Contemporary Immigration to Finland

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Institute of Migration, located in Turku, Finland, aims to promote and carry out migration and ethnic research and to encourage the compilation, storage and documentation of material relating to international and internal migration in Finland. *It serves also as a resource site for genealogists.*

Institute of Migration is maintained by a non-profit-making trust.

The Institute is basically financed by an annual operating grant from the Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education, but in addition various projects are financed from a variety of other sources.

*Web site:*  
[www.migrationinstitute.fi](http://www.migrationinstitute.fi)
Welcome to our new website!

You’ll notice that things round here don’t look like they used to. Much of the information on the new site is the same as the old site. We have worked hard to simultaneously migrate and update information from the old site, and thus certain information may be located in different places.

If you find a navigation problem or something that you think is an obvious error, please let us know.

The Institute of Migration Initiates a Migration Fellow -program

- The aim of the program is to promote research and support professional development. The program also promotes internationalization of science
- Avsikten med programmet är att främja forskning och stöda professionell utveckling. Programmet stöder också vetenskapens internationalisering.

The database on migration and ethnicity research (METTI)
Finland as a country of emigration

- Finland has traditionally been a country of emigration.
- The first major wave of emigration took part from the 1860’s and went on to the 1930’s, when emigrants headed mainly for North America.
According to statistics the total number of emigrants was approx. 400,000.
The second major emigration boom from Finland occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as more than 300,000 people moved to Sweden. These migrants made up nearly 10% of the population as a whole.
Immigration to and emigration from Finland 1945–2013

Source: Statistics Finland, Vital Statistics. Figure: Jouni Korkišaari, Institute of Migration 2014.
One major factor behind the migration to Sweden was the post-World War II baby boom. As that generation of young people reached working age, Finland was unable to increase labor force participation to the extent that was necessary.

Another factor that contributed to the situation was the shift in the country's economic structure, from agricultural to industrial. Rapidly, agricultural jobs in rural areas vanished.

In Finland the economic structure changed much later than in other western industrial countries.
Finns to Australia, Canada and the United States 1945–2013

Source: Statistics Finland

After 1945
- To Canada 25,000
- To the United States 29,000
- To Australia 20,000

To Canada
To Australia
To the USA
### Emigration 1860–2013

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### Finns Abroad 2013

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- **Norway**: 25000
- **Sweden**: 625000
- **Canada**: 94000
- **United States**: 330000
- **Europe**: 265000
- **Russia/Soviet U.**: 50000
- **Asia**: 18500
- **Australia**: 24000
- **New Zealand**: 2000
- **Latin America**: 6000
- **Africa**: 6500

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Finnish Emigration 1860–2013

1,4 million

Population of Finland:

1 million 1811
2 million 1879
3 million 1912
4 million 1950
5 million 1991

2013: 5,451,000
Immigration to Finland

- While a large number of Finns emigrated abroad, began a small number but otherwise very significant group of individuals from across Europe to immigrate to Helsinki and other major southern Finnish towns in the late 19th century.

- In coastal areas there already was a significant Swedish speaking population that originated from the Swedish era before 1809.
Immigrant entrepreneurs were very significant driving forces behind the development of Finnish industry in the 1800s and early 1900s.
Swiss cheese makers, Bavarian brewers, Norwegian sawmill proprietors, British textile industrialists, Italian ice cream makers, Jewish merchants, and Tatar fur and carpet traders were among the first waves of voluntary immigrants to come to Finland in modern times and made a comprehensive and considerable contribution to the Finnish economy.

By the beginning of 1939, Finland was home to more foreigners than Sweden, its larger neighbor.
In 1910 there were **36 244 foreign born** inhabitants in Finland, majority from Russia.

in 1924 the number of **foreign citizens** was **24 451** of which

- Russians 45,3 %
- Ethnic Finns 15,4 %
- Swedes 16,7 %
- Germans 6,7 %
- Estonians 3,8 %
- Polish 2,7 %
- Norwegians 1,9 %
- Swiss 1,1 %
- Others 4,7 %

Between World War II and 1990, when Finland experienced very little immigration, immigrant groups who had arrived prior to 1939 had sufficient space and time to integrate into Finnish society and daily life.

Today, these groups are considered an integral part of contemporary Finnish life.
Foreign citizens in Finland 1870–2010

Rosa, Finland’s first black citizen

■ Rosa Emilia Clay

In June 1888 a Finnish missionary came back from Amboland in Southwest Africa bringing with him “a mulatto girl”, 13-year-old Rosa Emilia Clay, who is believed to have been the first African to be granted Finnish citizenship.

She was, however, not the first black to come to Finland. Already in 1875 one missionary had brought another girl, Eva Maria Nangurashi, from Amboland but she did not adapt and was returned home.

