuurivaikuttaja Veijo Baltzar vangittu epäiltynä törkeästä ihmiskaupasta / [HS 26 November](#): Tapaus Baltzar muistuttaa, että luottamusyhteiskunnalla voi olla myös varjopuolensa

³² [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 29 March](#): Rikollisryhmät saavat Euroopassa 110 miljardia rikoshyötyä vuosittain, arvioi Europol – Poliisi: Suomi seuraa Euroopan kovaa rikolliskehitystä

³³ [TS 22 February](#): Asianajajat karsastavat turvapaikanhakijoiden avustamisjuttuja – osa ei ota niitä enää lainkaan vastaan

³⁴ [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 13 January](#): Kreikan hätähuuto EU-maille: Kreikan saarilta pitää saada turvaan 2 500 alaikäistä turvapaikanhakijaa / [HS 9 October](#): Pakolaislapsia ei saa jättää kurjiin oloihin Kreikan pakolaisleireille

³⁵ [Kaleva 16 January](#): Oulu tarvitsee nopeaa apua / [Yle 28 January](#): Oulussa turvapaikanhakijoiden tutustumiskäynnit kouluihin ja päiväkoteihin on lopetettu

³⁶ [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 13 January](#): Suomessa asuvat ulkomaalaiset mukaan kotouttamiseen – seksuaalisuudesta puhuttava rohkeasti

³⁷ [Kaleva 29 January](#): Viranomaiset Oulussa: Kotoutus kaipaa kuntalaisia – pelkkä viranomaisyhteistyö ei riitä

A Ministry of Education working group tasked with developing the education and employment prospects of immigrants in Finland handed its proposals to the Minister of Education in mid-January³⁸. In March, integration was again discussed in connection with the funding problems related to the health and social services reform.

In August, there were stories in the media on the lives of girls and women being restricted in families with immigrant backgrounds³⁹. Integration was highlighted by an expert in an article and an editorial on the subject suggested that the situation is due to "a failure of integration"⁴⁰.

Integration was also addressed in an ECRI report published in September, which issued recommendations to Finland regarding the prevention of racism and hate speech⁴¹.

STUDENTS

Near the end of the year, the media wrote about the effect of tuition fees for foreign students on interest in Finland among international students, which has begun to rise again after a recent dip⁴².

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Family reunification emerged as a topic in the run-up to the parliamentary election, as it was featured in the election platforms of the parties⁴³ as well as surveys of candidates by the media⁴⁴. The subject gained prominence in the political context again in June in connection with the publication of the new

Government Programme⁴⁵. In May, the consequences of raising the income limit for family reunification and the rising number of negative family reunification decisions⁴⁶ were covered by the media. Family ties were also identified as the most common grounds for moving to Finland in a survey carried out by the authorities in November⁴⁷.

LABOUR MIGRATION

Making labour migration easier was a key agenda item for labour market organisations throughout the year⁴⁸. The current system was criticised for e.g. the processing times of permits by labour market organisations as well as individual employers⁴⁹. Trade unions also expressed support for labour migration in the run-up to the parliamentary election⁵⁰, emphasising the need for adherence to the terms of employment when international labour is used.

The topic was closely linked to politics right from the start of the year. In the parties' election platforms, labour migration was particularly highlighted as a way of increasing the employment rate and solving the problem of balancing supply and demand in the labour market⁵¹. After the new Government was formed, the Government Programme again brought the topic into the public debate, as did the interpellation motion filed by the National Coalition Party in September⁵².

Residence permits issued on the grounds of employment were also in the spotlight in connection with Brexit and British citizens residing in Finland⁵³.

³⁸ [Yle 16 January](#): *Kotouttamista pohtinut työryhmä: Lisää maahanmuuttajataustaisia opettajia, oppivelvollisuus pidemmäksi*

³⁹ [HS 13 August](#): *Suomessa elää tyttöjä ja naisia, joita rajoitetaan ja vahditaan ankarasti: Voivatko viranomaiset tehdä mitään?*

⁴⁰ [HS 14 August](#): *Naisia alistaville perinteille ei ole Suomessa sijaa*

⁴¹ [TS 10 September](#): *Komissio suosittaa Suomen hankkivan lisää resursseja tasa-arvovaltuutetulle ja vihapuheen tutkintaan*

⁴² [Yle 26 December](#): *Suomi kiinnostaa ulkomaalaisia opiskelijoita, vaikka opiskelusta tuli maksullista – hakijamäärät ovat jälleen reippaassa nousussa*

⁴³ [HS 26 January](#): *Sdp:n vaaliohjelman tärkein tavoite on pysäyttää eriarvoistumisen kasvaminen – kokoomuksen mielestä ilmiötä ei ole olemassa* / [Aamulehti 10 March](#): *Analyysi: Lähes kaikki puolueet sanovat kiintiöpakolaisille kyllä – perussuomalaiset ei päästäisi heitäkään Suomeen* / [HS 4 April](#): *Rajat kiinni ja radikaaleja toimia ilmastomuutoksen pysäyttämiseksi: Katso, millaisia vaihtoehtoja löytyy politiikan laitamilta*

⁴⁴ [HS 23 March](#): *HS:n kysely: Puolueet nostavat esiin jälkihuollon, perheenyhdistämisen ja nuorten turvapaikanhakijoiden motivaation* / [Kaleva 7 April](#): *LM-kysely: Antti Rinne edistäisi pääministerinä hiilitulleja EU:n ulkorajoille – Sdp:n linja lähestyy perussuomalaisia*

⁴⁵ [Kaleva 3 June](#): *Näin hallitusohjelma muuttaa arkeasi – pakkoruotsi palaa kirjoituksiin, haittaveroa kiristetään ja tuomiot nousevat* / [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 3 June](#): *Perussuomalaisten eduskuntaryhmä rökittää hallitusohjelmaa: "Tulopuoli haihattelua, Bernerin politiikka jatkuu ja haittamaahanmuutto lisääntyy"*

⁴⁶ [Aamulehti 24 May](#): *Hamal tekee kahta työtä ja yrittää ansaita nettona 2600 euroa kuussa, jotta saisi perheensä Suomeen – Korkea tuloaraja on vähentänyt perheenyhdistämisiä*

⁴⁷ [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 8 November](#): *Selvitys: Perhe on yleisin syy muuttaa Suomeen*

⁴⁸ [TS 8 January](#): *Etlan kovat eväät hallitusohjelmaan: Eläkeputki ja vuorotteluvapaa pois ja työvoiman tarveharkinnasta luovuttava* / [HS 3 June](#): *Keskuskauppakamari: "Työllisyysodotukset ovat lähes tyhjän päällä" – SAK:lta hallitusohjelma saa kehuja* / [Yle 15 October](#): *EK haluaa kovapalkkaisille asiantuntijoille työluvan viikossa, työministeri Harakka pitää kuukauttakin hankalana – mikä prosessissa kestää?* / [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 23 October](#): *Teknolohiateollisuuden päänavaajan rooli ei tule olemaan helppo: "Tällä hetkellä kaikki isot asiat ovat yhtä avoinna"*

⁴⁹ [HS 30 September](#): *Maahanmuuttoviraston pitkittyneet käsittelyajat vaikeuttavat työvoiman rekrytointia ulkomailta*

⁵⁰ [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 26 January](#): *Maahanmuutto tarkoittaa ay-liikkeelle samaa kuin automaatio aikoinaan – "Väistämättömän kanssa on selvittävä parhaalla mahdollisella tavalla"*

⁵¹ [Yle 17 February](#): *Vihreät tavoittelee 100 000:ta uutta työpaikkaa* / [TS 28 February](#): *Kokoomus keventäisi työn verotusta miljardilla eurolla – alkoholi, tupakka ja lämmityspolttoaineet kallistuisivat*

⁵² [TS 3 June](#): *Näin hallitusohjelma muuttaa arkeasi – hallituspuolueiden johtajat julkistavat ohjelmaa juuri nyt*

⁵³ [Kaleva 25 January](#): *Tuhansien brittien pitää rekisteröityä EU-kansalaiseksi, jotta he voivat jäädä Suomeen – Oleskelun turvaamiseksi valmistellaan erillislakia* *Miesjoukot ovat jahdanneet ulkomaalaisia puukotuksen jälkeen.*

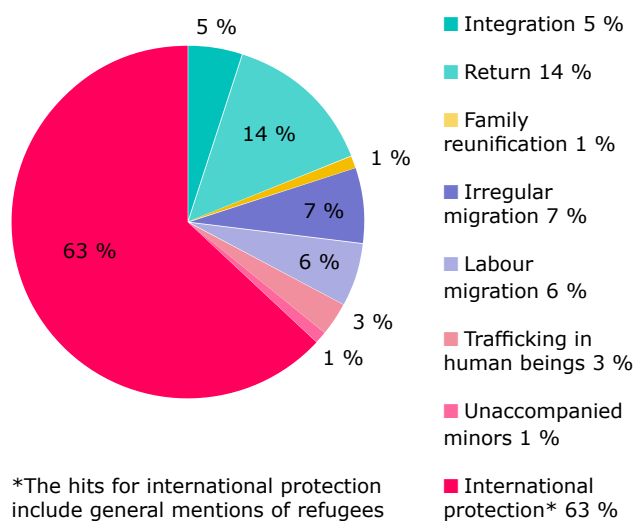
INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

The asylum seeker background of the suspects in the sex crimes in Oulu was quickly highlighted when the case hit the news⁵⁴. The Government's asylum and refugee policy also came under criticism⁵⁵. The military action taken by Turkey in Syria brought the refugee situation in that region back into the headlines and caused concerns regarding the deterioration of the situation⁵⁶. Turkey responded to the international criticism by threatening to open its borders to refugees seeking to enter the EU⁵⁷.

The repatriation of Finnish citizens at the al-Hol refugee camp was a topic of significant attention in the latter part of the year, causing controversy on several occasions in November–December and leading to the filing of an interpellation motion regarding the actions of the Minister for Foreign Affairs⁵⁸.

Demonstrations related to refugees were reported in connection with Finnish Independence Day⁵⁹.

Migration in public dialogue in 2019 Coverage by topic



Source: Media analysis produced for EMN by Liana Technologies Oy

⁵⁴ [HS 12 January](#): *Presidentti Niinistö Oulun uusista seksuaalirikosepäilyistä: Kestämätöntä*

⁵⁵ [Ilkka-Pohjalainen 6 January](#): *Kommentti: Hallituksen ilosanoma ei oikein tehoa –oppositio näyttää saaneen viestinsä paremmin perille* / [TS 12 January](#): *Turun Perussuomalaisten uusi hallitus kritisoi poliisia ja maahanmuuttopolitiikkaa*

⁵⁶ [TS 9 October](#): *Suomi tuomitsee Turkin hyökkäyksen Syyriaan – uudet asevientiluvat Turkkiin jäihin* / [HS 9 October](#): *Ulkoministeri Haavisto Turkin hyökkäyksestä Syyriaan: Voi aiheuttaa lisää pakolaisuutta*

⁵⁷ [Aamulehti 10 October](#): *Ulkoministeri Haavisto Erdoganin pakolaisvyöryllä uhkaamisesta: "Kovista lausunnoista pitäisi päästä maltilliseen asioiden hoitamiseen"*

⁵⁸ [Turun Sanomat 17 October](#): *Ulkoministeri Haavisto: Toimintaan Al-Holissa tarvitaan paikallisen hallinnon lupa – Suomi on selvittänyt, voidaanko leiriltä liikkua pois Turkin kautta* / [Aamulehti 2 December](#): *Kirjallinen kysymys ulkoministeri Pekka Haaviston toiminnasta – Yrittikö Haavisto tuoda lapset al-Holin leiriltä salaa Suomeen konsulikyydillä?* / [HS 9 December](#): *Ulkoministeriön korkea virkamies: Haavisto on toiminut laillisesti kiistassa konsulipäällikön kanssa*

⁵⁹ [TS 1 December](#): *Muukalaisvastainen äärioikeisto marssii jälleen kaduilla itsenäisyyspäivänä – Tutkija: "Liikehdintä kytee pinnan alla"* / [HS 5 December](#): *Turvapaikanhakijat perustivat mielenosoitusleirin Helsinkiin, mallia vuoden 2017 tapahtumista*

2.3. Research on migration

A considerable amount of research on migration was again published in 2019. The following is an illustrative sample of significant publications by the public authorities as well as academic studies on the subject.

Finland's annual national migration report to the OECD, **International Migration 2018–2019 – Report for Finland**⁶⁰, covering 2018 and early 2019, provides a concise summary of Finland's policies regarding migration, key legislative amendments, an extensive media review and up-to-date statistics. The report is largely based on OECD Guidelines. The report published in autumn 2019 discussed the impacts of the election held in 2019 on migration policy as well as labour migration and its effects on the Finnish economy. The report was compiled by the Ministry of the Interior's Migration Department and published in English.

The annual **Migration Review**⁶¹ brings together current issues related to migration from the perspective of policy formulation and legislation. The Review was compiled by the Ministry of the Interior's Migration Department. The report states that, in addition to Finnish labour, Finland needs foreign employees. The report also covers legislative amendments that aim to make it easier for entrepreneurs and experts to move to Finland and thereby promote economic growth and employment. The report further points out that number of new asylum seekers has already fallen below the level seen before 2015., but the system is still overburdened. New legislative amendments have accelerated the asylum procedure and the processing times for applications have become shorter. The number of returnees who have received assistance for voluntary return has decreased. In addition, there are challenges related to the removal from the country of those who have received a decision on the refusal of entry or stay or on deportation, because not all countries of origin are willing to readmit their citizens who are to be returned. An amendment to the Aliens Act has expedited the enforcement of deportation decisions for those who have committed offences and those who are considered to pose a danger to public order and security. The Nationality Act has been amended so that persons found guilty of certain serious offences may lose their Finnish citizenship.

The report **Greater Helsinki foreign-language population forecast 2018–2035**⁶² presents the views of population experts from cities in the Helsinki metropolitan area regarding the development of the foreign-language population over the next 17 years. Greater Helsinki refers to 14 municipalities, including the Helsinki metropolitan area municipalities of Helsinki, Espoo, Kauniainen and Vantaa as well as the surrounding municipalities Hyvinkää, Järvenpää, Kerava, Kirkkonummi, Mäntsälä, Nurmijärvi, Pornainen, Sipoo, Tuusula and Vihti. The forecasts have been prepared on a municipality-specific basis for the four municipalities of the Helsinki metropolitan area and as a single forecast for the surrounding region consisting of 10 surrounding municipalities. The publication presents a foreign-language population forecast for areas in Greater Helsinki for eight language groups. The report also describes the forecast method and the assumptions used.

Published by the Ministry of Justice, **National data sources for measuring discrimination**⁶³ reviews the national data sources related to discrimination and discrimination refers to discrimination as defined in the Non-Discrimination Act. The review presents the structures of continuous national monitoring regarding different categories of discrimination, research related to discrimination and deficiencies in data collection. The report collects information from the national structures of data collection, such as population surveys, statistics and administrative data in different sectors. It also includes views of representatives of the target groups about the current state and needs of data collection. The report identifies gaps and weaknesses in data collection, compares the current situation to a previous corresponding analysis and assesses the development of national data collection in 2008–2018. It also contains recommendations for developing national data collection through the discrimination monitoring system.

Hate crimes reported to the Police have already been monitored for 20 years in Finland. According to the report **Hate crimes reported to the police in Finland in 2018**⁶⁴, the police recorded a total of 910 reports of suspected hate crime in 2018. This represents a decrease of 22 per cent compared to the previous year. The majority (69.7%, 634 reports) of the cases were incidents based on ethnic or national origin. In the ma

⁶⁰ Ministry of the Interior (2019), International Migration 2018–2019: Report for Finland, Ministry of the Interior Publications 2019:32, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-303-3> (Cited 16 April 2020)

⁶¹ Sisäministeriö (2019), Maahanmuuton tilannekatsaus 1/2019, Sisäministeriön julkaisuja 2019:22, <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161587> (Cited 16 April 2020)

⁶² Helsingin kaupunki, kaupunginkanslia, kaupunkitutkimus ja -tilastot (2019), Helsingin seudun vieraskielisen väestön ennuste 2018–2035, Tilastoja 2019:3, https://www.hel.fi/hel2/tietokeskus/julkaisut/pdf/19_03_14_Tilastoja_3_Vuori.pdf (Cited 16 April 2020)

⁶³ Oikeusministeriö (2019), Syrjinnän seurannan kansalliset tietolähteet, Oikeusministeriön julkaisuja 2019:35, https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/161777/OM_2019_35_Syrjinn%c3%a4n_kansalliset_tietolahteet.pdf (Cited 16 April 2020)

⁶⁴ Rauta, Jenita (2019) Poliisin tietoon tullut viharikollisuus Suomessa 2018, Poliisiammattikorkeakoulun katsauksia 15/2019, Tampere: Poliisiammattikorkeakoulu https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/261556/Polamk_katsaus_15_Viharikos_B5_WEB.pdf (Cited 16 April 2020)

majority of the cases, prejudice or hostility was directed towards a member of an ethnic or national minority by a member of the majority population. The most common suspected crimes were assaults. The most common scenes of the suspected crimes based on ethnic or national origin were public outdoor locations such as roads or market squares.

Also published in Finland in 2019 were the significant dual reports **Jihadism in Finland**⁶⁵ and **Jihadist online communication and Finland**⁶⁶, which are indirectly related to migration. According to the first-mentioned study, jihadist activism in Finland remains relatively low scale when compared to other Western European countries, but the number of individuals involved has grown significantly during the 2010s. The most important factor contributing to this has been the conflict in Syria and Iraq, which, in addition to mobilising new activists, has had a uniting effect on an otherwise fragmented milieu. The study on online communication investigates jihadist online communication related to Finland in 2014–2018. In particular, it examines the visibility of Finland and persons connected to Finland in jihadist communication and investigates what kinds of content persons living in Finland have produced and disseminated online. The same subject matter was addressed in **Assessment of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extermism by the Ministry of the Interior**⁶⁷, which assessed the impacts of the 2016 action plan at the national and local levels. The most significant successes in the assessment were observed to be multi-professional cooperation and the participation of associations, the pursuit of structural measures as well as the emphasis on the significance of empirical information. The biggest challenges were detected in the gaps and in the exchange of information between actors, the assurance of association funding and its discontinuity as well as in the awareness of the phenomenon taking into consideration the different levels of the preventive work.

Matti Välimäki's doctoral dissertation **Politics within the frameworks of international, national and ideological conditions: Finnish political parties and immigration 1973–2015**⁶⁸ explores the devel-

opment of immigration views of Finnish political parties from 1973 to 2015. The dissertation deepens not only the understanding of party viewpoints, but also the principles and contemporary history of the regulation of immigration and immigrants in the Finnish political and legal system.

Doctoral dissertations on Finland's Russian population were also published in 2019. Anastasia Diatlova's dissertation **Between visibility and invisibility: Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland**⁶⁹ examines the life and work experience of Russian-speaking women engaged in commercial sex in Finland. It explores the ways in which commercial sex is conceptualised within the Finnish national project and the ways this affects the everyday lives of migrant women who engage in commercial sex. Daria Krivonos' **Migrations on the edge of whiteness : Young Russian-speaking migrants in Helsinki, Finland**⁷⁰ examines young Russian-speakers' quest for Europeanness.

Studies by Finnish researchers on the life and mobility of Muslims were also published in 2019.

The book **Wellbeing of Transnational Muslim Families Marriage, Law and Gender**⁷¹ by Marja Tiilikainen, Mulki Al-Sharmani and Sanna Mustasaari analyses the life of transnational Muslims with a particular focus on marriage, divorce and parenting as a Muslim in Europe. The book re-conceptualises wellbeing and unpacks its multiple dimensions in the context of Muslim families and investigates how migrants navigate different aspects of family relations and life in a transnational social space.

