

# IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION IN FINLAND



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Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö  
Arbets- och näringsministeriet



MAAHANMUUTTOVIRASTO  
MIGRATIONSVERKET  
FINNISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE

# IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION IN FINLAND



Immigrant population has almost doubled in the 2000s.



At the end of 2016, the immigrant population was around 244,000. It is estimated that the number will reach 330,000 by 2020.



Approximately 1/3 of immigrants leave Finland after a few years in the country.

## FINNISH MIGRATION TRENDS

— 1902 —

Emigration to the US is at its peak. Depression forces thousands of Finns to emigrate.



— 1922 —

The State Refugee Assistance Centre is established. The number of refugees, mainly from Russia, exceeds 30,000..



— 1960 —

Almost  
**400 000**  
Finns move to Sweden to find a better life.



— 1973 —



The first refugees since the Second World War arrive from Chile..

— 1986 —

An annual refugee quota is defined in the Budget for the first time.



The 1986 quota is 100.

— 1990 —



Dramatic increases in immigration create a need for a political consensus.

— 1999 —



Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers

— 2000 —

Besides family reasons and a need for international protection, more and more people are coming to Finland to **work and study**



— 2011 —



Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration.

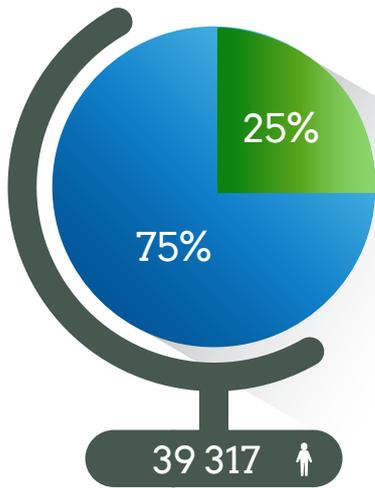
— 2014 —

The refugee quota for 2014 and 2015 is raised to

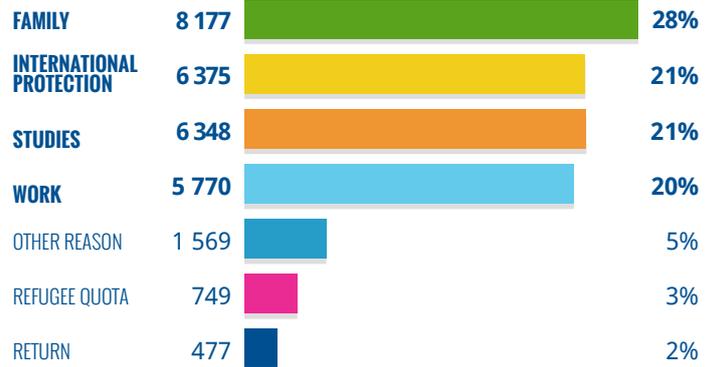
**1 050**

# RESIDENCE PERMITS AND RIGHTS OF RESIDENCE IN 2016

Source: National Police Board;  
Finnish Immigration Service



Residence permits issued to non-EU citizens in 2015 by reason of immigration:

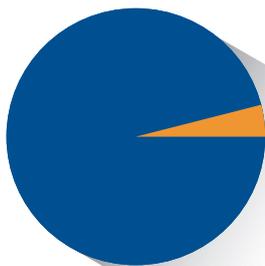


# IMMIGRANT POPULATION IN FINLAND IN 2016

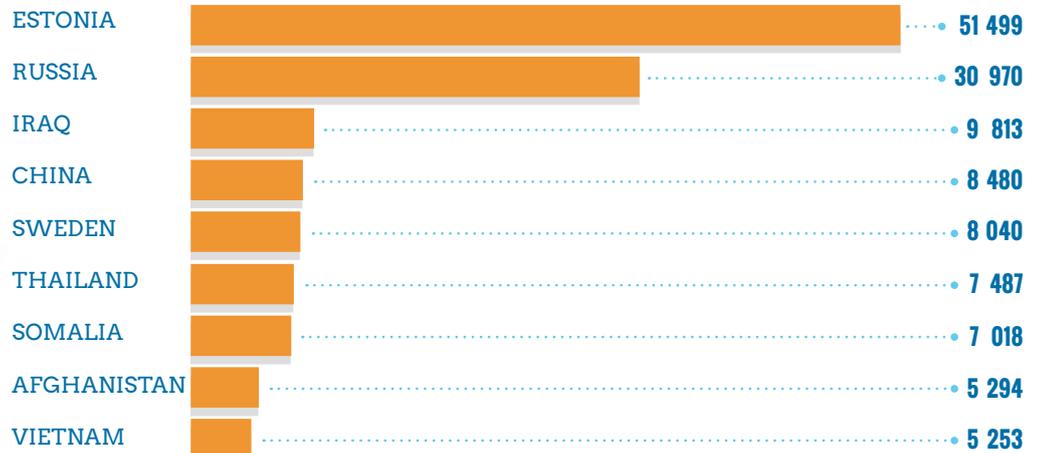
Source: Statistics Finland

FINNISH CITIZENS  
FOREIGN NATIONALS

5 259 658  
243 639

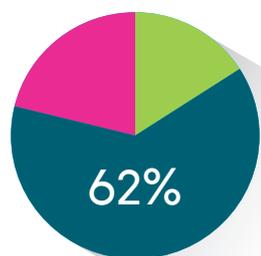


POPULATION IN TOTAL:  
**5 503 297**

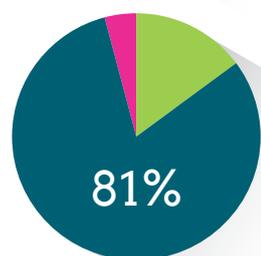


A significant part of the immigrant population comes from Estonia and Russia, as shown in the figure above.

## IMMIGRATION INCREASES WORKING-AGE POPULATION



FINNISH CITIZENS



FOREIGN NATIONALS



Most immigrants in Finland are of working age.



In many municipalities, immigration is the only factor contributing to population growth.

Source: Statistics Finland 2016

## WHAT IS INTEGRATION?



### MULTIDIMENSIONAL PROCESS

Immigrants are provided with information and skills necessary for active participation in society.

### INTERACTION

Integration takes place through interaction with society and different associations and organisations. It also changes the receiving society.

### EXTENSIVE COOPERATION

Besides public authorities, the integration process is supported by NGOs, workplaces, companies, educational institutions, neighbours and other related groups.

# PATHS TOWARDS INTEGRATION

**JORGE, 35, SPAIN**  
**LIN, 36, CHINA**

Jorge got a great permanent job in Finland! We are excited to move to a new country..

**KATERINA, 14, YEKATERINBURG, RUSSIA**

I lost my father, and my granny is too old to look after me. I'll go to live with my mother in Finland..

**OMAR, 27, IRAQ**

The situation back home is chaotic. My brother was killed and my father is missing. I'm afraid for my family's safety.

Jorge is moving because he was offered permanent employment.

Lin would like to continue her studies in Finland.

As Jorge is an EU citizen, all he has to do is register his right of residence with the Finnish Immigration Service. The Finnish authorities now consider that he is permanently residing in Hyvinkää because of his permanent employment..

Settling in the country is easy thanks to the local register office, Social Insurance Institution and the Finnish Tax Administration. Jorge's affairs have now been taken care of.

Lin wants to live with Jorge. As a non-EU citizen, or a third-country national, Lin has to apply for a residence card of a family member of an EU citizen. How long does it take to get the card?

Lin has to provide proof that she has lived in the same household with Jorge for a long enough time before moving to Finland to be considered Jorge's family member.

If she had been admitted to study at an educational institution in Finland before moving, she could be granted a residence permit for studying.

Lin is admitted to a polytechnic. Studying is free of charge. As Lin is a foreign national, she is not entitled to a study grant. Her family supports her financially.

It's great to be here together! Working conditions are good, and education is of high quality.

After many years of separation, it feels strange to live as a family again. Everyday life focuses on providing for the family and raising the children. The children learn Finnish and make friends with others in the neighbourhood surprisingly quickly.

Katerina is a child from Russia whose parents were divorced.

Her mother, who lives in Lappeenranta, is her guardian and she has decided to bring Katerina to live with her..

Once the Finnish and Russian residence permit and guardianship procedures have been completed, Katerina is now 15 and subject to compulsory education. She attends preparatory courses, because she still needs practice in Finnish language skills.

At the age of 16 Katerina aims high, but her Finnish skills are not yet sufficient for studies at a general upper secondary school. She is too young to attend integration training provided by Employment and Economic Development Offices or more flexible studies at a general upper secondary school for adults.

Katerina ends up taking a gap year to enrol in Finnish language courses at an adult education centre.

I'd like to make more friends - it would help me to learn Finnish.