Foreigners in Finland, 540 p.
From a land of emigrants to a country of immigration

■ Turning point in the beginning of 1990s
Finland received its first notable group of modern-day immigrants of foreign origin in the late 1980s with the arrival of the Vietnamese "boat refugees".

As recently as early 1990s Finland's foreign-born population was just over 25,000. Today, the figure is over ten-fold.

But while Finland has been "discovered" as a receiving country, compared for example with other Nordic countries, our foreign-born population is still rather small.
Foreign population in Finland 1980–2013

Source: Statistics Finland; figure: Jouni Korkiasaari, Institute of Migration
Finland typically receives immigrants from neighboring areas.

In 2013, the greatest number of immigrants came from Estonia (6,300 people), Russia (2,900), and Sweden (2,700).
Population of foreign background
Finland, the largest groups 2013
Population by Region, Background country 2013

- EUROPEAN UNION: 26%
- REST OF EUROPE: 34%
- ASIA: 24%
- NORTH AMERICA: 2%
- LATIN AMERICA: 2%
- AFRICA: 12%
- OCEANIA: 0%
Main types of immigrants in Finland

- **Return migrants** (persons born in Finland and their children born abroad)
- **Ethnic Finns** (Ingrian Finns)
- **Labor migrants**
- **Family reunion and family formation**
- **Foreign students**
- **Asylum seekers and quota refugees**
- **Illegal migrants**
The Return of Ethnic Finns

■ In April 1990, then-president Mauno Koivisto declared that all ethnic Finns living within the former Soviet Union would be eligible for an automatic residence permit if they chose to return to Finland.

■ Majority of these people are known as Ingrian Finns, are descended from 17th-century vanguards of Swedish Lutheranism who originally settled in Ingria, when Finland and that part of present-day Russia were under Swedish control.

■ Because the Ingrian Finns were poorly treated by the Soviet Union, many Finns felt that those Estonian or Russian citizens who were sufficiently Finnish in terms of ethnicity had a morally legitimate right of return.
30,000 - 35,000 Ingrians have benefited from Finland's Right of Return law over the past 20 years.

As of 2010, the government of Finland opted to end the special allowance for the repatriation of Ingrian Finns. From this point forward, Ingrian Finns who wish to migrate to Finland must do so through the same immigration channels as other migrants.
Labor migrants

- Bolstering industry via the encouragement of short-term labor migration has not been high on the agenda in Finland.

- Strong labor unions and permanently positioned civil servants have given way to a more long-term, cautious approach to labor migration.

- The result has been relatively little economically motivated immigration.
in 2009, just over a third of those granted residence in Finland received it for family reasons, and "only" a third for employment-related reasons.

Explanations for the low level of labor migration to Finland from non-EU countries have included the country's high unemployment rate and in particular the rate of long-term unemployment.
Students

- Students make up the largest portion of all immigrants. Registered students are now subject to a lighter immigration process, and basically need only a temporary residence permit to study in Finland.

- The government has adopted a strategic goal to more closely link students educated in Finland with the country’s labor market needs, and has implemented less strict work permit policies for students where work is available.
Family Reunification Immigration

- Family-based immigration and family reunification, particularly from Somalia has increased greatly over the past several years.

- Familial immigration processes in Finland are stricter than those in place for labor or student immigration. Secure income and proper, vetted identification documents are required in order for a migrant to seek a residence permit based on family reunification or some other familial reason.
Asylum seekers and refugees

- Finland is in favor of uniform EU-wide legislation for international protection, and its asylum policy is harmonized with that of the European Union.

- Since 1990, Finland has received 14,000 Somalis fleeing civil war, thousands of Kurds from the Middle East, and thousands of refugees fleeing conflict in the Balkans.

- Because of the large gap in living standards across the Finnish-Russian border and the ongoing human rights situation in the Caucasus, Finland received over 10,000 asylum applications from the former Soviet Union and Russia between 1990 and September 2010.
The increase in annual asylum applications has caused Finland to examine more closely the asylum policies of neighboring Nordic countries. This scrutiny has resulted in a wider variety of measures in application procedures, such as language testing and medical exams. Integration services and monetary benefits have also been adjusted to limit unfounded applications and misuse.
Most asylum applicants today come from Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Iran, Turkey, and Nigeria, with the variety of countries of origin constantly increasing.

On average, more than 25 percent of all asylum seekers since 1990 were entitled to remain in Finland with some type of residence permit.
Quota Refugees

- In addition to approving asylum applications, the government sets annual refugee quotas that determine the ultimate number of forced migration-related entries to Finland per year.

- During the recent years the quota has been 750 refugees annually. It is typically intended to protect people from the Middle East's most conflict-torn areas.