The book **Muslims at the Margins of Europe**⁷² by Tuomas Martikainen, José Mapril and Adil Husain Khan examines Muslim communities in Finland, Greece, Ireland and Portugal. It highlights how Muslim experiences can be understood in relation to a country's particular historical routes, political economies, colonial and post-colonial legacies, as well as other factors, such as church-state relations, the role of secularism and urbanisation.

⁶⁵ Malkki, Leena; Saarinen, Juha; (2019), Jihadistinen liikehdintä Suomessa, Sisäministeriön julkaisu 2019:14, <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161501> (Cited 16 April 2020)

⁶⁶ Malkki, Leena; Pohjonen, Matti; (2019), Jihadistinen verkkoviestintä ja Suomi, Sisäministeriön julkaisu 2019:15, <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161502> (Cited 16 April 2020)

⁶⁷ Kinnunen, Samuli; Partanen, Elli; (2019), Sisäministeriön kansallisen väkivaltaisen radikalisoitumisen ja ekstremismin ennaltaehkäisytoimenpideohjelman arviointi, Sisäministeriön julkaisu 2019:18, <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161510> (Cited 16 April 2020)

⁶⁸ Välimäki, M. (2019), Poliittikka kansallisten, kansainvälisten ja ideologisten reunaehtojujen puitteissa : Suomalaiset puolueet ja maahanmuutto 1973–2015, Turku: Turun Yliopisto, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-29-7859-5> (Cited 17 April 2020)

⁶⁹ Diatlova, A. (2019), Between Visibility and Invisibility: Russian-speaking Women engaged in Commercial Sex in Finland, Helsinki: Helsingin Yliopisto, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-51-3408-0> (Cited 17 April 2020)

⁷⁰ Krivonos, D. (2019), Migrations On the Edge of Whiteness : Young Russian-speaking Migrants in Helsinki, Finland; Helsinki: Helsingin Yliopisto, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-51-3400-4> (Cited 17 April 2020).

⁷¹ Tiilikainen, M. (Toim.), Al-Sharmani, M. (Toim.), Mustasaari, S. (Toim.). (2020). Wellbeing of Transnational Muslim Families. London: Routledge, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315231976> (Cited 17 April 2020)

⁷² Martikainen, T., Mapril, J., and Khan, A. (Toim.) (2019). Muslims at the Margins of Europe, Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004404564> (Cited 17 April 2020)

2.4. Other general developments related to immigration

Progress was made on a legislative amendment concerning the regulation of the processing of personal data by the immigration administration. The government proposal⁷³ on the Personal Data Act in the Field of Immigration Administration was given to the parliament on 12 September 2019.

The purpose is to ensure that the constitutional requirement to regulate the protection of personal data in an act is met as appropriate in the field of immigration administration. The Act on the Register of Aliens given in 1998 does not meet the requirements related to digitalisation, for example, at this time. The scope of application of the new act would not be bound to registers or data systems; instead, in line with the current practice, it would be tied to the purposes for which personal data is processed.

Furthermore, the act would allow the Finnish Immigration Service to make automated decisions when certain preconditions are met. Automated decision-making would promote the data subject's right to bring the matter to processing without undue delay. It would facilitate routine checks and allow the use of personnel resources in tasks where human contribution is required. Automated decision-making would speed up the granting of employee's res-

idence permits, for example. Good governance, legal protection and liability for acts in office would be ensured also in automated decision-making. Automation is not considered to be suited for the processing of asylum applications or other matters requiring that the applicant be heard.⁷⁴

Launched in October 2019, the **RIO 2 project** is a continuation of the Finnish Immigration Service's Rotating Immigration Officer project, which has developed procedures related to residence permit applications in challenging countries in cooperation with diplomatic missions and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The RIO 2 project will assess to what extent the new operating models have been adopted, evaluate their effectiveness, implement the necessary adjustments and strive to establish the best operating models as standard practices used by diplomatic missions. The aim is an immigration process for third-country nationals that is as swift, smooth and cost-efficient as possible, which benefits not only applicants but also employers, education institutions and the authorities. The project focuses on the most challenging diplomatic missions, particularly those that have outsourced the reception of applications. The project will also develop cooperation between the authorities by making use of technology in areas such as remote training, advice and interviews as well as the implementation of a feedback system.

⁷³ Government proposal HE 18/2019 vp

⁷⁴ https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/1410869/maahanmuuttohallinnon-henkilotietolainsaadannon-uudistus-etenee (Cited 17 April 2020)

3. Legal migration

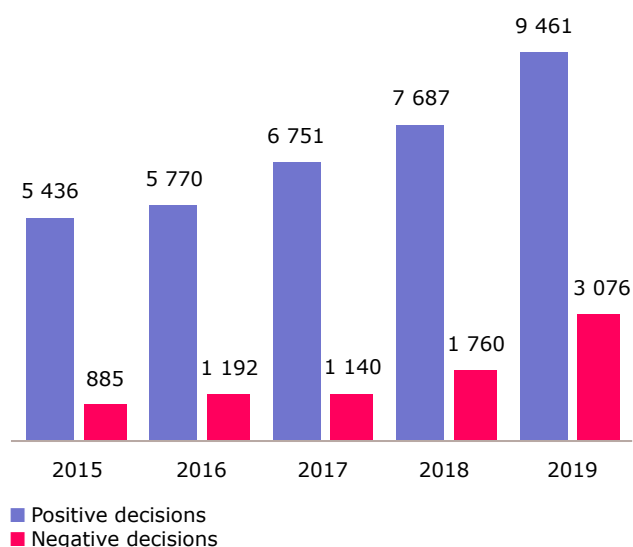
3.1. Labour migration

In 2019, a first residence permit for Finland on the grounds of employment was issued to 9,461 individuals. **There was a substantial increase in the number of residence permits issued on the grounds of employment compared to the previous year**, when this figure was 7,687. The year-on-year increase was 23 per cent.

The number of employment-based residence permits has been increasing for several years already. The Finnish Immigration Service issued decisions on a total of 12,537 applications for a residence permit on the grounds of employment. Of the decisions given, 76 per cent were positive and 24 per cent were negative. First residence permits on the grounds of employment were issued most often to citizens of Ukraine (2,170), India (1,423) and the Russian Federation (1,133).

Residence permits issued on the grounds of employment are divided into 14 categories (see the chart below). The chart shown here indicates that, as in the previous year, **the most common case was that a first residence permit on the grounds of employment was issued for employment requiring a preliminary decision, that is: it was a so-called residence permit for an employed person.**⁷⁵ Most of the applicants for a residence permit for an employed person are manual labourers. Sectors for which such residence permits are issued include the following, for instance: agriculture, catering, construction, cleaning and transport.⁷⁶ A total of 3,827 residence permits for an employed person were issued in 2019. The most common nationality was Ukrainian, with a total of 877 residence permits issued.

First residence permit decisions on the grounds of employment 2015–2019



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

⁷⁵ A decision on an application for a residence permit for an employed person is made in a two-step process that includes a preliminary decision by an Employment and Economic Development Office. For this reason, a residence permit for an employed person is also called employment requiring a preliminary decision. The preliminary decision by the Employment and Economic Development Office is an overall consideration that takes into account labour availability and an assessment of the conditions of employment as well as the employer's and employee's conditions. After the preliminary decision by the Employment and Economic Development Office, the final decision on the residence permit application is made by the Finnish Immigration Service, which determines whether the general requirements for issuing a residence permit are met.

⁷⁶ Sisäministeriö (2018), Töihin Suomeen - Hallituksen maahanmuuttopoliittinen ohjelma työpe-rusteisen maahanmuuton vahvistamiseksi, Sisäministeriön julkaisu 1/2018, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-176-3> (Cited 16 April 2020)

Decisions on first applications for a residence permit on the grounds of employment in 2019

	Positive	Negative	Total
Specialist	1,893	10	1,903
Specialist, Blue Card	163	4	167
Internship	163	4	167
Start-up entrepreneur	54	15	69
Seasonal work	1,091	37	1,128
Other work	287	31	318
Seasonal work, preliminary decision	486	7	493
Work requiring a preliminary decision	3,827	2,608	6,435
Intra-corporate transfer	28	1	29
Scientific research	1,032	11	1,043
Sports and coaching	284	75	359
Volunteering	24	0	24
Self-employment	128	271	399
Total	9,461	3,074	12,535

Many residence permits were also issued to specialists: 1,893 in total. The number of residence permits for a specialist increased slightly compared to the previous year. Again in 2019, specialists came to Finland especially from India: a total of 1,081, or more than half, of the persons that were issued with a first residence permit for a specialist for Finland were citizens of India. Most of them came to work in the IT sector, as in the previous years. Many seasonal workers also entered Finland during the year: there were 1,577 residence permits issued, including both 3–6-month seasonal work and 6–9-month seasonal work requiring a preliminary decision. Seasonal workers in Finland are particularly employed by gardens, greenhouses, berry farms and forest berry picking companies.

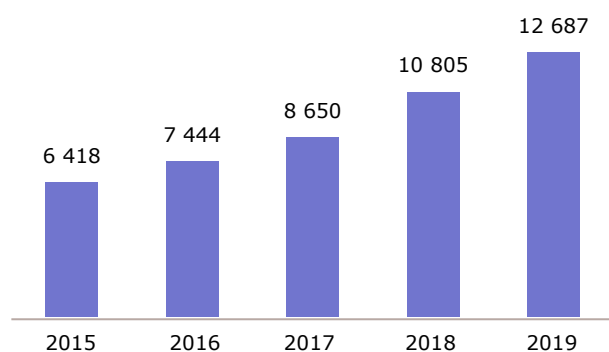
A total of 54 residence permits for startup entrepreneurs were issued in 2019, representing a slight increase from the previous year, when they were introduced as a new category.

A total of 8,255 extended permits were issued on the grounds of employment. **The number of extended permits issued on the grounds of employment increased slightly from the previous year,** when the corresponding figure was 7,534. Employment-based right of residence was most frequently extended by citizens of the Russian Federation (1,248), India (1,202) and Ukraine (795).

Of those who were issued a residence permit on the grounds of employment, 30 per cent were women and 70 per cent were men.⁷⁷

Employment surpassed family ties as the most common grounds for applying for a first residence permit in 2019. A total of 12,687 first applications for a residence permit were filed on the grounds of employment. This number is 17 per cent higher than in the previous year, when there were 10,805 applications. The increase in the number of residence permits issued on the grounds of employment has continued for several years.

First applications for a residence permit on the grounds of employment 2015–2019



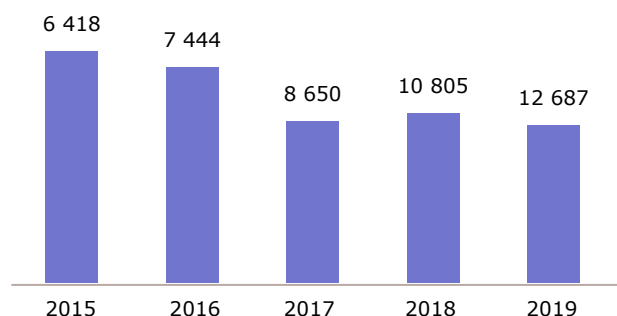
Source: Finnish Immigration Service

⁷⁷ This includes both first residence permits and extended permits.

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

In 2019, a total of 3,865 EU citizens registered their right of residence in Finland on the grounds of employment. This figure includes both employed and self-employed EU citizens who received a positive registration decision. The number of EU citizens who registered their right of residence on the grounds of employment decreased slightly from the previous year, which was in line with the longer-term downward trend. About one quarter (972) of the EU citizens who registered their right of residence on the grounds of employment were Estonians. Other nationalities of employment-based EU migration included citizens of Romania and the UK.

EU citizens who registered their right of residence on the grounds of employment

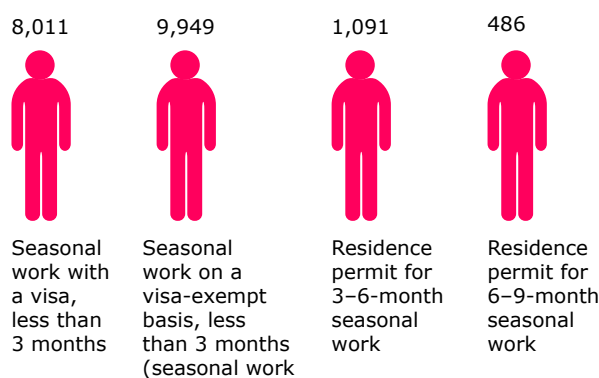


Source: Finnish Immigration Service

In addition to EU and EEA citizens, **some of the third-country seasonal workers are not included if the focus is only on residence permits issued.** Pursuant to the act that entered into force in 2018, people who enter the country for more than three months of seasonal work must apply for a residence permit for a seasonal worker so they are included in residence permit statistics. However, peo-

ple who enter the country for less than three months of seasonal work are still not included in residence permit statistics. People who come from a visa-exempt country for less than three months of seasonal work must obtain **a seasonal work certificate**. A total of 9,940 seasonal work certificates were issued in 2019.⁷⁸ People who come from non-visa-exempt countries for less than three months of seasonal work must obtain **a visa**. The number of visas issued for seasonal work was approximately 8,011. Seasonal work visas were mostly issued to citizens of Russia, Ukraine and Thailand.⁷⁹

Seasonal work in 2019



Source: Finnish Immigration Service, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

⁷⁸ Source: Finnish Immigration Service.

⁷⁹ Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the figure also includes wild berry pickers who do not apply for a seasonal work visa but a normal Schengen visa.

3.2. Research on labour migration

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment published the **Talent Boost Cookbook**⁸⁰ in 2019 as part of its Talent Boost programme to compile best practices related to working with international talent. Talent Cookbook for Finland is meant to serve as a practical guide for those working with international talent attraction and retention and those who wish to learn about the international talent scene in Finland. It showcases the good recipes that already exist to inspire others and gives an overview of what else is cooking in the talent scene in Finland. The purpose is to learn from existing initiatives and services to strengthen the development and implementation of talent attraction, reception, integration and reputation services in Finland. The book also includes models for bringing international talents and companies together.

Päivi Vartiainen's article-based doctoral dissertation **The paths of Filipino nurses to Finland: A study on learning and integration processes in the context of international recruitment**⁸¹ concerns the paths of nurses recruited in the Philippines into the work organisations of Finnish social and health care. The path typically entailed a recruitment process and departure training in the Philippines, further training to acquire professional competence in Finland and integration into the work organisations. The dissertation comprises four sub-studies and the articles reporting them, and a summary of these. The sub-studies scrutinized the recruitment processes of the Filipino nurses from different perspectives and in different contexts. The dissertation contributes new knowledge on the one hand about international re-

cruitment in social and health care and on the other hand about work organisation integration and informal learning in the multicultural social and health care work organisation.

Hanwei Li's dissertation **The journey of a thousand miles: Chinese student migration and integration in Finland and Germany**⁸² aims to identify the drivers of Chinese student mobility to Finland and Germany, and to explore the students' integration experiences in these countries. The dissertation considers Chinese students' integration into new academic settings and societal environments. The four sub-studies identified differences in the Chinese students' integration experiences in Finland and Germany. The students studying in German-taught programmes in Germany seem to have significantly higher pressures and greater difficulties with their academic integration than do the Chinese students studying in English-taught programmes in Finland. However, the students studying in Germany have higher chances of finding employment after graduation because of better proficiency in the local language.

Keiu Telve's doctoral dissertation **Family Life Across the Gulf: Cross-Border Commuters' Transnational Families**⁸³ between Estonia and Finland explored the transnational family life of men who commute between Estonia and Finland and how they maintain family connections between the two countries. The dissertation also analysed how the cross-border commuting of one family member affects the other family members and the effect of the commuting of fathers and husbands on the international mobility of wives and children.

⁸⁰ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment; Business Finland; (2019), Talent Boost Cookbook, <https://tem.fi/documents/1410877/7552084/Talent+Boost+Cookbook+Finland.pdf/d4675b40-cc36-2038-e96b-9eb01fe3874d/Talent+Boost+Cookbook+Finland.pdf/Talent+Boost+Cookbook+Finland.pdf> (Cited 16 April 2020)

⁸¹ Vartiainen, P. (2019), Filippiiniläisten sairaanhoitajien polut Suomeen: Tutkimus oppimisesta ja työyhteisöintegraatiosta kansainvälisen rekrytoinnin kontekstissa, Tampere: Tampereen Yliopisto, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-03-0937-4> (Cited 17 April 2020)

⁸² Li, H. (2019) (2019). The Journey of a Thousand Miles : Chinese Student Migration and Integration in Finland and Germany, Tampere: Tampereen Yliopisto, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-03-0957-2> (Cited 17 April 2020)

⁸³ Telve, K., 2019. Family Life Across The Gulf: Cross-Border Commuters' Transnational Families Between Estonia And Finland. Tartu: University of Tartu, <http://www.digar.ee/id/nlib-digar:403733> (Cited 17 April 2020)

3.3. Legislative amendments and other developments related to labour migration

A legislative amendment (437/2019) entered into force on 1 June 2019, eliminating the labour market test in the consideration of extended permit applications by holders of a residence permit for an employed person who have worked in Finland for at least one year and are changing to another sector (HE 273/2018vp). The aim of the amendment is to improve the conditions for professional mobility.

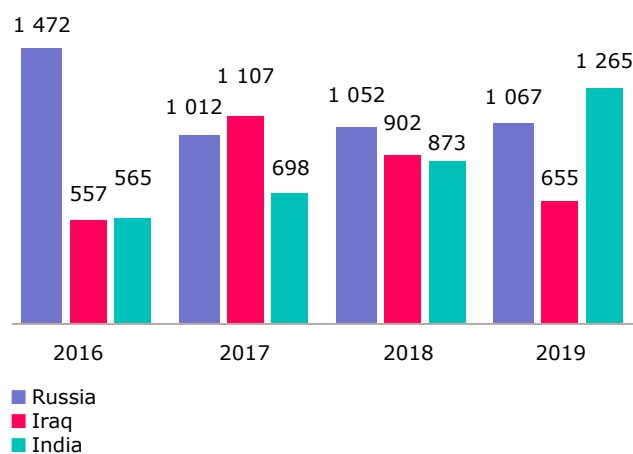
The residence permit process was streamlined by making it possible to apply for an extended permit online without visiting the Finnish Immigration Service. The change applies to all residence permits but, in practice, it will particularly facilitate the permit process of employees who work for international companies and travel frequently⁸⁴.

3.3. Family reunification

In 2019, family was again the most common reason for moving to Finland. **In 2019, a first residence permit on the grounds of family ties was issued to 10,251 foreign nationals.** The number increased substantially from the previous year, when the corresponding figure was 9,009.

Traditionally, nationals of the Russian Federation have topped the list of nationalities in the residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties. However, the year 2017 was an exception to the rule, with Iraq being ahead of Russia. **However, in 2019, India surpassed Russia as the most common nationality among those who received a residence permit on the grounds of family ties (1,265).** Russia was second on the list (1,167), followed by Iraq (655).

Residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties, three largest groups by nationality 2016–2018



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The Finnish Immigration Service made a total of 13,011 decisions on first applications for a residence permit on the grounds of family ties. **Of the decisions given, 79 per cent were positive and 21 per cent were negative.** As in the previous year, the share of positive decisions decreased slightly year-on-year.

⁸⁴ Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

The number of first applications for a residence permit on the grounds of family ties totalled 11,753. This represented a slight increase from the previous year's figure of 11,036. As in the case of decisions on residence permits on the grounds of family ties, India (1,317) surpassed Russia (1,304) in the number of applications.

Residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties can be categorised based on the sponsor. Of those who were issued a first residence permit on the grounds of family ties, 31 per cent were family members of Finnish citizens. Family members of beneficiaries of international protection accounted for 15 per cent of all people who were issued a residence permit on the grounds of family ties. However, as in the previous year, **the most common scenario was the granting of a residence permit on**

the grounds of family ties to a family member of other foreign national, such as a foreign national who had been issued a residence permit on the grounds of employment: 54 per cent of all cases were like this.⁸⁵

The picture is slightly different when examined in terms of the recipient of the residence permit: In the case of beneficiaries of international protection, the family member arriving in Finland was most often their minor child. Minor children were the majority also among other foreign nationals' family members arriving in Finland, although fairly often the arriving person was their spouse. In cases involving Finnish citizens, the family member arriving in Finland was most often their spouse. The trend was the same as in the previous year.

⁸⁵ The term "other foreign national" refers to a foreign national who has been issued with a residence permit on the grounds of employment, for instance.

Decisions on first applications for a residence permit on the grounds of family ties 2019⁸⁶

	Positive	Negative	Total
Guardian of a person in receipt of international protection	44	33	77
Child of a person in receipt of international protection	1,124	212	1,336
Other family member of a person in receipt of international protection	66	124	190
Spouse of a person in receipt of international protection	297	244	541
Guardian of a third country national	12	37	49
Child of a third country national	3,107	645	3,752
Other family member of a third country national	4	40	44
Spouse of a third country national	2,444	527	2,971
Guardian of a Finnish citizen	75	41	29
Child of a Finnish citizen	413	138	551
Other family member of a Finnish citizen	1	143	144
Spouse of a Finnish citizen	2,664	576	3,240
Total	10,251	2,760	12,924

A total of 10,615 extended permits were issued on the grounds of family ties. Their number decreased slightly from the previous year, when the corresponding figure was 11,312. The most common nationalities among people who were issued with an extended permit on the grounds of family ties were Iraq (1,116), the Russian Federation (1,112) and India (885).

Of those who were issued with a residence permit on the grounds of family ties, 61 per cent were women and 39 per cent were men.⁸⁷

Apart from third-country nationals, family reasons also brought EU citizens to Finland. **In 2019, a total of 1,795 EU citizens registered their right of**

residence in Finland on the grounds of family ties. Their number decreased somewhat from the previous year: in 2018, the corresponding figure was 1,895. The most common nationality among these registrations was Estonian (524).

In addition, the Finnish Immigration Service granted a residence card for a family member to 732 individuals. A residence card for a family member of an EU citizen can be granted to an individual who is a family member of a citizen of the European Union but who themselves is not an EU citizen. The most common nationality among people who were issued with a residence card for a family member of an EU citizen was that of the Russian Federation (145).

⁸⁶ Source: Finnish Immigration Service

⁸⁷ This includes both first residence permits and extended permits.

3.5. Legislative amendments and other developments related to family reunification

The Aliens Act was amended during the year with respect to family reunification.

On 1 May 2019, the Aliens Act was amended as regards the practical procedure of DNA sampling in connection with the residence permit process. Pursuant to Section 65 of the Aliens Act, the Finnish Immigration Service may provide an applicant or sponsor with an opportunity to prove their biological kinship with DNA analysis paid from State funds if no other adequate evidence of family ties based on biological kinship is available and if it is possible to obtain material evidence of the family ties through DNA analysis. Prior to the amendment, the DNA samples had to be taken by a health care professional. In practice, this slowed down the Finnish Immigration Service's processes. Following the amendment, pursuant to Section 66 of the Aliens Act, the person concerned takes the sample themselves, monitored by an officer representing the Finnish Immigration Service or a Finnish diplomatic mission.

On 1 June 2019, a third Subsection was added to Section 38 of the Aliens Act concerning the relevant date for assessing the minor status of an applicant in response to the Court of Justice of the European Union's judgment A and S (C-550/16). In practice, the Finnish Immigration Service had already adhered to the judgment of the Court, but the amendment meant that the judgment is now reflected in Finnish law. Following the legislative amendment, if an asylum seeker enters Finland when they are under the age of 18, they are considered a minor in the family reunification application even if they turn 18 during the application process. Applications for family reunification must be filed within three months of the asylum seeker receiving a decision on international protection.

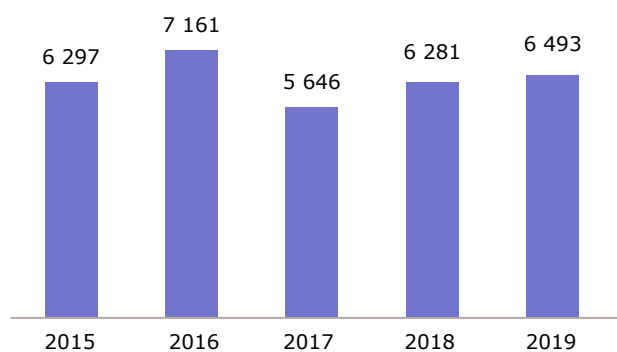
In spring 2019, the Finnish Immigration Service issued guidelines on the application of the Aliens Act (301/2004) provisions concerning family reunification for beneficiaries of international protection.

3.6. Students

In 2019, a first residence permit on the grounds of studies was issued to 5,246 foreign nationals. The number was largely unchanged from the previous years (2018: 5,202 residence permits issued) and the downward trend that began in the previous years has not continued.

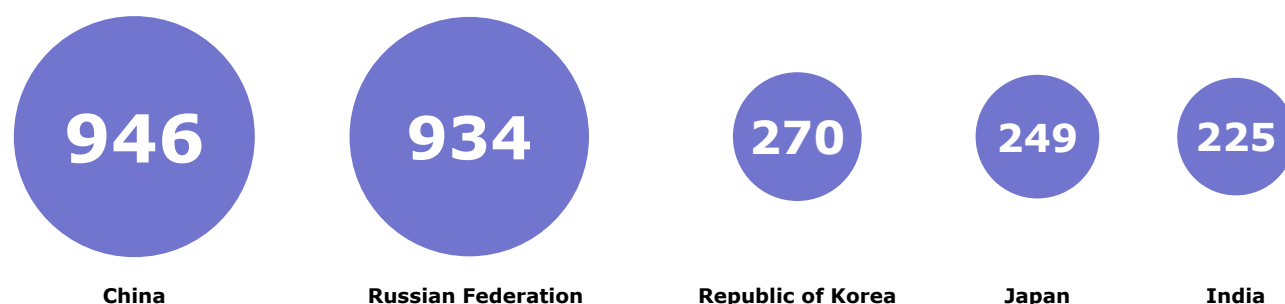
The total number of residence permit applications on the grounds of studies nevertheless continued to increase slightly: 6,493 applications for a student's residence permit compared to 6,281 applications in the previous year, showing an 3 per cent increase.

First residence permit applications on the grounds of studies 2015–2019



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

Decisions on first residence permit applications based on studies, top 10 nationalities in 2019



The number of new fixed-term residence permits, i.e. extended permits, issued on the grounds of studies was 4,829. The number again decreased from the previous year, when 6,154 such permits were issued. The most common nationalities among people who were issued with an extended permit on the grounds of studies were Vietnam (1,561), the Russian Federation (1,091) and China (549).

As in the previous year, the largest group of students entering Finland was Chinese (946 residence permits issued). In addition to China, students entered Finland from e.g. Russia (934), Vietnam (437), South Korea (270), Japan (249) and India (225).

In 86 per cent of cases, the decision on a student's residence permit was positive.

When the decisions are broken down by nationality, it can be seen that there were differences in the ratio of positive and negative decisions depending on the country of origin: although the greater part of the decisions were positive, negative decisions were more common with certain nationalities. In general, it can be stated that negative decisions were more common for applicants from South Asian countries (Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan) and African countries (Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon).

Half of those who were granted a residence permit for studies were female and half were male. However, it could again be seen in 2019 that a majority of those who were issued with a first residence permit for Finland were women (55 per cent), while men were in the majority in extended permits (55 per cent). The distribution was the same as in 2018.

3.7. Legislative amendments and other developments related to student migration

The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of the Interior launched a cooperation project in March 2019 to support the entry and integration of higher education students. The aim of the project is to find measures to streamline entry and residence permit practices. The task of the working group is to establish a shared understanding of the current situation and objective with regard to the smoothness of international students' entry immigration processes and integration into the Finnish labour market and, where necessary, propose improvements to existing practices. The group will prepare proposals for improving cross-sectoral cooperation as well as increasing networking and the exchange of information.

The working group's report, published on 16 September 2019, presents 34 measures related to areas such as developing the knowledge base, the exchange of information and processes, enhancing alumni activities and engaging the business sector in integration processes. The actions proposed by the working group would develop the processes that support recruitment and integration to make the entire chain operate in a proactive, reliable and efficient manner from the perspective of individuals, higher education institutions and the authorities, and develop customer-driven digital services and smooth service paths from recruitment to selection, admission and entry.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs established a coordination group on 2 October 2019. The task of the group is to coordinate the process development and expediting of the processing of residence permits issued on the grounds of employment, self-employment, studies and research as well as the harmonisation of performance guidance, service use practices, customer communication, the compiling of statistics and related needs for legislative amendments. The coordination group reports to the labour migration and integration sub-group of the Ministerial Working Group on Promoting Employment, which reports to the Ministerial Working Group on Promoting Employment. The coordination group also steers a cross-sectoral working group led by the Finnish Immigration Service, which is tasked with developing a harmonised process for residence permits issued on the grounds of employment and studies, including the exchange of information, preparation of forms, customer communication and advice, the compiling of statistics and digitalisation.

The Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government⁸⁸ states that an action plan will be compiled to improve the employment of international degree students. The action plan will investigate financial support modes to compensate for the tuition fees of non-EU/EEA students studying in Finland if they stay on to work in Finland after graduation. The post-graduation residence permit will be prolonged to two years and will allow the permit holder to take short-term work.

⁸⁸ Finnish Government (2019), Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government 10 December 2019, INCLUSIVE AND COMPETENT FINLAND – a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society, Publications of the Finnish Government 2019:33, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-811-3> (Cited 16 April 2020)

4. International protection including asylum

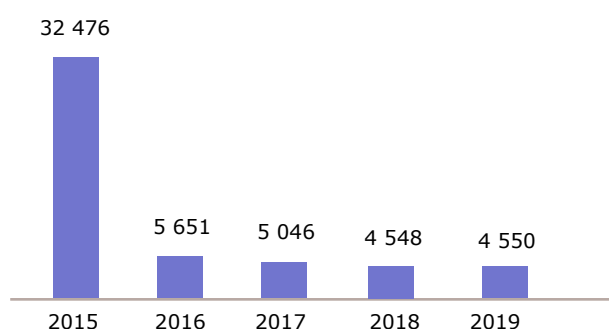
4.1. Asylum seekers

The number of asylum seekers entering Finland in 2019 was largely unchanged from the previous year. A total of 4,550 asylum applications were submitted. Of the asylum applications submitted in 2019, 46 per cent (2,083) were **subsequent applications**.⁸⁹

In addition to a downward trend, there were also changes in applicant profiles. **The most common countries of origin of asylum seekers were Iraq (1,431), Somalia (483), Turkey (388), Afghanistan (364) and the Russian Federation (336).** The autumn of 2015 was still reflected in asylum applications. Many of the Iraqis had arrived in Finland earlier and filed a subsequent application in 2019. The number of new applicants from Iraq was relatively low. **The most common countries of origin of new asylum seekers were Turkey and Russia.** As in previous years, most of the asylum seekers were young adults: approximately half of them were 18–34 years old. About 32 per cent of the asylum seekers were women and 68 per cent were men.

Most of the asylum seekers from Turkey claimed fear of persecution because of real or alleged association with the Gülen movement. In previous years, Jehovah's Witnesses represented a large proportion of the asylum seekers from Russia, but the grounds for application were more diverse in 2019.⁹⁰

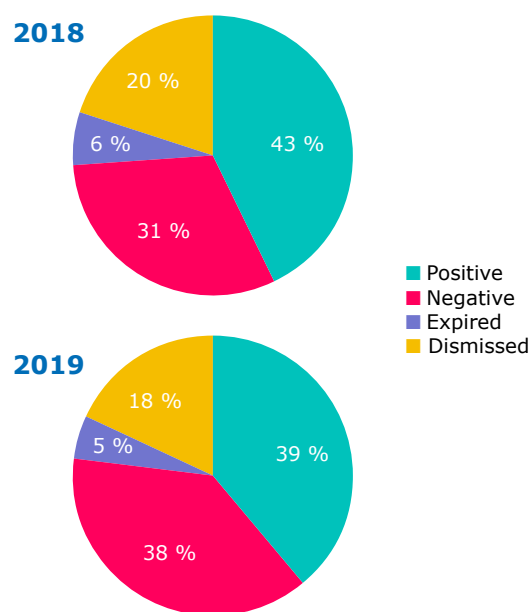
Asylum applications 2015–2019



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The Finnish Immigration Service made a total of 7,494 decisions on asylum applications. Of these decisions, 39 per cent were positive. In absolute numbers, this is 2,959 positive decisions, most of which (2,073) granted asylum. Subsidiary protection was granted to 452 individuals and a residence permit on other grounds, such as compassionate grounds, to 434 individuals. The share of negative decisions was 38 per cent. 18 per cent of applications were dismissed and in 5 per cent of cases, the application expired. Comparing the distribution of decisions with that of the previous year, it can be noted that the share of negative decisions relative to positive decisions increased somewhat, but there were no major changes compared to the previous year.

Distribution of asylum decisions made by the Finnish Immigration Service in 2018 and 2019



Lähde: Maahanmuuttovirasto

⁸⁹ A subsequent application is an application for international protection that a foreign national files after receiving a final decision on a previously submitted application (Section 102 of the Aliens Act).

⁹⁰ https://migri.fi/en/press-release/-/asset_publisher/maahanmuuton-tilastot-2019-oleskelulupaa-haki-ennatysmaara-tyontekijoita (Cited 17 April 2020)

4.2. Legislative amendments related to international protection

A proposed amendment to the Aliens Act pertaining to subsequent applications filed by asylum seekers (HE 273/2018 vp) was approved by the Parliament in February 2019 and entered into force on 1 June 2019. The amendments concern both the conditions for admissibility of applications and the enforcement of refusal of entry. The aim of the legislative amendment is to reduce the possibilities of misusing the subsequent application procedure related to international protection and to guide the applicants to present all the facts and grounds that they know and that are relevant to the application for international protection already in the connection of the first application or the related appeal.

The legislative amendments also specified the right to employment of persons who have applied for international protection. The right to employment now ends when the removal decision concerning an asylum seeker who receives a negative asylum decision becomes enforceable or the application expires. After filing a subsequent application, the right to employment only starts three or six months after the filing of the subsequent application depending on whether the applicant has presented a valid travel document when filing the application. Following the legislative amendment, a subsequent application cannot be used for the sole purpose of extending the right of employment in situations where the foreign national does not have grounds for being issued a residence permit on the grounds of employment.

The aforementioned government proposal also included a provision pertaining to taking possession of the travel documents of persons who have applied for international protection. The aim is to ensure the smoothness of the asylum procedure so that a missing travel document does not prevent, for example, the identification of an applicant or the removal of a person who has received a negative decision concerning international protection. The documents are returned to the applicants when they are issued a residence permit on the grounds of international protection or when they leave the country.

The amendments to the Aliens Act that entered into force at the beginning of June 2019 also included a provision stipulating that the relevant date for assessing a family reunification sponsor's age should be the date on which the application for international protection was submitted. In future, a person who was an unaccompanied minor at the time of entry into Finland but who reached the age of 18 during the asylum procedure will be considered a minor when submitting an application for family reunification. The amendment was based on a decision by the Court of Justice of the European Union and it applies to persons who are granted asylum as well as subsidiary protection. Family reunification still needs to be applied for within three months of the date of the sponsor being served the decision on being granted international protection.

4.3. Developments related to international protection

In December 2018, the Ministry of the Interior commissioned an independent report on the asylum process⁹¹ from Owl Group. The purpose of the report was to identify development needs pertaining to the asylum process and evaluate the procedures between the authorities and the operating models of the administrative courts in asylum-related matters. The aim was to determine how the asylum process can be streamlined in the future, how the quality of the process can be improved and how the duration of the process could be reduced while better ensuring the legal protection of asylum seekers. The report was completed in June 2019. The report highlighted the large number of subsequent applications and applications returned to the Finnish Immigration Service by an administrative court. By far the most common reason behind the subsequent applications and returned applications was that the applicant had subsequently provided new information on the application. The number of applications returned due to procedural errors and incorrect interpretation of the law is relatively low. The large number of subsequent applications and returned applications creates congestion in processing and leads to longer processing times in the Finnish Immigration Service as well as in the administrative courts. Longer processing times, in turn, are reflected in the practical implementation of interviews and prolongs the duration of residence in the reception system. The report suggests that the asylum process could be streamlined by a clearer division of responsibilities between the authorities in establishing the applicant's identity. The report also proposes that the use of services should be developed in such a way as to give applicants better access to information on the progress of their application. This would make it easier for applicants to prepare for the next stages of the process. The Finnish Immigration Service has investigated opportunities to establish an online ser-

vice for asylum seekers within the next few years.

Launched in September 2019, the **Tulppaani project** will build a quality control model that will enable the systematic monitoring of the quality of interpreting. The model will be implemented and the quality of interpreting will be monitored with the help of two quality control interpreters employed by the project. The quality of interpreting will also be improved by producing suitable training materials. The data accumulated in quality control activities will also be used to support tendering processes related to interpreting to ensure that quality control criteria are better taken into account. The project will also prepare a contingency plan for a scenario in which the need for interpreting quickly multiplies.

Also launched in September 2019 was the **SOPU project**, in which the Legal and Country Information Unit of the Finnish Immigration Service will develop a new, more resource-efficient approach for preparing situation reports and application guidelines pertaining to the security situation in various countries and other factors that are relevant to the asylum process of the Finnish Immigration Service. The documentation under the newly developed model will be made into live documents that can be updated in a more flexible and resource-efficient manner than the documents developed since 2016. The newly structured documents, which are based on sections, will increase agility in terms of including country of origin information and related legal analyses in the Finnish Immigration Service's guidelines, as only the key sections with regard to the asylum process will need to be updated. In developing the situation reports, reports that apply a similar model from other EU immigration authorities (e.g. Staaendokumentation) will be used, and the application guidelines will be a combination of the models used in Denmark and Sweden. The project will run until 31 December 2021.

⁹¹ Owl Group (2019), Turvapaikkaprosessia koskeva selvitys, <https://intermin.fi/documents/1410869/3723692/Turvapaikkaprosessia+koskeva+selvitys+27.6.2019/60bd290f-ffbd-2837-7f82-25fb68fe172c/Turvapaikkaprosessia+koskeva+selvitys+27.6.2019.pdf> (Cited 17 April 2020)

4.4. Participation in EU-level operations

The Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government reiterated Finland's commitment to the development of EU-level immigration policy. The Programme states that Finland will promote the EU's Global Strategy, which will strengthen the Union's role as a global leader. Coordination between the EU and its Member States will be enhanced in regard to the EU's external influence. According to the Programme, decision-making by qualified majority can be increased in limited areas, which is one way of enabling rapid action in the external relations of the Union.⁹²

Finland held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the period 1 July–31 December 2019. During its six-month term, the Finnish Presidency chaired Council meetings attended by ministers and public servants, took forward EU legislative work in the Council, ensured continuity in the management of EU affairs and kept up cooperation between member states.

The Finnish ministers of the interior and justice co-chaired the justice and home affairs council (the JHA Council), one of the configurations in which the EU Council meets. The JHA Council develops cooperation and common policies in cross-border issues, with the aim of building an EU-wide area of freedom, security and justice. The JHA Council is made up of justice and home affairs ministers from all the EU member states. Home ministers deal with issues such as migration, border management and police cooperation. The formal meetings of the JHA Council were held in Brussels and in Luxembourg and an informal meeting took place in Helsinki during 18–19 July.⁹³

The Government of Prime Minister Antti Rinne laid out the EU-level immigration policy priorities of Finland's Presidency in a separate programme entitled **Sustainable Europe – Sustainable Future**. The programme stated that pursuing a more equitable, mutually beneficial and comprehensive EU-Africa partnership will continue during is Finland's Presi-

dency. The programme further stated that a common objective should be an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable transformation to manage the external dimensions of climate change, population growth and migration⁹⁴.