- The government fulfills the quota by selecting vulnerable refugees from that region's refugee camps.
Integration Challenges

The migration policy situation in Finland is currently characterized more by questions than by answers:

1. How many additional immigrants should be admitted into Finland?
2. Can current and future immigrants be successfully integrated to maximize the economic benefits of migration and avoid any potential security threats?
3. To what extent is it Finland’s responsibility to extend humanitarian relief to asylees and refugees?
4. What is the best way to determine the limit on humanitarian relief, and how to deal with those that exceed the limit?
One of the most important challenges facing the government is ensuring the integration of the foreign born and their children.

The guiding principle behind Finnish integration policy is to treat the foreign born equally to native-born Finns.

Immigrants are guaranteed rights to health services, education, citizenship, housing, employment, and suffrage, which are independent of specific integration policies.
Migration is one of the main issues on the policy agenda in all European countries today. The debate is about the need for replacement migration given rapidly ageing and declining populations, about the need for skilled workers, about illegal migration and the abuse of asylum, and about how to fight the trafficking of migrants.
The percent of foreign population in Europe

- **Very high percentage countries** (over 20%):
  - Luxemburg 37,4 %, Lichtenstein 33,9 %, Switzerland 22,9 %

- **High percentage countries** (10–15 %):
  - Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, **Sweden**, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia

- **Medium percentage** (7–9 %)
  - Denmark, Greece, Portugal, Slovenia, Great Britain, Iceland, **Norway**

- **Low percentage** (3–6 %)
  - Czech, **Finland**, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Macedonia

- **Very low percentage** (<3%):
  - Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey

*(Munz at al. 2006:66)*
Enlargement of the European Union

http://www.geographic.org/maps/new2/europe_animated_maps.html
Finland's population is growing older, with the bulk of the post-World War II baby boomers retiring over the next five years. Over 500,000 people will soon retire, which is every fifth or sixth person presently in the active workforce. Unless compensating measures are systematically implemented, population decline will inevitably occur after 2025. The speed of the decline may be slowed by more immigration.

Immigration and the aging population
Population development in Finland 1750–2003
Population of Finland

1. million 1811
2. million 1879
3. million 1912
4. million 1950
5. million 1991

World population

1. billion early 1800s
2. billion 1920s
3. billion 1960
4. billion 1974
5. billion 1987
6. billion 1999
7. billion 2011
Supply of labor in Finland 1990-2010

Leaving labor markets (age of 58.5)

Coming to labor markets (age of 20.5)
Population of Finland by age 1950-2050
Age structure of population in Finland 1900–2030
Age structure of native population 2010

Males

Females
Age structure of foreign population 2010

Males

Females
How has Finland succeeded in its integration and multicultural policy?
Finland places fourth in immigrant integration policy

- A study comparing immigrant integration policies of the EU countries, Switzerland, Canada, and the United States, puts Finland in fourth place in the degree to which legislation and immigration policy helps newcomers adapt to their new country of residence.

- The Migration Integration Policy Index (MPC) study by the Migration Policy Group organization put Sweden in first place, followed by Portugal, Canada, and Finland.
Welcome to the Multiculturalism Policy Index

The Multiculturalism Policy Index is a scholarly research project that monitors the evolution of multiculturalism policies in 21 Western democracies. The project is designed to provide information about multiculturalism policies in a standardized format that aids comparative research and contributes to the understanding of state-minority relations. The project provides an index at three points in time - 1980, 2000, 2010 - and for three types of minorities: one index relating to immigrant groups, one relating to historic national minorities, and one relating to indigenous peoples. The Multiculturalism Policy Index and supporting documentation are freely available for researchers, public officials, journalists, students, activists, and others interested in the topic.

The Slides: The findings of our Multiculturalism Policy Index reveal a number of interesting developments. For example, despite the perception of a backlash and retreat from immigrant multiculturalism, the evidence suggests that multiculturalism policies have persisted, and in many cases, continue to expand, as illustrated below.

http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/immigrant.html
MPC INDEX for Immigrant Minorities

MCP Index for Immigrant Minorities is intended to track the extent of multicultural shift over the past three decades, by examining the adoption of the following eight policies:

1. constitutional, legislative or parliamentary affirmation of multiculturalism;
2. the adoption of multiculturalism in school curriculum;
3. the inclusion of ethnic representation/sensitivity in the mandate of public media or media licensing;
4. exemptions from dress-codes, Sunday-closing legislation etc;
5. allowing dual citizenship;
6. the funding of ethnic group organizations to support cultural activities;
7. the funding of bilingual education or mother-tongue instruction;
8. affirmative action for disadvantaged immigrant groups.