During Finland's Presidency, on 23 September 2019, Germany, France, Italy and Malta reached a temporary agreement on the disembarkation and relocation of migrants rescued in the central Mediterranean. As the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Finland attended the meeting in the capacity of an observer.⁹⁵

The EU–Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs took place in Skopje, North Macedonia, on 18–19 November 2019. Minister of Justice Anna-Maja Henriksson chaired the justice affairs session. Minister of the Interior Maria Ohisalo chaired the home affairs session.

At the annual forum, the ministers heard how the Western Balkans have progressed in the development of the rule of law and fight against corruption. The aim is to reaffirm the political commitment to continue rule of law reforms, and to discuss how to increase cooperation with the EU and how the EU can provide further assistance in the implementation of reforms. The ministers of justice discussed the effective implementation of judicial reforms in the Western Balkans region. The home affairs ministers discussed the situations and needs of the partners of the Western Balkan migration route. The Western Balkans continue to face strong migratory pressures, as the region is one of the most common routes into the European Union. Other topics of the home affairs session included closer cooperation in border control and combating terrorism and organised crime.

During its Presidency of the Council of the EU, Finland wanted to promote dialogue with the Western Balkans in the area of justice and home affairs. The themes of the forum were related to two of the objectives of the Finnish Presidency: strengthening the rule of law and shared values and promoting comprehensive security.⁹⁶

⁹³ Valtioneuvosto (2019), Pääministeri Sanna Marinin hallituksen ohjelma 10.12.2019, OSALLISTAVA JA OSAAVA SUOMI – sosiaalisesti, taloudellisesti ja ekologisesti kestävä yhteiskunta, Valtioneuvoston julkaisuja 2019:31, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-808-3> (Viitattu 16.4.2020)

⁹⁴ Sisäministeriö, Suomen EU-puheenjohtajuus 2019, <https://intermin.fi/eu2019fi> (Viitattu 17.4.2020)

⁹⁵ Valtioneuvosto (2019), KESTÄVÄ EUROOPPA – KESTÄVÄ TULEVAISUUS Suomen EU-puheenjohtajakauden ohjelma, Euroopan unionin neuvoston puheenjohtajuus 1.7. – 31.12.2019, <https://eu2019.fi/documents/11707387/14346258/EU2019FI-EU-puheenjohtajakauden-ohjelma.pdf/53e093b3-24b9-562f-375a-39cd1cbe3d31/EU2019FI-EU-puheenjohtajakauden-ohjelma.pdf> (Viitattu 16.4.2020)

⁹⁶ https://intermin.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/sisaministeri-ohisalo-maltalle-keskustelemaan-valimeren-turvapaikanhakijatilanteesta (Viitattu 17.4.2020)

⁹⁷ https://intermin.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/suomi-edistaa-oikeusvaltioperiaatetta-ja-turvallisuutta-lansi-balkanilla (Viitattu 17.4.2020)

4.5. Case law related to international protection

On 14 November 2019, the European Court of Human Rights handed down its judgment concerning Finland⁹⁷ in a case involving the return to Iraq of an asylum seeker. In its judgment, the Court found that Finland had violated Articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The judgment concerned the case of an Iraqi asylum seeker who had sought international protection in Finland in 2015. The Finnish Immigration Service issued a negative decision on the asylum application in 2016 and the Administrative Court subsequently dismissed the applicant's appeal. The applicant returned to his home country of Iraq in November 2017 by assisted voluntary return, where he was said to have died. The Supreme Administrative Court also refused the applicant's leave to appeal. In its judgment, the European Court of Human Rights underscored the issue of risk assessment, meaning the extent to which events that had previously befallen the applicant were taken into account in assessing future threats. It was also noted that the decision should have taken into account the combined effect of the individual factors relating to the applicant's background. In response to the Court's judgment, the Finnish Immigration Service announced it will review around 500 of its asylum decisions to ensure that all potentially similar cases have been duly identified.⁹⁸

The yearbook decisions of the Supreme Administrative Court (KHO) dealt with various themes in 2019.

As in 2018, the Supreme Administrative Court in 2019 assessed the **credibility of applications** in regard to religion and sexual orientation, for example.

In one case, an asylum seeker from Afghanistan had renounced Islam and stated that they had converted to Christianity. Based on its oral hearing, the Administrative Court had found that the appellant's story did not indicate particularly in-depth or personal adoption of Christianity. Nevertheless, in the Supreme Administrative Court, it was necessary to assess whether the appellant had a justified fear of being persecuted in their home country because a potential persecutor could consider that they have religion-related characteristics leading to persecution regardless of whether they actually have such characteristics.⁹⁹

In another case, the Supreme Administrative Court had to judge whether an Iraqi national had provided credible proof of belonging to a sexual minority or gender minority that would give rise to a justifiable fear of persecution in their home country. The Supreme Administrative Court found that A had described their relationship to B consistently in the asylum interview, in the oral hearing conducted by the Administrative Court and in their appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court. A self-identified as a homosexual. Furthermore, A had consistently described their feminine manner of dress and behaviour and stated that they feel like a woman inside. C, who appeared as a witness in the Administrative Court, also indicated having made corresponding observations.¹⁰⁰

The **internal flight** alternative was also assessed in several cases in 2019. In one case, the question was whether the appellant had the alternative of internal flight in Kabul. According to the country information available at the time, the internal flight alternative in Kabul had become worse, particularly due to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Kabul. However, the situation was not considered to be such that internal flight to Kabul could not be considered a reasonable alternative in anyone's case. The appellant was a Dari-speaking Sunni Muslim with a Tajik ethnic background, which meant that he was part of a large ethnic group in Afghanistan and Kabul. The appellant had spent his entire life in Afghanistan. He was also a healthy young man who had several years of school behind him. The fact that the appellant was not yet gainfully employed and he did not have a safety net in Kabul specifically did not make him vulnerable in such a way that internal flight to Kabul could not be considered to be a reasonable alternative for him.¹⁰¹

In another case, the question was whether the appellants, whose family included children born in 2012 and 2014, had the alternative of internal flight to Kabul. Unlike in the aforementioned case, it was deemed that, according to the country information available at the time, the internal flight alternative in Kabul had become worse, particularly due to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Kabul. Internal flight to Kabul could not be considered to be a reasonable alternative for the appellants, as a family with children, in light of their personal circumstances and the prevailing situation in Kabul.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ European Court of Human Rights judgment *N.A. v Finland*, application no. 25244/18, 14 November 2019

⁹⁸ https://migri.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/maahanmuuttovirasto-kay-lapi-noin-500-turvapaikkapaatosta (Cited 17 April 2020)

⁹⁹ Supreme Administrative Court yearbook decision 2019:18

¹⁰⁰ Supreme Administrative Court yearbook decision 2019:99

¹⁰¹ Supreme Administrative Court yearbook decision 2019:19

¹⁰² Supreme Administrative Court yearbook decision 2019:21

The Supreme Administrative Court also considered e.g. whether a citizen of Turkey was entitled to international protection on the grounds of, among other things, being the subject of **disproportionate prosecution**, which is considered to be one form of persecution. The Supreme Administrative Court found that the prison sentence given to A met the criteria of disproportionate punishment relative to the description of the offence stated in the judgment. Accordingly, the punishment was considered to meet the criteria of persecution pursuant to Section 87 a (2) (3) of the Aliens Act.¹⁰³

The Supreme Administrative Court also heard a case pertaining to **female genital mutilation**. The Finnish Immigration Service had rejected the application for asylum and a residence permit of A, a Somali national, and her daughter, B, and decided to refuse entry and return them to Somalia. The Administrative Court had dismissed the appeal concerning the Finnish Immigration Service's decision. In the Supreme Administrative Court, A had, in addition to the information she had previously presented, indicated that she feared that her daughter, B, who was born in Finland, would be subjected to genital mutilation and she herself could be subjected to reinfibulation in Somalia if they were to be returned. The Supreme Administrative Court stated that an asylum seeker

can, as a rule, be expected to present all grounds for the application for international protection during the application phase. An asylum seeker may not, however, be aware that genital mutilation is a violation of human rights and that the threat of mutilation is a significant factor in assessing a woman's need for international protection. Due to the sensitivity of the issue, bringing up the matter of genital mutilation may also be difficult for an applicant. In light of these considerations and the account provided in the matter, it was found that A was justified in bringing up the new grounds for asylum in the Supreme Administrative Court and that, taking country information into consideration, it was necessary to assess the grounds for asylum.¹⁰⁴

In another case, the Supreme Administrative Court considered the issue of **which country should be used as the basis for assessing an applicant's application for asylum**. A had indicated that he is a citizen of Somalia. However, he was born in Saudi Arabia and had lived there almost his entire life, and his mother tongue was Arabic. The Finnish Immigration Service had assessed A's need for international protection in relation to his country of nationality, i.e. Somalia. A had stated that he had not understood that his case would be assessed using Somalia as the basis of the assessment.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Supreme Administrative Court yearbook decision 2019:23

¹⁰⁴ Supreme Administrative Court yearbook decision 2019:93

¹⁰⁵ Supreme Administrative Court yearbook decision 2019:149

4.6. Research on international protection

Commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior, Owl Group Oy carried out **an independent assessment of the asylum process** in January–June 2019. The report was published on 27 June 2019. The aim was to determine how the asylum process can be streamlined in the future, how the quality of the process can be improved and how the duration of the process could be reduced while better ensuring the legal protection of asylum seekers. The assessment covered the entire process that an asylum seeker who enters Finland goes through after entry, until they are covered by integration services or leave the country. The operating methods between the authorities in asylum issues were assessed and development needs related to the asylum process were identified. The idea behind the report was the goal of developing the asylum process as a whole instead of the partial optimisation of individual stages of the process. Specifying the report's recommendations further and implementing them in practice calls for participation and continued development efforts by the authorities concerned and other relevant parties.¹⁰⁶

The book **Turvapaikanhaku ja pakolaisuus Suomessa**¹⁰⁷ edited by Eveliina Lyytinen examines the diversity of being a refugee in Finland in the crossroads of different themes and scientific disciplines as well as the global context of the phenomena. Comprising 15 chapters, the book focuses on Finnish experiences of the practices, policy and legislation pertaining to the receiving and granting of international protection. The first section of the book — Policy, legislation and administration — discusses the structural aspects of asylum seeking and refugeeism. The second section — On the road, in the asylum process and in the reception centre — focuses on the experiences of asylum seekers during their journey and after their arrival in Finland. The third section is built around the theme Representations of being a refugee. The fourth section sheds light on the day-to-day integration and well-being

of asylum seekers and refugees. The book is one of the first peer-reviewed compilations of refugee research in Finnish.

The Asylum Seekers Health and Well-being Survey (TERTTU)¹⁰⁸ was the largest population study of asylum seekers to date at the national and international level. The aim of the project was to produce comprehensive data on the health, well-being, health risk factors and service needs in Finland of adults and minors who applied for asylum in 2018. All newly arrived asylum seekers who entered Finland during the survey period and met the sampling criteria were invited to participate in the study.

The study **Towards High Quality Legal Aid Services**¹⁰⁹ produced by the Prime Minister's Office aimed to produce a comprehensive, multidimensional and realistic picture of the availability, quality and utility of legal aid in Finland. The study looked at public legal aid in general, asylum seekers' legal aid and financial and debt counseling services, and why and how legal aid should be further developed.

Mari Metsäniitty's doctoral dissertation in the field of forensic dentistry, **Forensic age assessment in Finland, and dental development of Somalis**¹¹⁰ also touched on the asylum process. Forensic age estimation is often used in the context of establishing an asylum seeker's identity and making changes to personal data files. The methods are generally based on evaluating dental and skeletal development, which usually require radiography. Dental and skeletal age always represent an estimate of chronological age. Asylum seekers typically come from developing countries, which can make it challenging to obtain reliable reference material for age assessment. The aims of the study included assessing the forensic age estimates of asylum seekers in Finland and the related legislation as well as comparing the Somali dental development model created in the study with other models and evaluating the accuracy of age estimates of young Somalis.

¹⁰⁶ Owl Group (2019), Turvapaikkaprosessia koskeva selvitys, <https://intermin.fi/documents/1410869/3723692/Turvapaikkaprosessia+koskeva+selvitys+27.6.2019/60bd290f-ffbd-2837-7f82-25fb68fe172c/Turvapaikkaprosessia+koskeva+selvitys+27.6.2019.pdf> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁰⁷ Lyytinen, E. (Toim.) (2019), Turvapaikanhaku ja pakolaisuus Suomessa, Tutkimus 2. Siirtolaisuusinstituutti 2019, <https://siirtolaisuusinstituutti.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/t-02-isbn-978-952-7167-60-1-turvapaikanhaku-ja-pakolaisuus-suomessa.pdf> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁰⁸ Skogberg, N.; Mustonen, K.; Koponen, P.; Tiittala, P.; Lilja, E.; Ahmed Haji Omar, A.; Snellman, O.; Castaneda, A. E. (toim.), (2019), Turvapaikanhakijoiden terveys ja hyvinvointi : Tutkimus Suomeen vuonna 2018 tulleista turvapaikanhakijoista, THL 12/2019, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-343-351-9> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁰⁹ Majamaa, Karoliina; Nieminen, Kati; Lepola, Outi; Rantala, Kati; Jauhola, Laura; Karinen, Risto; Luukkonen, Tuomas; Kortelainen, Jeremias; (2019), Kohti laadukkaita oikeusapupalveluita, Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan julkaisusarja 2019:60, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-793-2> (Cited 16 April 2020)

¹¹⁰ Metsäniitty, M. (2019), Forensic Age Assessment in Finland, and Dental Development of Somalis, Helsinki: Helsingin Yliopisto, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-51-5201-5> (Cited 17 April 2020)

4.7. Quota refugees

Quota refugees to be resettled in Finland are persons whom the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has designated as refugees or other foreign nationals in need of international protection. The UNHCR designates for resettlement persons who have fled from their home country to another country, usually in nearby regions, in which they are unable to settle and reside on a permanent basis. Quota refugees are accommodated in refugee camps, for instance. The Parliament confirms Finland's refugee quota for the coming year annually in the State budget. The ministerial working group on migration prepares a proposal to the Government on the regional allocation of the refugee quota, and the proposal is approved by the Minister of the Interior.

In 2019, Finland committed to receiving 750 quota refugees.¹¹¹ The refugee quota was allocated as follows: 430 Syrian refugees from Turkey, 120 refugees evacuated from Libya to Niger under the ETM evacuation mechanism, 100 Congolese refugees from Zambia and 100 emergency cases without area or nationality restrictions.

Finland carried out two selection missions in 2019. Two visits were made to Turkey in April, with a total of 431 Syrian refugees selected to enter Finland. In June, a selection mission was carried out in Zambia, with 103 Congolese refugees selected. In September, a selection mission to Niger led to the selection of 117 Eritrean, Somali and Sudanese refugees.

The original end date of the EU resettlement programme was 31 October 2019. This meant that the quota selection visits mostly took place during the first half of the year instead of being evenly spread out over the entire year, which would be the most appropriate option in terms of balancing the work load. The first quota selection visit to Niger created additional work due to the local security situation.¹¹²

Finland's entire refugee quota was fulfilled. Finland grants residence permits and the required travel documents to the selected persons before their arrival in the country. Altogether 582 of the selected 750 quota refugees arrived in Finland in 2019, and the rest will arrive in 2020.

Not all of the quota refugees selected by Finland arrive in the country at all, or their arrival can be delayed due to various reasons.

¹¹¹ Since 2001, Finland's annual refugee quota has been 750 individuals, excluding the years 2014 and 2015 when the quota was raised by 300 persons because of the crisis in Syria.

¹¹² Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

4.8. Developments related to quota refugees

In 2019, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) again funded several projects related to quota refugees.

Launched in July 2019, the **TURPRO project** develops the security aspects of quota refugee selection missions, thereby improving Finland's capacity to safely and efficiently carry out its agreed international obligations related to refugee policy. The focus of the project is on establishing permanent and well-documented processes for quota refugee selection missions that take security aspects into account and also enable independent operations. In practice, this involves not only establishing the processes but also training the personnel, both individually and in groups, as the officers concerned may need to operate in very challenging circumstances. The goal is to build an independent ability to identify operational risks and to take them into consideration in the planning and implementation of the activities in such a way as to not compromise Finland's international commitments. The project also includes an assessment of the circumstances and security situation in Niger.

Launched in October 2019, the project **TUULI – Mielenterveyttä maahantuloon: Maahan tulevien psykoedukaatio ja mielenterveyden tukeminen** supports high-quality, mostly video-based psychoeducational material on various themes related to mental health for refugees entering the country. The themes will be decided on after the launch of the project through a collective development process. For example, they may include a description of mental health and related services; the use of intoxicating substances as a risk factor in mental health problems; parenting that supports mental health; preventing the incitement of radicalisation; violence/harassment as a risk factor in mental health problems. In addition to videos, the project will also produce other support and screening materials related to mental health for use by professionals in the field. The materials can be used both before arrival in Finland (cultural orientation for quota refugees) and after arrival (e.g. in municipalities).

The **PALOMA2** project will build, launch and model a national structure for supporting and coordinating refugee mental health work and disseminating practical know-how. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) coordinates the activities and the dissemination of information nationally and connects the regions with each other. In addition to national coordination, a Centre of Expertise will be established in each of the five university hospitals to disseminate know-how across sectoral borders, for instance, through consulting, training and developing services, and creating well-functioning regional networks to enable and facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation to support refugee mental health. The Finnish Association for Mental Health brings the experiences of the target group and the voice of the third sector to the project. During the project, the aim is to make the activities a permanent feature of the existing structures. The project will also pilot various tools and operating methods for use in the field of refugee work.

Launched in January 2019, the **LANU project** focuses on the assessment of the need for care, provision of care, rehabilitation and case management for tortured and severely traumatised children and young people who are under 24 years old and have arrived in Finland as quota refugees as well as their family members. In practice, it is not always possible or sensible to categorise the status of the patient in mental crises and the referring party is not necessarily capable of determining the status either. Consequently, the patients can also be persons who are not quota refugees, provided that there are sufficient resources for this. The project activities include training municipal personnel who work with the target group. The training shows that systematic screening can be used to identify the special needs of tortured and severely traumatised children and young people, that there are specialised services available for them, and that the competencies necessary for helping this difficult target group can be strengthened. Developing the national competence capacity will contribute to making it easier to find municipal placements for quota refugees.

4.9. Reception

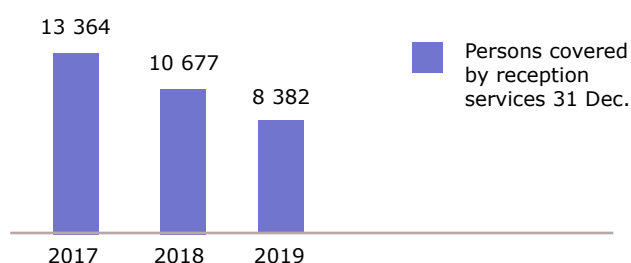
The number of people covered by the reception system decreased in 2019 and the customer capacity was generally reduced. There were 10,677 people in the reception system at the beginning of the year and 8,382 at the end of the year. The total customer capacity of the reception system was reduced in 2019 by 1,219 places through closures and 407 places through capacity reductions at reception centres. The number of reception centres was reduced from 49 to 40 during the year (including units for minors). Approximately 35 per cent of all persons registered in the reception system were in private accommodation at the start of the year, compared to 38 per cent at the end of the year.

The largest nationality groups were Iraq, Afghanistan and Russia. Iraqi nationals accounted for 38.5% of the customers registered in the reception system. The customers represented 101 different nationalities in total. Men accounted for 70% of the customers and women for 30%. Some 23% of the customers were minors. The average age of the adult customers was 32 years and the average age of the minors was 7 years.¹¹³

Detention capacity was kept unchanged from the previous year's level in 2019 at 107 places¹¹⁴.

As stated above in the section on asylum seekers, nearly half of the asylum applications submitted in 2019 were subsequent applications. As mentioned above, as in the previous years, the nationality with the highest number of applicants was Iraq, but in terms of new applications, citizens of Turkey and Russia were the largest groups.

Persons covered by reception services 2017–2019



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

4.10. Developments related to reception

Reception-related EU AMIF-funded projects were also launched in 2019.

The **PSYKKE project**, which started in March 2019, develops personnel competence in mental health work. The aim is to identify customer needs at an early stage and provide timely mental health support for customers. The capacity of reception centres, detention and the assistance system for victims of human trafficking to help people with mental health-related problems will be improved. New evidence-based methods will be adopted. Methodological expertise and material will be produced for reception centres (adult and family units, special units for minors, special support department), the National Assistance System for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings and detention units.

A new and updated model and protocol for initial health examinations was adopted in 2019. The model and protocol were developed in the TERTTU project carried out in partnership with the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (see section 4.6. above). The comprehensive roll-out of the model and protocol for initial health examinations will take place in 2020.

The Finnish Immigration Service continued to develop the social services of reception centres in 2019. There were changes related to the personnel of social services to ensure the implementation of the requirements stipulated by national legislation. This meant that social workers with university degrees were more extensively included in the personnel providing social services at reception centres. Work also began in 2019 on preparing an update of the service process of social services (assessing the need for support and creating a customer plan). The work is scheduled to be completed in 2020. Also in 2019, a report was produced on families with children and couples in reception centres.

Cooperation between reception centres and external private, public and NGO-based service providers was enhanced further in 2019. The Finnish Immigration Service issued guidelines to reception centres on essential health care in 2019, and the information was also distributed to parties external to the centres.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Source: Finnish Immigration Service, Reception Unit

¹¹⁴ Source: Reception Unit of the Finnish Immigration Service, e-mail, 26 March 2020.

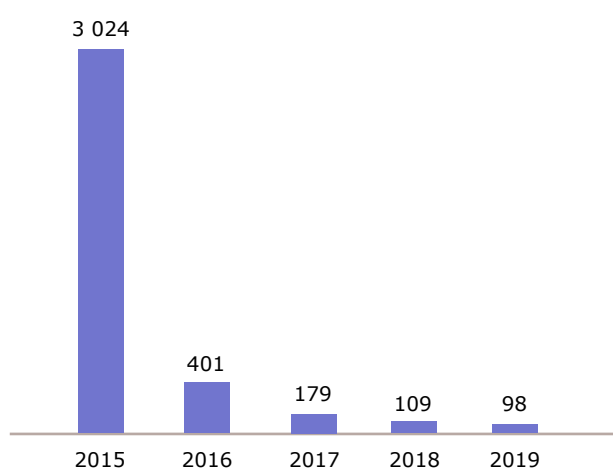
¹¹⁵ Source: Finnish Immigration Service, Reception Unit, e-mail, 17 December 2019.

5. Unaccompanied minors¹¹⁶ and other vulnerable groups

5.1. Unaccompanied minors

The number of unaccompanied minors continued to decline. A total of 98 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum in Finland in 2019.

Asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors 2015–2019



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The most common countries of origin among unaccompanied minors were **Iraq (19 minors), Somalia (18) and Afghanistan (14).**

A total of 63 decisions were made on asylum applications submitted by unaccompanied minors. **Positive decisions accounted for 89 per cent of all decisions.** This corresponds to 55 positive residence permit decisions, 2 negative decisions and 5 expired applications along with one application that was not processed due to another EU member state being responsible for deciding on the asylum application.

Of the positive decisions, 25 cases involved the granting of asylum, 22 cases involved the granting of subsidiary protection and 8 cases involved the granting of a residence permit on grounds other than international protection.

For unaccompanied minors, a residence permit granted on grounds other than international protection usually means a residence permit on compassionate grounds. A residence permit is granted on compassionate grounds when there are no grounds for granting international protection but returning the person to his or her home country would be otherwise unreasonable from a humane point of view. For unaccompanied minors, this is often associated with a case in which it is not clear who would take care of the minor when he or she returns to the home country.

¹¹⁶ There are two Finnish equivalents for the term: "yksin tullut alaikäinen" (a minor who has entered the country alone) and "ilman huoltajaa oleva alaikäinen" (a minor without a guardian). The latest EMN Glossary, *Asylum and Migration Glossary 6.0: Finnish edition*, includes both terms. The terms are used synonymously. By using the term "yksin tullut alaikäinen", one can emphasise the fact that the minor has entered Finland alone and, as a result, his/her asylum application is processed independently of any adult's application, and by using the term "ilman huoltajaa oleva alaikäinen", one can emphasise the fact that the minor is in Finland without a guardian at that particular moment.

5.2. Developments related to unaccompanied minors

A legislative amendment (437/2019) entered into force on 1 June 2019 concerning the family reunification of unaccompanied minors who have been granted international protection. The amendment was based on the judgment issued by the Court of Justice of the European Union on case C-550/16. Under the new legal provision, an unaccompanied minor who is a beneficiary of international protection is considered a minor as a sponsor if they have submitted the application for international protection when still minor, even if the decision on the residence permit application based on family ties is made after the applicant reaches adulthood. A residence permit based on family ties must be applied for within three months of the date when the sponsor was served the decision on being granted international protection.

Launched in October 2019, the **Osaava edustaja project** aims to enhance the competence of the guardians of asylum seekers who enter Finland as unaccompanied minors and to provide improved support to them. The project will create online training that will give all guardians across Finland access to the same basic information regarding the relevant legislation and official processes, the networks around the child and how to cooperate with them, interaction with the child and the special needs of unaccompanied minors. In addition to the online training, the project will develop a model for classroom training of 2–3 days to complement the online training. Going forward, the model can be used in regional and national training to deepen the expertise of the guardians. The training covers current topics related to advance surveys of guardians, sections related to the basic training that provide additional depth and collectively discussing customer cases. The project will also pilot an online supervision model offered to guardians.

5.3. Research on unaccompanied minors

The research article **Epäilyä ja myötätuntoa: Yksin tulleet alaikäiset turvapaikanhakijat Aamulehdessä, Helsingin Sanomissa ja Ylen verkkouutisissa 2014–2016**¹¹⁷ by Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto and Jaakko Tuominen examined Finnish media coverage of refugees who enter the country as unaccompanied minors. The literature consisted of texts published by Aamulehti, Helsingin Sanomat and Yle in 2014–2016. This was a significant period due to the exceptional volume of migration to Europe. In the article, the authors shed light on how Finnish news media covered the situation faced by unaccompanied minors, what themes the articles focused on and what themes were given minimal attention. Based on their analysis of the literature, the authors argue that the representations of suspicion and compassion repeated in all three media outlets serve to further narrow the public discussion regarding the daily life of unaccompanied minors, the difficulties they face and the opportunities they have in their new home country. The article also points out that the agency of the young people is given little attention in the media. Through the article, the authors express a broader opinion on two social issues: how does Finnish media report on immigration policy related to unaccompanied minors and biopolitical practices in particular, and how the representations conveyed by the media selected for analysis serve to strengthen victim and threat discourses. According to the authors, these discourses do not support the integration of young people, let alone their active agency in their new host societies.

Outi Lepola's report **Kriisituesta kuntosalikorttiin – Yksintulleiden nuorten jälkihuolto kunnissa**¹¹⁸ provides a general view of the after-care services currently offered by Finnish municipalities to young people who originally came to Finland seeking asylum as unaccompanied minors and were granted a residence permit as minors and subsequently reached adulthood. The survey was based on information collected directly from municipalities regarding after-care support services based on the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration as well as interviews with experts and young people with a background of arriving as an unaccompanied minor. The report particularly highlights that after-care work-

¹¹⁷ Kuusisto, A.-K., & Tuominen, J. (2019). Epäilyä ja myötätuntoa: Yksin tulleet alaikäiset turvapaikanhakijat Aamu-lehdessä, Helsingin Sanomissa ja Ylen verkkouutisissa 2014–2016. Media & Viestintä, 42(3). <https://doi.org/10.23983/mv.85781> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹¹⁸ Lepola, O. (2019) Kriisituesta kuntosalikorttiin - Yksintulleiden nuorten jälkihuolto kunnissa, Siirtolaisuusinstituutti Raportteja 2, https://siirtolaisuusinstituutti.fi/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/r2_lepola.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

ers should have the capacity to provide psychosocial support to young people. As the biggest concerns among the young people were related to the continuity of their residence permit and family reunification, their motivation, integration and confidence in the future would be supported by longer residence permits and the opportunity for family reunification. The report also suggests that there are fairly large differences between municipalities in terms of the methods, structures and resources of providing after-care. Young people are in an unequal position depending on their municipality of residence. It is estimated that the support provided to them is completely inadequate in some places and the services are not always sufficiently personalised: the same services are offered to all young people, even if some of them clearly have a need for more robust support.

5.4. Other vulnerable groups: developments and research

Prepared for the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health by Mimmi Koukkula and Reija Klemetti, the **Action plan for the prevention of female genital mutilation (FGM)**¹¹⁹ aims to continue the good practices that Finland has implemented to prevent FGM and to develop new means to help victims of FGM, for example. The main objective of the action plan is to increase healthcare and social welfare professionals' knowledge and competence and disseminate information to groups at risk of being subjected to FGM. The action plan also includes useful information for decision-makers, education and research organisations, and other organisations, which should, for their own part, participate in the prevention of FGM and the promotion of the health and welfare of those who have been subjected to the practice. The action plan is a follow-on to the action plan for the prevention of FGM for 2012–2016 adopted by Finland.

Jean d'Amour Banyanga's dissertation **Social Suffering and Healing Among the Rwandan Diaspora in Finland and Belgium**¹²⁰ was also published during the year. The dissertation aims to (a) provide an analysis of the role of the church before and after the genocide, (b) explore how frequent various forms of traumatic experiences during the genocide are among member of the diaspora in Finland, (c) compare the mental well-being of victims of rape during the genocide with the mental well-being of those who were born as a result of such rape, and (d) investigate coping methods and compare services aiming at trauma healing among genocide victims in Belgium and in Finland.

¹¹⁹ Koukkula, Mimmi; Klemetti, Reija (2019), Tyttöjen ja naisten sukuelinten silpomisen (FGM) estämisen toimintaohjelma, Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriön julkaisuja 2019:1, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-00-4029-1> (Cited 16 April 2020)

¹²⁰ Banyanga, J. (2019), *Social Suffering and Healing Among the Rwandan Diaspora in Finland and Belgium*, Turku: Åbo Akademi University, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-12-3786-7> (Cited 17 April 2020)

6. Integration

6.1. Legislative amendments and other developments related to integration

The Finnish Government initiated several measures related to integration in 2019.

The preparation of a comprehensive action plan pertaining to the need to reform integration measures began in autumn 2019. The action plan, which will be submitted to the Parliament in the form of a report by the end of 2020, will respond to the content of the Government Programme and the Audit Committee's report approved by the Parliament. The preparation of the action plan will also take into consideration other key themes and reform needs pertaining to the promotion of integration. The preparation will be aligned with other key preparatory measures, including the labour policy service structure, municipal trials related to employment, health and social services reform, the Government's Education Policy Account to the Parliament and the parliamentary reform of continuous learning.

The shaping of immigrant services into multi-sectoral services was developed by e.g. strengthening the municipalities' centre of expertise activities. The multidisciplinary operating model of the centres of expertise combines education, employment and social and health care services for adult immigrants. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Education and Culture supported the development, implementation and launch of these operations in 2019 through fixed-term funding in Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Tampere and Turku. The preparations for applying for state aid in 2020 began in late 2019.

Guidance and advisory services to expedite the integration and employment of immigrants have been developed and established using project funding. These services are currently organised by the municipalities in a highly inconsistent manner. An assessment has been initiated to support the devel-

opment of guidance and advisory services for immigrants. The aim is to establish an overall view of the current situation and present minimum criteria for established activities in the provision of guidance and advisory services to immigrants. This is aimed at improving the accessibility of guidance and advisory services for immigrants and harmonising their quality in municipalities.

The employment of immigrants requires not only strengthening the competencies of immigrants but also increasing the receptivity of working life. Preparatory work began in autumn 2019 on a diversity programme for working life. The programme will include measures to develop professional networks for immigrants, increasing diversity-related competence in recruitment and workplaces as well as linking work and competence development.¹²¹

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

According to the Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government, the Government will draw up an accessibility plan for higher education that will include a review of how universities and universities of applied sciences realise equality in terms of social aspects, regions and languages. The review will also identify the obstacles minority groups are facing when seeking higher education and appropriate action will then be taken on the basis of the review outcomes. The Government Programme also states that clear and measurable targets will be introduced to facilitate access to education and boost the rate of completion among underrepresented groups.

A Ministry of Education and Culture working group on the promotion of immigrant education and employment submitted its proposals in January 2019. The report emphasises issues related to the availability and qualifications of teachers, the significance of early childhood education and care, the situation in pre-primary education and challenges related to Finnish/Swedish language proficiency and teaching. The proposals complement the previous proposals drawn up in 2016 and 2017.¹²²

¹²¹ Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, e-mail 30 January 2019

¹²² https://minedu.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/uusia-ehdotuksia-maahanmuuttajien-varhaiskasvatukseen-ja-kielen-osaamiseen (Cited 17 April 2020)

The Ministry of Education and Culture granted special aid totalling EUR 2.6 million to eight higher education institutions to support the education and counselling of university-educated immigrants in April 2019. The projects funded by the Ministry will strengthen, expand and develop the operations of the higher education institutions designated as responsible for supporting immigrants in higher education as well as immigrants' paths to higher education and working life.¹²³

EMPLOYMENT

In 2019, the Government launched Talent Boost, a cross-administrative programme designed to boost the immigration of senior specialists, employees, students and researchers. It focuses on attracting the kind of talent who will be instrumental for the growth and internationalisation of Finnish companies, and for RDI in the leading growth sectors. It also targets sectors suffering from a labour shortage. The programme aims to raise Finland to a new level in terms of its attractiveness to specialists and their families.

Programme measures

- Shortening the processing period for work-based residence permit applications to one month, as outlined in the Government Programme (drafting the necessary legislative amendments as well as changes to electronic systems and the process)
- Creating a model for international recruitment
- Determined action to attract and retain international talent, and help their families settle in Finland, including the employment of international students and researchers Building Talent Hub models in partnership with cities
- Increasing receptiveness and diversity in the workplace
- Promoting the integration and employment of international students and researchers
- Strengthening ethical recruitment and preventing the exploitation of foreign workers
- Supporting the growth and internationalisation of companies and RDI activities and the ability to attract investment through the recruitment of international talent¹²⁴

The **KOTO-SIB trial** launched in 2016 was completed.¹²⁵ It is a fast-track training and employment programme for immigrants that utilises the SIB (Social Impact Bond) impact investing model. It is a results-based financing agreement, in which private and institutional investors finance projects that create well-being – in this case, finding employment for immigrants. In other words, the State does not bear the financial risk for the success of the trial. The purpose of the investing model is to generate savings for the State. Part of these savings are used for returning funds to the investors after the successful completion of the project. The target group of the Koto-SIB trial is 17–63-old immigrants who are unemployed jobseekers. The aim of the project is to find employment quickly for 2,000–2,500 immigrants. By October 2018, a total of 1,173 immigrants have joined the trial. Of them, 351 have found employment, 70% permanent and 75% full-time. The project ended on 31 December 2019, marking the start of a three-year follow-up period.

The potential of international talents already residing in Finland is still underutilised in Finnish companies. The Talent Boost programme of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment develops measures that help **connect companies and international talents more efficiently**. For instance, Business Finland is developing tools for encouraging SMEs to hire international talents to boost their growth and internationalisation. The programme also develops coordinated Talent Hubs for the biggest growth centres to connect companies, international talents, universities and innovation platforms.¹²⁶

¹²³ https://minedu.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/korkeakoulutetuille-maahanmuuttajille-lahes-2-6-miljoonaa-erityisavustuksia (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹²⁴ Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, e-mail 30 January 2019

¹²⁵ The launch of the trial was reported in the EMN's Annual Report on Migration and Asylum for 2016.

¹²⁶ Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, e-mail 3 January 2019.

6.2. Developments related to integration

The evaluation report **Background matters – Students with an immigrant background in higher education**¹²⁷ by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) on the inclusion and participation of students with an immigrant background was published in November 2019. The evaluation report presents an assessment of the national situation based on statistical data on students with an immigrant background (both immigrants and immigrants' children born in Finland) in higher education and presents development recommendations for providers of higher education and decision-makers of educational policy. One of the key results of the evaluation is that higher education institutions primarily do not identify those with an immigrant background as a distinct group, meaning that they are not registered in official systems. As a result, it is difficult to monitor the progress of studies as well as to allocate communication, guidance and support in an appropriate way. According to the evaluation, students benefit from affirmative action that takes into account their need for special support. They do not, however, want to be labelled as a person with an immigrant background. Higher education institutions, for their part, emphasised equality and parity, but they should reconcile these principles with the need for support among students with an immigrant background. Good practices identified in the evaluation included, for example, additional time in examinations and the opportunity to receive individual counselling during studies. The students' networking with potential employers should also be supported during their studies.¹²⁸

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) funded several integration projects in 2019:

Launched in February 2019 by Turku University of Applied Sciences, the **YOUME project** aims to promote immigrants' integration by supporting their mental health. Working together with immigrants and an expert network, the project will develop a Mental Health Ambassadors Model that uses mentoring to increase awareness among immigrants of mental health and how it can be enhanced as well as problems and seeking treatment. The mentoring framework helps the Mental Health Ambassa-

dors bring up topics related to mental health in their communities and networks. Mentoring involves the transfer of experiences and information in community events and through one-on-one interaction. Mentoring is characterised by goal orientation, openness, trust and commitment. Mentors react to needs that are of a critical nature in a person's life. In this case, mentoring is not tutoring, teaching, work guidance or supervision. The activities of the Mental Health Ambassadors are supported by information seminars. The project will be implemented as a permanent part of the activities of NGOs.

The Uusimaa Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment's **Kotoutumisen tukena project** launched in February 2019 also models cooperation in municipalities aimed at more effective and widespread use of the kotoutumisen.tukena.fi website. The website is being developed to improve its effectiveness based on user needs identified during the pilot phase and following the public launch of the website. Training for NGOs and various authorities will continue to ensure that the website will be adopted as a tool in the daily work of advisers and counsellors as broadly as possible. The aim is to primarily organise training in cooperation with regional partners. NGOs will be supported in the use of the website through quality-related efforts focused on communication and the conceptualisation of operations, amongst other things. The project will initiate and strengthen regional development efforts related to the partnership programme of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. The project will plan online training/tutorial materials to support users. The materials will be used particularly after the end of the project.

Launched in March 2019, Tampere University of Applied Sciences' **Kotoa kotiin ja yhteiskuntaan project** promotes cooperation among organisations that provide services to migrant women and the elderly and aims to encourage women to expand their activities from homes to society more broadly. To achieve this goal, the project will work together with migrant women to develop a coaching model that will coach migrant women to participate in society by acquainting them with Finnish culture, communication culture, the Finnish social and health care service system and Finnish working life. The project will primarily use the networks of the Naistari meeting

¹²⁷ Airas, Maija; Delahunty, David; Laitinen, Markus; Shemsedini, Getuar; Stenberg, Heidi; Saarilampi, Mafi; Sarparanta, Tuomas; Vuori, Hilla; Väätäinen, Hanna; (2019), Taustalla on väliä. Ulkomaalaistaustaiset opiskelijat korkeakou-lupolulla, Kansallinen koulutuksen arviointikeskus, julkaisut 22:2019, https://karvi.fi/app/uploads/2019/11/KARVI_2219.pdf (Cited 16 April 2020)

¹²⁸ <https://karvi.fi/2019/11/21/ulkomaalaistaustaisten-osallisuutta-korkeakoulutuksessa-selvitetty-ensimmaista-kertaa-ulkomaalaistaustaisen-on-haastavaa-paasta-opiskelemaan-ja-saada-tarvitsemaansa-tukea/> (Cited 17 April 2020)

place maintained by the NGO Setlementti Tampere. Located in Tampere's Hervanta district, Naistari offers support services for migrant women. Naistari's activities are particularly aimed at women who have no vocational qualifications, competencies required for working life in Finland or Finnish language skills.