http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/immigrant.html
MPC INDEX for National Minorities

1. federal or quasi-federal territorial autonomy;
2. official language status, either in the region or nationally;
3. guarantees of representation in the central government or on constitutional courts;
4. public funding of minority language universities/schools/media;
5. constitutional or parliamentary affirmation of ‘multinationalism’;
6. according international personality (eg., allowing the substate region to sit on international bodies).

http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/minoritynations.html
MPC INDEX for **Indigenous People**

1. recognition of land rights/title
2. recognition of self-government rights
3. upholding historic treaties and/or signing new treaties
4. recognition of cultural rights (language; hunting/fishing)
5. recognition of customary law
6. guarantees of representation/consultation in the central government
7. constitutional or legislative affirmation of the distinct status of indigenous peoples
8. support/ratification for international instruments on indigenous rights
9. affirmative action

[http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/indigenouspeople.html](http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/indigenouspeople.html)
NEW COUNTRIES ADDED TO THE MIPEX: Australia & Japan join the MIPEX!

New countries: Australia & Japan join MIPEX

NEW! Australia and Japan have been added to the 2010 MIPEX data set.

http://www.mipex.eu
MIPEX INDEX

MIPEX is a fully interactive tool and reference guide to assess, compare and improve integration policy.

MIPEX measures integration policies in all European Union Member States plus Norway, Switzerland, Canada and the USA up to 31 May 2010. The data from Australia and Japan was collected up to September 2010, but as there have been no changes since May 2010 the data is directly comparable between the 33 countries.

Using 148 policy indicators MIPEX creates a rich, multi-dimensional picture of migrants’ opportunities to participate in society by assessing governments’ commitment to integration. By measuring policies and their implementation it reveals whether all residents are guaranteed equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

http://www.mipex.eu/download
Overview

Finland remains a net immigration country, though numbers fell from a 2008 high. More unaccompanied minors and asylum seekers have recently sought protection in Finland. Labour migration decreased, while family and student applications are unchanged. Policies focus on attracting more students and workers, and fewer groundless asylum seekers.

Finland also remains a country with slightly favourable integration policies, scoring 4th overall behind SE, PT and CA. Even its areas of weakness (citizenship, long-term residence) are better than what most newcomers experience on average in Europe. Still, they encounter many obstacles on several key dimensions where Finland lags behind a range of countries, not only SE: residence equality for spouses and families, eligibility for long-term residence, discretion in naturalisation, intercultural education and new opportunities in schools.

However, little has improved for newcomers over 3 years of policy making. Indeed, Finland’s biggest MIPEX improvement, on access to nationality, stemmed from a court case. Years later, politicians have yet to implement a clear, professional and encouraging path to naturalisation. Debates may intensify in the run up to 2011 elections.
Change since MIPEX

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* The overall score includes Education and the six other policy areas.

** This excludes Education. It reflects the overall changes in the six other policy areas measured in both MIPEX II & III.
The Migration Policy Group

The Migration Policy Group is an independent non-profit European organisation committed to contributing to lasting and positive change resulting in open and inclusive societies in which all members have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities in developing the economic, social and civic life of Europe’s diverse societies.

MPG stimulates well-informed European policy debate, cooperation and action to achieve this goal in the three programme areas of Migration & Mobility; Anti-discrimination & Equality; and Diversity & Integration. MPG takes a consistent and dynamic approach to all three inter-related programmes, details of which can be found on each programme page.

http://www.migpolgroup.com/

Migration Information Source

To better help you search the Migration Information Source, we've added regional navigation pages. Check out each region page for country profiles and other Source articles. Africa | the Americas | Asia | Europe | Oceania

Policy Beat

Same-Sex Partners Slowly but Surely

October 16 – The

http://www.migrationinformation.org/
Immigrants are a permanent part of Finnish society
Conclusions

- Finland currently stands on a dividing line. On the one hand, the population is undoubtedly growing older.

- Immigration could be a partial solution to both servicing the elderly and contributing to an increase in the working-age population.

- Immigration is at its best a welcome boost for a nation in need of rejuvenation as new ideas, contacts, and businesses typically emerge from the moderated immigration of well-integrated labor migrants.
The integration problem in Finland is not yet solved. Humanitarian-related immigration does not yet convert to a productive labor force, and the majority of the Finnish population does not support further immigration.

While Muslim extremists do not seem to pose a major security threat in Finland, recent statements in Russian foreign policy circles about the sheltering of Russian minorities abroad have prompted new questions: Whether a weakly integrated, uncommitted Russian minority could pose a security and sovereignty threat in EU countries near Russia?
“Immigrants are not a problem but an opportunity. They are not a liability but an asset.”

Tara Mukherjee
European Multicultural Foundation