Launched in April 2019, Lahti University of Applied Sciences' **Kotoa kotiin project** organises group activities that support integration, inclusion and positive mental health for migrant women who, for one reason or another, are outside the reach of services and therefore at risk of being entirely excluded from study opportunities and the labour market (e.g. housewives and women who are illiterate). The activities are centred around professionally guided group support and linking S2 teaching to all activities. Women can participate in the activities with their children and they are particularly aimed at women who are Arabic, Kurdish, Dari and Thai speakers. Migrants who are further along on the path of integration serve as mentors for the other women. The project helps expand the women's support networks and familiarises the participants with local services and activities. The participants also improve their Finnish skills and have a clear path forward af-

ter the group activities are concluded. The women will be in a better position to support the education and integration of their children. The mentors also benefit from stronger participation and competence.

Also launched in April 2019, the town of Pudasjärvi's **Löydä kotisi uudestaan Pohjois-Pohjanmaalta project** will create an early stage integration model in Pudasjärvi and Utajärvi for families residing in rural municipalities. The model includes an integration survey, a family integration plan and, where necessary, a competence assessment. The project will also develop the service system to help municipalities respond to the needs of third country nationals, particularly those who are vulnerable, by making the services more customer-driven and increasing the competence of the personnel and NGOs. The project will develop peer support activities by training peer support counsellors. Peer group activities support the integration of immigrants, but they need to be complemented by cooperation between various municipal operators and the third sector. The project aims to strengthen the promotion of integration, inclusion and well-being driven by the needs of migrants with refugee backgrounds in such a way that a small rural municipality will genuinely become their new home.

6.3. Research on integration

A lot of research on integration was again published in 2019. The list below is an illustrative sample of the research published by the authorities or academic entities during the year.

The report **Mahdollisuuksia, toivoa ja luottamusta – kustannuksia säästäviä ratkaisuja maahanmuuttajien työllistymiseen**¹²⁹ presents recommendations on what should be taken into consideration in supporting the integration and employment of long-term unemployed migrants in particular as well as the provision of services for them. The key observations are related to the advantages and cost benefits of sufficiently long-term confidential and personal guidance relationships. The report also addresses the challenges of project-style work and presents proposed solutions to them. The development proposals are based on the experiences and observations made in seven pilot projects under the Kotona Suomessa programme and the Kotona Suomessa coordination project.

The Ministry of Education and Culture's **The educational tracks and integration of immigrants: Problematic areas and proposals for procedures III**¹³⁰ is the final report of the further working group appointed by Minister of Education Sanni Grahn-Laasonen on 9 April 2018 to monitor how the sectoral reforms in education and integration for immigrants have progressed and to propose new measures. The report seeks to add to the previous work and to highlight some aspects that have either not been discussed in the earlier reports or involve proposals for procedures that have not yet been implemented. Such aspects include questions related to the availability, skills and qualifications of teachers, participation in early childhood education and care, status of the education preparing immigrants for comprehensive school education, and challenges in Finnish language skills and teaching. The further working group also seeks to explain why learning outcomes have been found to be weaker among immigrants and to monitor the impacts of the measures, implemented as part of the reform of vocational education and training, concerning immigrants' access to education and guidance and the strengthening of their language skills. New measures are proposed for streamlining the educational and em-

ployment tracks for immigrants, and more flexibility is sought for the residence permit practices for university students when they move on to employment. Needs to standardise practices have been identified in the cultural sector, and local measures are emphasised in youth work.

A significant publication that came out in January 2020 but concerns the year 2019 was the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment's dual publication **Kotoutumisen kokonaiskatsaus 2019 – Tutkimusartikkeleita kotoutumisesta**¹³¹ and the related statistical publication **Kotoutumisen kokonaiskatsaus 2019 – Indikaattoritietoa kotoutumisesta**¹³². As part of the integration monitoring system, the Centre of Expertise in Immigrant Integration at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment publishes an overall review of integration at intervals of four years. The monitoring system and the overall review for 2019 comprises the following themes: employment, education and training, wellbeing, civic participation and two-way integration. The overall review for 2019 consists of infographics that present key indicators and a research publication.

Kathleen Valtonen's study **Nordic Vietnamese – Our Community in Finland**¹³³ is a study commissioned by the Centre of Expertise in Immigrant Integration at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment on the Vietnamese community in Finland. The study highlights the education and career guidance of young people, the promotion of employment, mother tongue teaching and the availability of reception and integration services in the immigrants' own language as key issues related to integration. The study was particularly significant because the Vietnamese were the first quota refugees in Finland and also among the first immigrant minorities in Finland. The study focused on how Vietnamese immigrants have settled in and adapted to Finland during the past 40 years. The study also highlighted guidelines for the development of the current integration measures and integration policy.

The book **Oma paikka haussa: Maahanmuuttoaustaiset nuoret ja koulutus**¹³⁴ edited by Markku Jahnukainen, Mira Kalalahti and Joel Kivirauma examines the significance of school and education in the life of young people with immigrant backgrounds. Ac-

¹²⁹ ELY-keskus (2019), Mahdollisuuksia, toivoa ja luottamusta – kustannuksia säästäviä ratkaisuja maahanmuuttajien työllistymiseen, <http://www.ely-keskus.fi/documents/10191/37678612/Mahdollisuuksia%2C%20toivoa+ja+luottamusta/079a09c9-5fae-43c8-b187-e50a3ea2e39e> (Cited 16 April 2020)

¹³⁰ Ministry of Education and Culture (2019), The educational tracks and integration of immigrants: Problematic areas and proposals for procedures III, Publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture 2019:1, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-263-613-3> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹³¹ Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö (2019), Kotoutumisen kokonaiskatsaus 2019 – Tutkimusartikkeleita kotoutumisesta, TEM oppaat ja muut julkaisut 2019:10, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-327-487-7> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹³² Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö (2019), Kotoutumisen kokonaiskatsaus 2019 – Tutkimusartikkeleita kotoutumisesta, TEM oppaat ja muut julkaisut 2019:11, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-327-489-1> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹³³ Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2019), Nordic Vietnamese - Our Community in Finland, Publications of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Regions 2019:37, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-327-433-4> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹³⁴ Jahnukainen, M., Kalalahti, M., Kivirauma J. (toim.) (2019): Oma paikka haussa, Helsinki: Gaudeamus

According to the book, the critical stage is the transition from basic education to secondary education: the end of compulsory education is a time of big decisions for all young people and the competition for places is intense. The book discusses how to ensure that as many young people as possible find the right path of education for them. The book emphasises that, in guidance and support activities, it is important to note that people with immigrant backgrounds constitute a highly diverse group. In addition to experts, the book presents the voice of young people themselves. Even though discrimination and racism are still part of daily life for many of them, the book suggests that young people with immigrant backgrounds have a favourable and expectant attitude towards education overall.

Published in December 2019, the study **Samaa vai eri maata?** by Pasi Saukkonen, Ville Pitkänen and Jussi Westinen examines values, attitudes, confidence and identity amongst speakers of the Russian, Estonian, Somali, Arabic and English language. The study found that people with immigrant backgrounds have more trust in the majority population than in people living in Finland who come from their own country of origin. They also have strong trust in the police, the judiciary, the school system and the health care system. Trust in politicians varies by language group.

The report **Työ paras kotouttaja?**¹³⁵ presents an employment model that supports integration. The KIITO – Kiinni työhön ja osaamiseen project carried out in 2017–2019 developed an employment model aimed at promoting the quick employment of immigrants while supporting integration at the same time. The model piloted in the project consists of three stages: skills assessment, integration-oriented training at a workshop and training on integration-at-work in a company.

According to the publication **Monikulttuurinen työyhteisö – kokemuksia työnantajien näkökulmasta**¹³⁶ by the Centre of Expertise of Vantaa, employ-

ers have mostly positive experiences of multicultural workplaces. In a survey of employers, 94% of the respondents recommended the recruitment of employees with immigrant backgrounds. Nearly 30% of the respondents characterised employees with immigrant backgrounds as being highly motivated, hardworking and flexible. More than half of the employers who participated in the survey indicated they want more support and guidance related to managing a multicultural workplace. The most frequently cited challenges were related to the lack of Finnish language proficiency and communication. Some 17% of the respondents highlighted cultural differences as challenges, while 12% mentioned challenges related to different religions. The respondents included 17 employers representing a wide range of industries.

The Nordic Council of Ministers published the study **Integrating Immigrants into the Nordic Labour Markets**¹³⁷ edited by Lars Calmfors and Nora Sánchez Gassen. The study casts light on the challenges Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden face in integrating large groups of immigrants, especially low-educated ones from outside the EU, into their labour markets. The report addresses education policy, labour market policy, social policy and wages. In general, the report finds that no single policy will suffice and, instead, the exact policy mix must depend on evaluations of the trade-offs with other policy objectives.

Eveliina Lyytinen and Nita Toom from the Migration Institute of Finland published a report in 2019 on the labour market integration of young people with a refugee background entitled **Two-way labour market integration? : Perspectives on youth with a refugee background and employers in Finland**¹³⁸. The report is part of the Nordic CAGE (Coming of Age in Exile) cooperation project funded by NordForsk, which is based on comparative analysis of studies of the development of the health and socioeconomic inequality of young immigrants in the Nordic countries.

¹³⁵ Härkönen, E. (Toim.) (2019), Työ paras kotouttaja? - Työssä kotoutumisen mallin kokeilu Pirkanmaalla 2017–2019, ELY-keskus raportteja 44/2019, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-314-818-5> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹³⁶ Vantaan osaamiskeskus (2019), Monikulttuurinen työyhteisö - kokemuksia työnantajien näkökulmasta, Vantaan kaupunki, <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6613027756965933056> (Cited 17 April 2020)

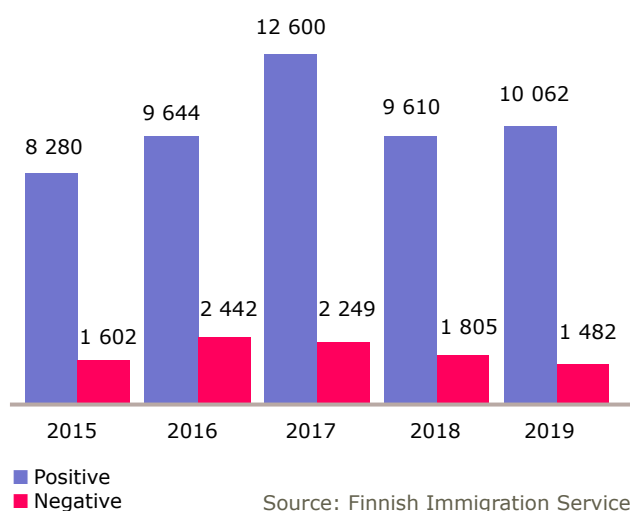
¹³⁷ Calmfors L., Sánchez Gassen, N. (2019), Integrating Immigrants into the Nordic Labour Markets, Nordic Council of Ministers 2019:024, <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1317928/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹³⁸ Lyytinen, E., Toom, N. (2019), TWO-WAY LABOUR MARKET INTEGRATION? - Perspectives on youth with a refugee background and employers in Finland, CAGE 3B Project report, https://cage.ku.dk/publications/reports/Two-way_labour_market_integration_-_CAGE_report_2019.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

7. Citizenship and statelessness

In 2019, a total of 10,062 persons acquired Finnish citizenship, which represents a slight increase from 2018. The number of decisions on citizenship applications and declarations was 11,544. Of these, 87 per cent were positive and 13 per cent were negative. As in previous years, the most common reason for a negative decision was insufficient language skills. Other common reasons were unclear identity, insufficient period of residence and the applicant's failure to satisfy the integrity requirement. Of those who were granted Finnish citizenship, 55 per cent were women and 45 per cent were men.

Citizenship decisions (citizenship applications and declarations) 2015–2019

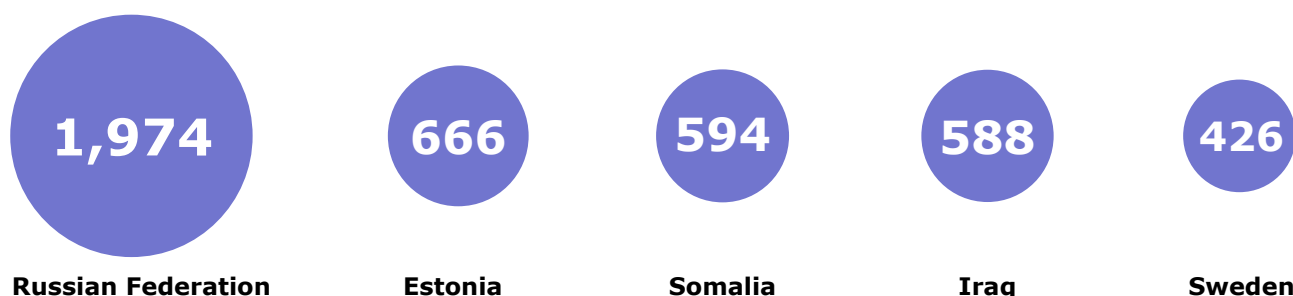


As in previous years, the top nationalities applying for Finnish citizenship were citizens of the Russian Federation, Somalia, Iraq, Estonia and Afghanistan, but citizens of Syria also emerged as a significant group of applicants. Many of the Syrian refugees who arrived in 2015 satisfied the four-year minimum residence requirement in 2019, which was reflected in the applicant statistics.

A total of 11,962 citizenship applications and 1,090 citizenship declarations were filed during the year. The numbers were close to the previous year's levels. In 2019, 89 per cent of those who were granted citizenship acquired it through the application procedure.

Certain groups can also acquire citizenship through the declaration procedure. These groups include former citizens of Finland, 18–22-year-old young persons, citizens of the Nordic countries, foreign nationals whose father is a citizen of Finland and over 12-year-old adopted children of Finnish citizens. A total of 1,103 decisions were made on citizenship declarations, 96 per cent of which were positive. In the declaration procedure, the most common grounds for granting Finnish citizenship was former Finnish citizenship (42 per cent of cases). The largest group to acquire citizenship through the declaration procedure was citizens of Sweden (39 per cent).

Persons who were granted Finnish citizenship (by application and declaration), Top 5 groups by former nationality



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

7.1. Legislative amendments related to citizenship

On 26 April 2019, the Parliament approved government proposal HE 272/2018¹³⁹ to amend the Nationality Act¹⁴⁰ to make it possible for people who are found guilty of certain criminal offences to lose their Finnish citizenship. Such offences would be offences against the vital interests of the state for which the most severe punishment provided is at least eight years of imprisonment. The loss of citizenship would also require the individual to have been sentenced to at least five years of unconditional imprisonment. An individual could lose their citizenship only if they are also a citizen of another country and have sufficient de facto ties to their other country of citizenship. Finnish citizens by birth could also lose their citizenship under the same grounds.

The legislative amendment stemmed from the action plan on asylum policy¹⁴¹ of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government, dated 8 December 2015, which stated that participation in the activities of any organisation classified by the UN and the EU as a terrorist organisation as well as travelling abroad to commit a terrorist offence and the funding of such travel will be criminalised.

The new Maternity Act entered into force in April 2019. It decrees that if a female same-sex couple has a child through fertility treatment, the child's legal relation to both of the parents can be legally recognised without an intra-family adoption. This also influences the determination of the child's citizenship if the partner that did not give birth to the couple's child is a foreign national. The Nationality Act was amended as required by the new Maternity Act.

Pursuant to it, the mother who did not give birth to the couple's child and whose maternity is legally recognised transfers her Finnish citizenship to the child and, if the child is born abroad, the child acquires the Finnish citizenship by declaration.

A legislative amendment entered into force in July 2019 restricting the eligibility of persons with dual citizenship for military posts. The amendment was based on government proposal HE 252/2018¹⁴² to amend Section 37 of the Act on the Defence Forces, Section 16 of the Act on the National Defence University and Sections 10 and 26 of the Act on the Administration of the Border Guard. As a result of the amendments, appointments to military posts require candidates not to hold such citizenship of or other links to a foreign country, as referred to in the Security Clearance Act, that could constitute a danger to the security of the state, general security, national defence or Finland's international relations, or to the security of duty in the Defence Forces.

The Act on the National Defence University was amended so that eligibility for studies leading to officer posts requires candidates not to hold such citizenship of or other links to a foreign country, as referred to in the Security Clearance Act, that could constitute a danger to the security of the state, general security, national defence or Finland's international relations, or to the security of duty in the Defence Forces or the Finnish Border Guard.

Corresponding amendments were also made to the Act on the Administration of the Border Guard with regard to officer posts in the Border Guard and admission to the border guard's basic course.

¹³⁹ Government proposal HE 272/2018 vp

¹⁴⁰ Act amending the Nationality Act 564/2019

¹⁴¹ Finnish Government (2015), Government action plan on asylum policy, 8 December 2015, https://valtioneuvosto.fi/documents/10184/1058456/Hallituksen_turvapaikkapoliittinen_toimenpideohjelma_08122015+EN.pdf/3e555cc4-ab01-46af-9cd4-138b2ac5bad0 (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁴² Government proposal HE 252/2018 vp

8. Borders, Schengen and visas

8.1. Border control

A total of 29 illegal entries were detected in air traffic to Finland from non-Schengen areas in 2019 (41% lower than in 2018). In the cases in question, 19 people used forged travel documents, seven people had no travel documents and three people used travel documents belonging to someone else. In December, two people were detected with forged travel documents and one person was detected with travel documents belonging to someone else. In addition, a total of 2,860 entries to Finland or entries to other Schengen countries using visas granted by Finland were prevented as a result of the efforts of the Finnish Border Guard's liaison officers. This figure increased by about one thousand compared to 2018. The impact of the liaison officer operations also improved.¹⁴³

In addition to the illegal entries detected in air traffic at the external border, a total of 129 people were found to misuse legal entry methods, meaning that they arrived at Helsinki Airport on a transit flight, did not continue on to their connecting flight and applied for asylum (55% higher than in 2018). In December, a total of 19 asylum seekers entered the country on transit flights.

At the border crossing points on the eastern border, a total of 10 illegal entries were detected by the end of the year. Of these, seven used forged travel documents, two involved attempted smuggling and one person used a travel document belonging to someone else (43% higher than in 2018). A total of ten crossings of the land border for the purpose of illegal entry from Russia to Finland were detected in 2019 (23 fewer than in 2018).

8.2. EU cooperation

The number of detected illegal border crossings on external EU borders was approximately 139,000. While the trend has been downward, the number of illegal border crossings was still higher than in 2013. The most frequently used route for illegal entry was the Eastern Mediterranean route from Turkey to the Balkans. Some 82,500 people entered Europe illegally via this route. The decline in the total number of illegal border crossings was due to a lower number of illegal border crossings on the Western Mediterranean route to Spain and the Central Mediterranean route to Italy and Malta. At the same time, the number of irregular entries on the Eastern Mediterranean routes from Turkey to Greece and from Turkey via North Cyprus to the Republic of Cyprus increased, and these routes represented approximately half of all detected illegal border crossings into the EU.

The irregular entry situation on the Eastern Mediterranean also increased the irregular use of the Western Balkans route and intra-Schengen flights onward from Greece in 2019. The number of irregular entry into Finland through the Schengen area has nevertheless remained moderate.

The Finnish Border Guard participated in Frontex-coordinated joint operations in 2019 in various parts of Europe, with the focus being on the Mediterranean. A Finnish Border Guard patrol boat and crew operated off the coast of Greece in March–May. The boat patrolled the area to detect irregular entry in cooperation with the host country Greece and other participants in the joint operation. The Finnish Border Guard also sent individual experts to participate in interviews with irregular migrants at Mediterranean ports over a period of several months. In addition, a Finnish Border Guard surveillance aircraft patrolled the coast of Spain for one month in the spring.

On the EU's land borders, officers from the Finnish Border Guard participated in border security operations in Bulgaria and Greece for several months. Frontex launched its first fully-fledged joint operation outside the EU and Schengen area, in Albania. Officers from the Finnish Border Guard also participated in the operation in Albania. In Finland, the Finn-

¹⁴³ Finnish Border Guard (2019), Finnish Border Guard financial statements 2019, https://www.raja.fi/download/79089_Tilinpaatos_2019.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

ish Border Guard hosted visiting Norwegian officers at border crossing point on the eastern border on a reciprocal basis.

At air borders, officers of the Finnish Border Guard carried out border control duties at various European airports during the year. Visiting officers were also hosted at Helsinki Airport.

Participation in Frontex operations slowed down as the turn of the year approached and the last of the year's assignments in joint operations ended in early December. In Spain, the posting of one officer working on interviews with irregular migrants ended, while in Greece, the border control patrol assignment of three officers ended at the land border. The officers posted at border crossing points in Poland and Croatia also completed their assignments.

In May, the Finnish Border Guard hosted officers in charge of border security at the Moldovan Ministry of Internal Affairs under the European Commission's TAIEX programme. During the visit, the delegation became acquainted with the operations of the Finnish Border Guard and the Finnish Integrated Border Management model.

In November 2019, the Finnish Border Guard hosted officers from the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration. During the visit, the delegation was provided with a presentation of border control activities at Helsinki Airport.

8.3. Other developments in border control

Additional funding allocated by the Government was used in 2019 to hire just under 200 new border control officers to carry out border control at the eastern border, manage the increasing EU obligations and conduct border control related to the growing passenger traffic at Helsinki Airport.

An amendment of the Border Guard Act¹⁴⁴ on 1 April 2019 strengthened the powers of the Finnish Border Guard to intervene in hybrid threats. The amendments clarified the options available to the Border Guard to give and receive executive assistance from other authorities.

At the national level, the contingency plans for irregular entry were updated and related exercises were organised. In addition, the Finnish Border Guard drafted an operational concept for border control and technical architecture documentation related to technical control, enabling the development of technical control from 2020 onward.¹⁴⁵

In November 2019, the Ministry of the Interior launched the **Älykkäät rajat project** to draft amendments to national legislation required by the EU Regulations issued with regard to the Entry/Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). The Regulations issued with regard to EES and ETIAS are related to the development of EU's border management and the national legislation must define certain competent authorities and national contact points referred to in the Regulations as well as specify legislative provisions pertaining to the processing of personal data.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Act amending the Border Guard Act 9/2019

¹⁴⁵ Source: Finnish Border Guard, e-mail 17 December 2019.

¹⁴⁶ https://intermin.fi/artikkeli/-/asset_publisher/rajaturvallisuuutta-kehittavien-eu-tietojarjestelmien-kayttoonottoa-valmistellaan (Cited 17 April 2020)

8.4. Schengen

A **Schengen evaluation** according to the annual plan of the European Commission was conducted in Finland in June 2018. It covered all Schengen acquis aspects: the Schengen Information System (SIS), police cooperation, visa policy, returns, data protection and external borders. The evaluators write an evaluation report about any deficiencies and immediate measures must be taken to rectify these. Finland's evaluation report and the recommended actions based on it were published in 2019.

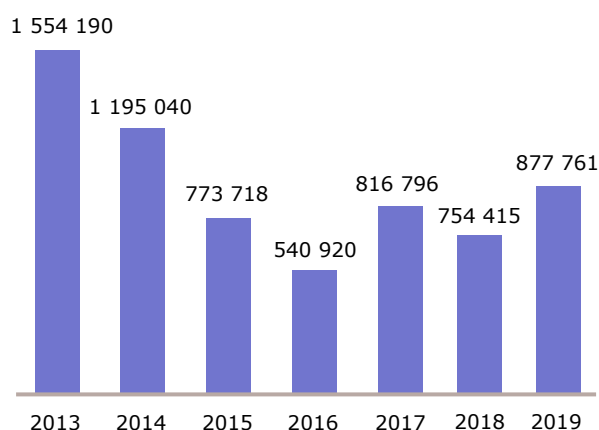
In the evaluation report, Finland's integrated border management concept was found to be of an extremely high standard. Particular praise was given to Finland's National Integrated Border Management Strategy (IBM strategy), which is the only national strategy that fully meets the EU's criteria. The national IT systems that support border checks and border surveillance were also singled out as something that other Member States could learn from. Finland's PTR cooperation (that is, cooperation between the Police, Customs and the Border Guard) was also found to be of an extremely high standard. Likewise, Finland's participation in joint European border management coordinated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) was found to be praiseworthy.

The report also found some deficiencies. Both border surveillance technology and the number of personnel controlling land borders were found to be insufficient. Finland must ensure that all border crossing points and Border Guard stations have a sufficient number of trained personnel to carry out border surveillance and border checks under all circumstances. Finland must also ensure that there are sufficient personnel to meet the new EU obligations. Amendments to the Schengen Borders Code, the introduction of the EU's Entry Exit System and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System, and the growth of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency have all increased the need for personnel.¹⁴⁷

8.5. Visa policy

In 2019, the number of visas issued for Finland was 877,761. This represented an increase of 16 per cent compared to the previous year, which suggests that the previous downward trend began to turn.

Visas issued for Finland 2013–2019



Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs

The number of visa applications submitted was 895,679. Once again, **Russia was the leading country in the number of visa applications**: 88 per cent of visa applications were submitted in Russia, most of them in St Petersburg (644,844 applications).

An amendment to the Aliens Act¹⁴⁸ entered into force in May 2019, making it possible to submit a request for rectification concerning decisions on the refusal, invalidation or cancellation of a visa made by a Finnish diplomatic mission pursuant to the EU Visa Code to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs instead of the diplomatic mission in question. The amendment also includes a provision pertaining to the processing of a request for rectification being subject to a fee.

¹⁴⁷ https://www.raja.fi/current_issues/headlines/1/0/eu_evaluated_finland_s_integrated_border_management_system_77537 (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁴⁸ Act amending the Aliens Act 242/2019

9. Irregular migration¹⁴⁹ and migrant smuggling

In 2019, 1,219 irregular migrants were found in Finland, which represents a slight decrease from the previous year (1,328)

The statistics for 2019 include persons who stayed or worked in the country without a valid permit and were found within the country or at an external border as well as those asylum seekers who were found to have stayed in the country without appropriate documents before filing an asylum application. The statistical methods are largely based on the Eurostat's criteria for collecting statistics on irregular stay.

A large proportion of the irregular stay shown in the statistics is short-term; irregular employment is typically gig work that lasts for a period of a few months, for example. Criminal activity can also occur in similar short-term and temporary patterns. On the whole, the volume of irregular stay remained stable compared to the previous year. The main change in the situation has been an increase in the number of cases involving Africans. There have been entries to Finland, particularly from Italy, of Gambian citizens who often obtain income from the organised sale of cannabis and violate prohibitions of entry already imposed on them due to criminal offences. There have also been entries to Finland from Italy by Nigerian citizens to work in temporary jobs without the required permits. Many of these persons are returned by the authorities to their country of residence, even multiple times per year.

Poor living conditions, indebtedness and exploitation among people who have entered Europe were more clearly visible among irregular migrants in Finland in 2019.

The number of irregular migrants detected in 2019 within Finland and at the internal borders was largely unchanged from 2018. There were some changes with regard to the types of irregular stay. The most notable deviation from the previous year's statistics was a rise in violations of prohibition of entry by third-country nationals. The increase corresponds to the earlier trend and is related to activity in mobile crime. The most notable drop in numbers was observed in violations related to travel documents.

Thanks to active operations by the authorities, the number of irregularly staying third-country nationals detected in monitoring activities or criminal investigations increased with regard to violations of the prohibition of entry and residence permit violations. The change may be attributable to improved effectiveness on the part of the authorities.

Irregular migrants, top 10 nationalities in 2019

Russia	174
China	120
Iraq	105
Turkey	77
Gambia	70
Ukraine	60
Nigeria	56
USA	34
Belarus	33
Stateless	32
Top 10 total	761
Total all (individuals)	1 219

Source: Police

The Police compile separate statistics on illegal employment. **In 2019, a total of 294 third-country nationals working without any work permit were found in Finland.**

Illegal employment is part of informal economy, which is connected to irregular stay. For most irregular migrants, undeclared employment is the most convenient means of livelihood but international supply of cheap labour and undeclared workers is also increasing. The use of undeclared workers distorts competition: the supply of undeclared workers and cheap labour also involves organised crime, for which crime within corporate structures is a growing source of income.

Not nearly all of the persons who work illegally are staying irregularly in the country. In many cases, the movement and employment of undeclared workers and cheap labour is facilitated with forged documents, similarly to irregular migration and

¹⁴⁹ The Finnish equivalent for the term is "säännösten vastainen maahanmuutto", which is found also in the latest EMN Glossary, *Asylum and Migration Glossary 6.0: Finnish edition*. Finnish legislation and authorities, however, use terms "laiton maahantulo" (illegal entry in the country) or "laiton maassa oleskelu" (illegal stay in the country).

cross-border crime. The following statistics include persons working without any work permit regardless of whether they were staying in the country legally or not.

Person working without any work permit 2019

Iraq	42
Nigeria	36
Ukraine	34
Russia	32
Turkey	13
Stateless	10
Gambia	9
Kyrgyzstan	9
Bangladesh	8
China	7
TOP 10 total	200
Total all (individuals)	294

Source: Police

9.1. Legislative amendments and other developments related to irregular migration and smuggling in human beings

Amendments to the Aliens Act that entered into force in June 2019¹⁵⁰ aim to prevent irregular migration, in particular the misuse of the asylum process. The Aliens Act was amended by e.g. specifying the criteria for the processing of subsequent applications.

According to the confirmed legislation, asylum seekers have to be able to present well-founded grounds for not having previously presented the arguments they are now making in the subsequent application. Such grounds may be changes in the applicant's home country or in his or her personal circumstances in Finland. The applicant may also have well-founded reasons relating to their vulnerability, shame or fear. The Finnish Immigration Service takes account of these reasons when considering whether a subsequent application will be examined or not.

The amendments are aimed at preventing situations where a person submits a new application only for the purpose of delaying the processing, and this way causes a backlog in processing. **Subsequent applications account for about half of all applications for international protection submitted in Finland.** Many applicants have already submitted several subsequent applications.

The amendments are based on the EU Asylum Procedures Directive. The provisions of the Directive are now included in the Aliens Act more clearly than before. In compliance with the Directive, the Act also provides that the admissibility of an application also requires that the applicant was, through no fault of his or her own in connection with the processing of the earlier application or the related request for review, incapable of asserting the situations or grounds now presented in the subsequent application.

The amendments also have an effect on the procedures of the police. In future, a subsequent application will not prevent the enforcement of an earlier decision on denial of admittance or stay, if the subsequent application does not fulfil the criteria for admissibility and it has been submitted only for the purpose of preventing or delaying the return. In

¹⁵⁰ Act amending the Aliens Act 437/2019

practice, this means situations in which the arrangements for the removal from the country have already been made and a new application is not submitted until at the airport, for example. Therefore the subsequent application must be submitted as soon as there are grounds for it, not just when the person is being returned.

The same Act also laid down provisions on taking possession of the travel documents of persons who have applied for international protection. The provision confirms, at the level of an act of Parliament, the current practice, in which the police, border control authorities or the Finnish Immigration Service may take possession of a passport or other travel document until the applicant has been granted a residence permit or he or she has left the country.

The travel document may also be transferred to other competent authorities for keeping. The authority that keeps the travel document ensures that the applicant can take care of his or her affairs in situations in which the establishment of identity is required.

The publication **VARJOYHTEISKUNTA VALOKEILASSA - Turvapaikkajärjestelmästä poistetut ja kadonneet henkilöt** by the National Police Board uses strategic analysis to discuss persons who have gone missing from, and have been removed from, the asylum system as well as the broader thematics of irregular stay. The report contextualises the conclusions of the Kadonneet project established by the National Police Board and offers development proposals for the official system. The focus of the Kadonneet project was on persons marked as missing from the reception system by the Finnish Immigration Service, i.e. persons with "14a3" status.

According to the report, some of those who go missing from the asylum system and are removed from the system continue to stay in the country as irregular migrants. It has been suggested that the number of irregular migrants in Finland will grow significantly due to the increasing number of asylum seekers who receive a negative decision. There have been no

indications of this in monitoring activities. The most likely to stay in the country are persons with 14a3 status, i.e. those for whom reception services have ended and whom the police have not been able to return to their country of origin.

According to the report, the number of people with an asylum seeker background who are staying in the country as irregular migrants is not very high and the composition of the group is not static.

One of the goals of the project was to evaluate the connection between going missing from the asylum process and irregular stay and crime. The report finds that persons who have gone missing and 14a3 cases only account for a small number of criminal offences based on detected crimes that are included in the statistics. The report suggests that hidden crime may be more common. The low number of crimes is partly explained by the fact that a significant proportion of those who go missing do so very soon after applying for asylum. Going missing quickly indicates that Finland was used as a transit country or the asylum system was used for criminal purposes.

In addition to addressing phenomena related to irregular migrants, the report also assesses the problems associated with the current official systems and the models used in police operations and offers development proposals related to them. The current information systems make it impossible to establish an up-to-date picture of the phenomenon. Furthermore, free movement makes it possible for people to cross borders without the authorities becoming aware of it. The report suggests that the exchange of information between the authorities should be improved, in particular, to make it possible to establish an overall picture of the phenomenon.

According to the report, the number of irregular migrants is especially affected by the availability of work opportunities. This means that taking action against undeclared employment plays a significant role in preventing the formation of a shadow society and related pull factors in Finland.

10. Trafficking in human beings

10.1. Trafficking in human beings detected in asylum and residence permit procedures¹⁵¹

In 2019, the Finnish Immigration Service detected **indications of trafficking in human beings with 140 asylum seekers**.¹⁵² Of these asylum seekers, 48 were issued with a residence permit on grounds such as international protection, compassionate grounds or being a victim of trafficking in human beings.¹⁵³

A residence permit on the grounds of being a victim of trafficking in human beings can, under certain conditions, be issued to a victim of trafficking in human beings who is currently in Finland. In 2019, first residence permits for a victim of trafficking in human beings were issued to nine persons. The number of new fixed-term residence permits, i.e. extended permits, for a victim of trafficking in human beings were issued to three persons.

10.2. Victims of trafficking in human beings included in the assistance system¹⁵⁴

The National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking had a busy year in 2019. A record-high number of 229 new customers were included in the system. In connection with these, 74 minor dependants of the customers were also included in the system. The majority (69%) of the new customers had been exploited outside Finland. **The number of people referred to the Assistance System in 2019 who were potential victims of trafficking in human beings taking place in Finland was 70, which represents a significant increase from the previous year (52).**¹⁵⁵

The total number of customers in the Assistance System at the end of 2019 was higher than ever before. The number had grown from the previous year by one-third. In addition to 521 adult customers, the services of the Assistance System covered 155 minor children of the customers residing in Finland. The services covered a total of 676 people at the end of 2019.

People can be referred to the Assistance System by various parties. In most cases, victims are referred to the system by the Finnish Immigration Service or reception centres. In 2019, reception centres referred 93 people to the system and the Finnish Immigration Service referred 64 people.¹⁵⁶ People who have become victims in Finland are typically referred by an NGO, shelter, lawyer or the police. A growing number of victims also contact the Assistance System themselves or with the help of another individual.

¹⁵¹ Source: The Finnish Immigration Service

¹⁵² The statistics are based on certain indicative register entries and are not complete. Indications of trafficking in human beings do not mean that the person in question has been a victim of trafficking in human beings. Indications of trafficking in human beings include authorities' suspicion that a case may involve trafficking in human beings. The numbers include indications of human trafficking detected in 2019, which includes some applications which were submitted in 2018 already.

¹⁵³ In the asylum process, the person's need for international protection is always assessed first. A status granted on the grounds of international protection, such as refugee status, is a protection status stronger than the status of a victim of trafficking in human beings. Consequently, the person is primarily granted an international protection status if there are grounds for that, even if there also existed grounds for granting a residence permit for a victim of trafficking in human beings.

¹⁵⁴ National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking (2019), Overview 1.1.–31.12.2019, http://www.ihmiskauppa.fi/files/503/Annual_overview_of_the_NAS_1.1.-_31.12.2019.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁵⁵ Inclusion in the Assistance System does not mean that the person in question would have been officially identified as a victim of trafficking in human beings. The person included in the Assistance System is only considered a potential victim of trafficking in human beings. After this, the person may be officially identified as a victim of trafficking in human beings. An officially identified victim of trafficking in human beings may continue using the services of the Assistance System until they do not need these services any more. If the client cannot be officially identified as a victim of trafficking in human beings, the services of the Assistance System will no longer be available to them.

¹⁵⁶ National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking (2019), Overview 1.1.–31.12.2019, http://www.ihmiskauppa.fi/files/503/Annual_overview_of_the_NAS_1.1.-_31.12.2019.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

The customers of the assistance system include Finnish citizens, EU citizens, people who entered Finland on a visa-exempt basis, third-country nationals working legally in Finland and people with an asylum seeker background. **Some 74% of the new customers were asylum seekers.** Asylum seekers only represented less than one-third of those who became victims in Finland. Typically, those who become victims of exploitation in Finland are people residing in Finland with some other residence status, such as on the grounds of family ties, as an EU citizen (including Finnish citizens) or a residence permit issued on the grounds of employment. They may also be irregular migrants.

There are many types of trafficking in human beings and new forms are continuously being identified. Nevertheless, forced labour and sexual exploitation are still the most common types. In addition to these, cases have been observed in Finland, for example, involving forced begging, forced criminal activity and forced marriage.

The number of people identified as having become victims of sexual exploitation in Finland was 11, which represents a slight decrease from the previous year (18). The majority of the victims of sexual exploitation had been victimised outside Finland (70).

The persons victimised in Finland in 2019 were mostly victims of forced labour (33 persons). The cases of forced labour are the most common in the restaurant, cleaning and construction industries. Characteristics of forced labour have also been detected in the conditions of domestic workers in pri-

vate families as well as farm work. The victims of forced labour are usually non-Finnish nationals, but the employers also include Finnish citizens. Those who had become victims of trafficking in human beings involving work-related exploitation outside Finland (43 persons) had typically been exploited outside the EU, usually in their home country or a neighbouring country. The exploitation included significant use of violence in many cases.

The number of forced marriages detected was more than twice as high as in the previous year. In total, 52 victims of trafficking in human beings related to forced marriage were included in the Assistance System. Of these, 20 had either been forced into marriage in Finland or the forced marriage had begun abroad and continued in Finland. Many of the cases are detected when the authorities intervene in domestic violence. The police, reception centres and shelters play a key role in identifying victims of forced marriage.

The people who sought the services of the Assistance System in Finland also included some who had been forced into criminal activity or begging. The victims of forced begging (two persons) were also pressured to engage in criminal activity and collect bottles to accumulate wealth for their exploiters.

The majority of the customers are adults, but minors (who are not dependants of adult customers) are also referred to the system. In 2019, there were **14 minors among the victims of trafficking in human beings included in the Assistance System.**

10.3. Developments related to trafficking in human beings

The **IHME project** administered by the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking **ended on 31 May 2019**. Lasting nearly two years and funded by the Internal Security Fund (ISF-P) of the European Union, the project was intended to enhance competence in anti-trafficking in Finland, particularly for the criminal investigation authorities, by developing training focused on human trafficking to support understanding of the phenomenon of human trafficking, the identification of victims and criminal investigations pertaining to human trafficking. Nearly 1,200 police and Border Guard officers attended human trafficking training provided in the project. The training cooperation between the Assistance System, the Border and Coast Guard Academy and the Police University College will continue after the project. From now on, all police and Border Guard students will receive the basic training on human trafficking created in the IHME project. In autumn 2019, similar training sessions were held at the Service Centre for Entry Permits of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for example.¹⁵⁷

In spring 2019, the Assistance System organised fact-finding missions to Romania and Bulgaria (the countries from which the majority of migrant beggars come) and to Ukraine. These missions form part of the HOF-BSR project run by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The purpose of the project is to boost cooperation between the countries in the Baltic Sea region in combating human trafficking.

In June 2019, the Parliament's Deputy Ombudsman issued a decision (EOAK/3489/2017)¹⁵⁸ concerning assistance provided to a victim of human trafficking in a Finnish municipality. According to the decision, the victim's rights had been neglected in a manner that endangered the customer's legal protection and her special right to receive help as a victim of human trafficking. The Deputy Ombudsman stated that it is essential that the municipality prepare a general plan regarding its operating methods for assisting victims of human trafficking and ensures that the municipality has an effective structure for providing assistance. The municipality must also ensure that its employees have a clear understanding of the division of responsibilities related to assistance for victims of human trafficking. The decision was noted by a number of Finnish municipalities and considered a significant precedent that clarifies the role of municipalities in anti-trafficking efforts.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking (2019), Semiannual Review 1 January – 30 June 2019, http://www.ihmiskauppa.fi/files/487/Tilannekatsaus_1.1.-_30.6.2019_english.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁵⁸ Parliamentary Deputy Ombudsman decision EOAK/3489/2017 28 June 2019, <https://www.oikeusasiamies.fi/r/fi/ratkaisut/-/eoar/3489/2017> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁵⁹ National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking (2019), Overview 1.1.-31.12.2019, http://www.ihmiskauppa.fi/files/503/Annual_overview_of_the_NAS_1.1.-_31.12.2019.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

10.4. Research on trafficking in human beings

In March 2019, the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking and HEUNI published **a report on trafficking in children and young persons**¹⁶⁰ in Finland. According to the report by Elina Kervinen and Natalia Ollus, the exploitation that took place in Finland was most commonly sexual exploitation, such as forced prostitution, commercial sexual exploitation of a child or sexual exploitation that occurs or begins via the Internet. The report also reveals cases of forced marriage and forced criminal activity in Finland. Sexual exploitation and forced marriages are the most common forms of exploitation experienced by children and young people in their home country or country of origin. En route to Finland, children and young people have experienced many forms of sexual exploitation and labour exploitation. According to the report, sexual exploitation appears to be the most identifiable form of exploitation related to human trafficking. It was also the most common form of exploitation that took place or was identified in Finland. Based on the report, the understanding of trafficking in children and young persons varies among municipalities and authorities. The awareness of trafficking in human beings by public au-

thorities and other actors must be increased further so that such cases can be identified and prevented. Also needed are clear guidelines on how to intervene in the human trafficking of children and young persons as well as sufficient assistance and support for those who have been victimised.

Terhi Tafari's **Review of media framing of human trafficking in Finnish news media**¹⁶¹ analyses the framing of human trafficking in Finnish media. The study analysed 91 news articles published in four Finnish news media publications (Helsingin Sanomat, Ilta-Sanomat, Yle uutiset and MTV Uutiset) and the illustrations used in the articles. According to the study, trafficking in human beings is internationally often framed as sexual exploitation targeting women, with little background provided in news coverage of the criminal process. However, the study found that Finnish news media performed relatively well in several aspects. Except for news of the criminal process, journalists sought information on human trafficking from several different sources and the sources included, in addition to the authorities or instead of the authorities, NGOs and experts involved in the prevention of human trafficking and, for example, representatives of the business sector.

¹⁶⁰ National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking (2019), Overview 1.1.-31.12.2019, http://www.ihmiskauppa.fi/files/503/Annual_overview_of_the_NAS_1.1.-_31.12.2019.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁶¹ Tafari, T.(2019), Review of media framing of human trafficking in Finnish news media, National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking , https://www.cbss.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Review_Finland.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

11. Return and readmissions

11.1. Removal decisions

A removal decision is an administrative decision by which a foreign person is ordered to leave Finland. There are two types of removal decisions: refusal of entry and deportation.¹⁶²

Refusal of entry concerns persons who have not had a residence permit for Finland and who do not fulfil the requirements for residence.¹⁶³

Deportation concerns persons who have had a residence permit for Finland but who no longer fulfil the requirements for residence.

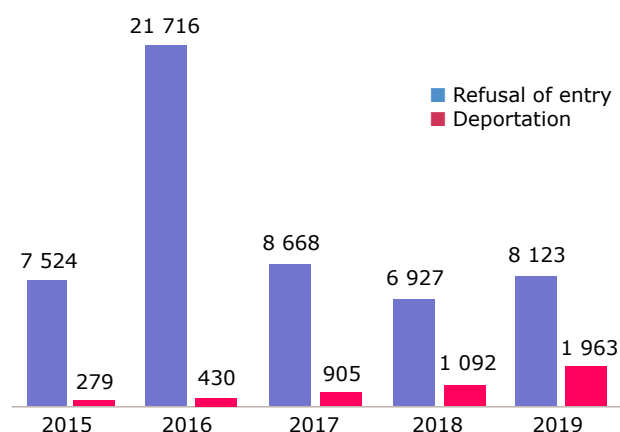
In 2019, the number of refusal of entry and prohibition of entry decisions was 8,123.¹⁶⁴ The majority of the removal decisions were refusal of entry decisions by the Finnish Immigration Service, with decisions by the Police and the Finnish Border Guard being in the minority. In 2019, the Finnish Immigration Service made a total of 5,880 refusal of entry decisions and the Police made 754 such decisions¹⁶⁵. The Finnish Border Guard refused entry to 1,489¹⁶⁶ persons.

The fluctuation of the number of the refusal of entry decisions by the Finnish Immigration Service is connected with the number of negative asylum decisions: a negative asylum decision entails a removal decision. Consequently, the number of removal decisions correlates somewhat with the number of asylum seekers entering the country. The refusal of entry figures for the Finnish Immigration Service include refusal of entry decisions made in connection with negative asylum decisions as well as other residence permit decisions.

A total of 1,963 deportation decisions were made in 2019, which is a significant increase compared to the previous year, when the corresponding figure was 1,092. The majority (1,839) of the deportation decisions were related to irregular stay.

The number of deportation decisions based on criminal offences was 124. A foreign national may be deported on the basis of criminal offences if he or she is found guilty of an offence carrying a maximum sentence of imprisonment for a year or more or if he or she is found guilty of repeated offences. These decisions are always based on an overall consideration that also takes into account factors such as the seriousness of the crime, the person's ties to Finland, the person's health and the non-refoulement principle, according to which no one should be returned to a country where they would face persecution, other inhuman treatment, torture, treatment violating human dignity or the death penalty.

Refusal of entry and deportation decisions 2015–2019



Source: Finnish Immigration Service, Police, Finnish Border Guard

In general, **the challenges related to returns in 2019 were the same as in 2018:** returnees being unwilling to return voluntarily and the countries of destination being unwilling to receive returnees. Returns to Iraq are still particularly challenging. Returns to other countries generally went well in 2019.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² In addition, there is **prohibition of entry**, which means prohibiting the entry of a third-country national at the border in the manner provided in Article 13 of the Schengen Borders Code. (Section 142, Subsection 1 of the Aliens Act)

¹⁶³ The most common scenario for refusal of entry is removing a person who has already entered the country (Section 142, Subsection 2 (4) of the Aliens Act). In certain situations, refusal of entry also means preventing a person from entering the country at the border. These cases are, however, less common. (Section 142, Subsection 2 (1–3) of the Aliens Act).

¹⁶⁴ The total number of refusal of entry and prohibition of entry decisions made by the Finnish Immigration Service, the Police and the Finnish Border Guard.

¹⁶⁵ Source: National Police Board, e-mail 6 April 2020, the figure also includes EU citizens

¹⁶⁶ Finnish Border Guard (2019), Finnish Border Guard financial statements 2019, https://www.raja.fi/download/79089_Tilinpaaatos_2019.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

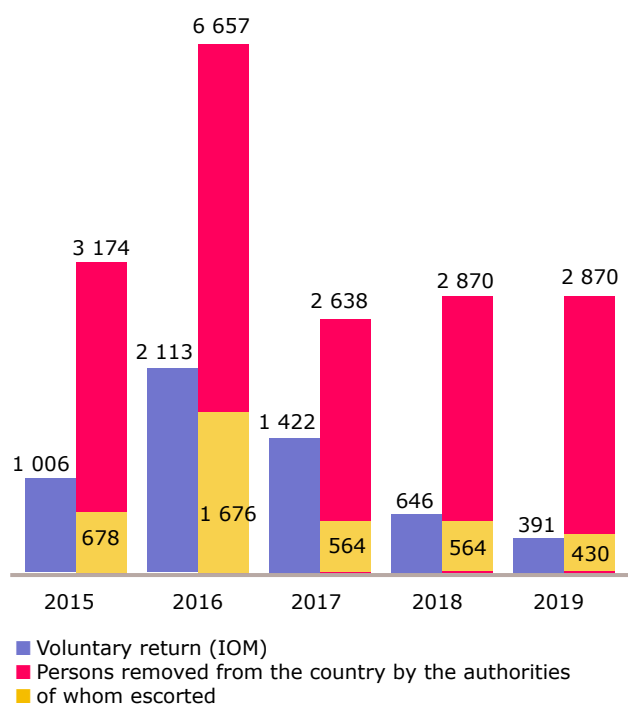
¹⁶⁷ Source: National Police Board, telephone interview, 2 December 2019

11.2. Voluntary return

In 2019, **the number of people returning to their countries of origin through the voluntary return programme was 391**. There were altogether 35 countries of return. Most returnees returned to Iraq (187). Of voluntary returnees, 78 per cent were men and 22 per cent were women. When it comes to age and marital status, the returnees are mostly unmarried young adults.

The number of voluntary returnees has decreased steadily every year since the record-breaking year of 2016, and the same trend continued in 2019. The decrease from the previous year was considerable, with there having been 646 returnees in 2018.

Returnees through the voluntary return programme and persons removed from the country by the authorities 2015–2019



Source: IOM, National Police Board

11.3. Legislative amendments related to return and readmissions

The Aliens Act was amended¹⁶⁹ effective from 1 January 2019 to **expedite the removal process of persons who have been found guilty of criminal offences or are considered to pose a threat to public order and security**. Certain deportation decisions related to public order and security could be enforced within 30 days of the service of the decision, unless an Administrative Court prohibits its enforcement. The deportation procedure is used for removal when the person has, or has had, a residence permit in Finland or the residence of an EU citizen has been registered. The deportation procedure does not apply to asylum seekers.

In addition an amendment to the Aliens Act entered into force on 1 June 2019 so that **the travel document of an applicant for international protection can be taken into an authority's possession** until the applicant is granted a residence permit or leaves the country. The goal is to ensure the smoothness of the asylum procedure so that a missing travel document would not prevent the identification of an applicant or the removal of a person who has received a negative decision concerning international protection.

¹⁶⁹ Act amending the Aliens Act 1022/2018.

11.4. Other developments related to return and readmissions

The decree given by the Ministry of the Interior in December **increased in kind assistance that is part of the reintegration assistance** granted in connection with voluntary return. The new decree entered into force at the beginning of 2019 and remained in force until the end of the year. The aim was to increase the attractiveness of voluntary return. The amount of in kind assistance for adults returning to Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance, was EUR 5,000 instead of the earlier amount of EUR 2,500.¹⁷⁰ The in kind assistance for children returning with their families remained unchanged at EUR 1,500 regardless of the country of return. In cash assistance, the alternative to in kind assistance, remains unchanged. The in cash assistance for Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance, was EUR 1,500 but some countries were moved from one category to another so the sums received by persons returning to these countries changed.¹⁷¹

Launched in October 2019, the Finnish Immigration Service's **RETU project** aims to update the Finnish Immigration Service's operating model and guidelines for voluntary return because the current model does not address this target group or the guidance directed at it. The project will evaluate potential ways to reach and give guidance to persons who stay in the country as irregular migrants after receiving a negative asylum decision and are no longer covered by reception services.

The National Police Board's **MAPPI project** launched in February 2019 is aimed at ensuring a nationally harmonised operating model through the various stages of the removal process. Harmonised operating models and processes ensure equal treatment for persons who are subject to a return decision, with particular consideration for vulnerable persons. The training provider under the project will ensure the adequate number of competent personnel. The effectiveness of return operations will be promoted through official cooperation with third countries.

The Laurea University of Applied Sciences pilot project **Future path** is targeted at Iraqi asylum seekers. The participants will attend four days of training to strengthen their entrepreneurial capabilities and re-

ceive personal counselling and facilitated networking with Finnish SMEs that respond to demand in the Iraqi market, while also increasing understanding of the opportunities that in kind assistance creates for starting entrepreneurial activity after returning to Iraq. The concept enhances self-employment skills and creates opportunities for sustainable economic cooperation with Finnish SMEs. The goal is to strengthen the asylum seekers' understanding of opportunities to earn an income in Iraq and create a training model that promotes the Iraqi asylum seekers' entrepreneurial capabilities, initiative and confidence required for starting a business. After the training, personal counselling and company-specific orientation period, the asylum seekers may make an agreement with a Finnish company to continue cooperation and to start a business in Iraq.

In October 2019, the Finnish Immigration Service launched a project to assign **a return expert (REX) to the Finnish Embassy in Iraq**. The REX will be posted in Iraq for one year to collect data on the migration and return situation in Iraq as well as reintegration methods and needs for the Finnish authorities. The REX will meet with and establish contacts with the local authorities, NGOs and embassies in Iraq. The REX will meet with Iraqi returnees from Finland as well as service providers to obtain information on effective methods and monitor returns. Information and connections enhance the planning of cooperation to promote returns. The REX may promote return cooperation with other EU countries in Iraq and enhance Iraq's participation in the planning of return measures. The REX may also engage in activities involving documentation related to return cooperation, working with travel documents and establishing identity as well as the monitoring of returns. The practical implementation of returns requires the involvement of various parties, not just the authorities that can carry out projects that support return, stabilisation and reconstruction. The REX will participate in developing ideas and assessing potential partners.

In the **Palautusten valvonnan vaikuttavuus** project launched in February 2019, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman will assess the monitoring of individual returns carried out to date and produce recommendations for developing the enforcement of removals in a more transparent manner that re-

¹⁷⁰ The amount of reintegration assistance depends on the country of return. Countries of return have been divided into four categories; Iraq and Afghanistan are in the category A, entitling returnees to the highest reintegration assistance.

¹⁷¹ Ministry of the Interior Decree on Assistance for Voluntary Return 1278/2018.

spects the fundamental and human rights of those being returned. The project also provides proposals and measures for the development of monitoring and, in particular, for improving its impact. Impact is also improved by improving internal and external communication. The European Union's objective is to increase returns, which will mean that the importance of monitoring and the need for cooperation between member states will increase. To this end, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman's AMIF project also increases collaboration with Frontex and monitoring organisations in member states.

11.5. Research on return and readmissions

The IOM and Finnish Immigration Service joint AUDA project's **Pilot Project on Monitoring of Voluntary Returnees from Finland** report, entitled **Report on a reintegration sustainability survey among voluntary returnees from finland**¹⁷² sums up the results of a pilot project that monitored the reintegration of voluntary returnees to Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia. More than 200 voluntary returnees were interviewed in the project. The interviews were conducted using a structured survey consisting of sections to assess the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions of reintegration. According to the survey, the reintegration of returnees to Iraq has been fairly successful. Nevertheless, nearly all of the respondents expressed concerns about their economic situation. A slight majority of the returnees indicated they are doing well in a psychosocial sense. The survey showed that the return aid granted by Finland for voluntary returnees helped get them started in their return to their home country. The success of reintegration was nevertheless affected by large-scale social problems, such as unemployment or deficiencies in health care, which cannot be addressed by return aid alone.

¹⁷² IOM (2019), Report on a reintegration sustainability survey among voluntary returnees from Finland, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/0/2019-10-29+IOM+Finland_Monitoring+Report_Auda.pdf/4e072ae6-0bbf-4014-3079-3386efe4a086/2019-10-29+IOM+Finland_Monitoring+Report_Auda.pdf (Cited 17 April 2020)

12. Migration and development

Finland's development policy emphasises coherence across the various policy areas so as to ensure favourable conditions for sustainable development in developing countries.

In addition to food security, trade, taxation and security, the priorities have also included migration. Concrete national-level measures have included deeper cooperation among various central government actors and closer coordination of EU affairs¹⁷³.

The Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government¹⁷⁴, drawn up in 2019, also highlights migration as part of development policy. The Programme states that the geographical focus of Finland's development cooperation activities will be on Africa. **According to the Programme, Finland will direct its development cooperation funding towards tackling the root causes of migration.**

The Government underscores Africa's growing significance as an EU neighbour and strategic partner. According to the Programme, Finland firmly supports moving forward on the partnership negotiations between the African Union (AU) and the EU.

The Programme further states that Finland will prepare a comprehensive Africa strategy, which will be based on the 2030 Agenda and will ensure coherence in Finland's Africa policy. Finland will also expand its political and economic interaction with African countries.

In the area of EU cooperation, in 2019 Finland again participated in **the EU-funded and European Commission-coordinated Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument (TAIEX)** by hosting officials from the Division of Migration of Belarussian Ministry of Internal Affairs in February. The officials visited the Ministry of the Interior and the Finnish Immigration Service to learn about Finland's immigration administration, immigration policy and legislation. The special theme of the visit was labour migration.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs again engaged in migration-related communications¹⁷⁵ aimed at influencing the root causes of irregular migration. The "Salam for Peace"¹⁷⁶ project aimed at young people was carried out in Iraq and Afghanistan in 2019 to promote peace and harmony. The goal of the project was to prevent or slow down the development of the root causes that lead to young people experiencing a perceived lack of prospects as well as marginalisation and radicalisation, which in turn may make them pursue illegal pathways such as human smuggling or join extremists that promote terrorism. The project aimed to promote peace, conflict resolution and young people's belief in their own ability to have influence while also enhancing their media skills and offering opportunities for international networking.

¹⁷³ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Goals and principles of Finland's development policy, <https://um.fi/goals-and-principles-of-finland-s-development-policy> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁷⁴ Finnish Government (2019), Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government 10 December 2019, INCLUSIVE AND COMPETENT FINLAND – a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable society, Publications of the Finnish Government 2019:33, <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-287-811-3> (Cited 16 April 2020)

¹⁷⁵ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, press release 12 April 2019: Ulkoministeriö toteuttaa sovintoa ja rauhaa edistävää vies-tintää Irakissa ja Afganistanissa, <https://www.sttinfo.fi/tiedote/um-ulkoministerio-toteuttaa-sovintoa-ja-rauhaa-edistavaa-viestintaa-irakissa-ja-afganistanissa?publisherId=1797&releaseId=69856192> (Cited 17 April 2020)

¹⁷⁶ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Salam for Peace (Facebook page), <https://www.facebook.com/salamforpeace/> (Cited 17 April 2020)

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Euroopan muuttoliikeverkosto (EMN) perustettiin neuvoston päätöksellä 14. päivänä toukokuuta 2008. Se saa taloudellista tukea Euroopan unionilta. Euroopan muuttoliikeverkoston tavoitteena on vastata yhteisön toimielinten sekä jäsenvaltioiden viranomaisten ja laitosten tarpeeseen saada tietoa maahanmuutto- ja turvapaikka-asioista. EMN tuottaa ajantasaista, puolueetonta, luotettavaa ja vertailukelpoista tietoa politiikan suunnittelun tueksi Euroopan unionissa ja sen jäsenvaltioissa. EMN antaa lisäksi yleisölle tietoa kyseisistä asioista.

The EMN was established by Council Decision 2008/381/EC. It is financially supported by the European Union. The objective of the EMN is to meet the information needs of Community institutions and of Member States' authorities and institutions by providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum, with a view to supporting policymaking in the European Union in these areas. The EMN also serves to provide the general public with such information.