The situation in Omar's home country is unstable and it is difficult to move around outside. He has a two-year-old daughter and a wife who is pregnant. He decides to leave the country with his family to go to live in Turkey.

However, Omar cannot find a job in Turkey to provide for his family. He leaves the family with relatives in Turkey and goes north to find better opportunities for them. He ends up in Finland and applies for asylum.

The Finnish Immigration Service informs him that he has been granted a residence permit on the basis of a need for international protection. Now he can start to plan what to do in life.

On that same day, Omar's roommate Nasmi receives a negative decision on his asylum application and decides to return to Albania, his home country, voluntarily.

Omar, a laboratory technician, is sure that he will find a job, but he must learn the language first. Within a few months, with some help from a friend, he finds an apartment in Central Finland. He shares it with two other men.

After moving in, Omar starts to organise his affairs with the local officials responsible for refugees. Integration training begins in two months. Omar gets to learn the language and use it with other people..

To provide for his family when they come to Finland, Omar delivers newspapers. Besides studying, Omar works. Along with delivering newspapers, he helps a friend with a cleaning business. He considers attending bus driver training, but gets a traineeship in the laboratory sector.

Omar has been admitted to an adult education centre to continue his studies in laboratory sciences. Because he is with Finnish people, his Finnish skills start to improve.

Omar is employed under an employment subsidy at a health centre's laboratory. In the mornings, he delivers newspapers. He stays at his cousin's place in a bigger town. He is waiting for his wife and two children to get a residence permit. His family begins to make arrangements for moving to Finland.

Omar's family has come to Finland. His wife is waiting for access to integration training. She misses the training because their third baby will be born soon. Their first born has completed instruction preparing for primary education and begins the first grade. Their youngest child goes to day care. Omar continues to work on a temporary basis..

## INTEGRATION TERMINOLOGY

### RESIDENCE PERMIT

A fixed-term or permanent permit allowing an alien to repeatedly enter and stay in the country. The type of a residence permit depends on the purpose of the stay. As a rule, residence permits must be applied for before entering Finland.

### INITIAL ASSESSMENT

An important basis for an integration plan. It consists of assessing an immigrant's service needs in terms of integration and employment and referring the person to the appropriate services accordingly.

### INTEGRATION PLAN

An individual and personalised plan drawn up for an immigrant in cooperation between the immigrant and the municipality or Employment and Economic Development Office. It aims to support the immigrant in becoming an equal member of society at the initial stage of immigration.

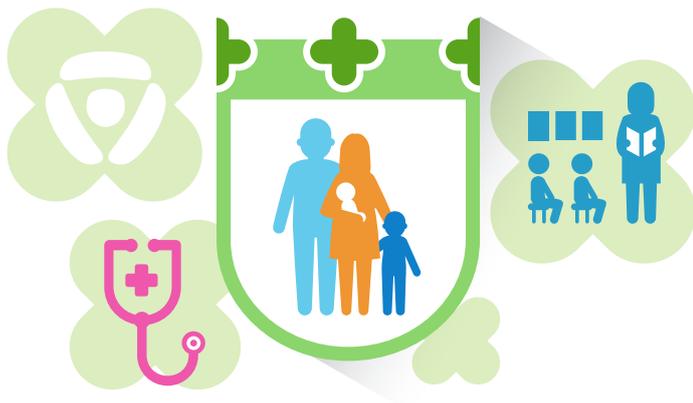
### MUNICIPAL RESIDENT

A person residing in a municipality who is entitled to municipal services and has the right to participate in local self-government by, for example, voting in local elections. As a rule, a person's municipality of residence is the municipality where he or she lives.

### PERMANENT RESIDENT IN FINLAND

A person whose municipality of residence is in Finland, that is, he or she resides permanently in a Finnish municipality.

## INTEGRATION THROUGH BASIC PUBLIC SERVICES



- Permanent residents in Finland are municipal residents and entitled to municipal services.
- Job seekers may use services provided by Employment and Economic Development

## INTEGRATION IS WORTHWHILE



- Integration and employment help immigrants to participate in maintaining and building society.
- Integration measures are an investment made at the initial stage of immigration. If successful, they will pay for themselves in increased tax revenue and consumer demand.
- Diversity in working life contributes to innovation and expands the market.

## APPLYING FOR FINNISH CITIZENSHIP

### CITIZENSHIP IS APPLIED FOR AT THE FINNISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE

Requirements for acquiring Finnish citizenship:

- residence in Finland for a sufficient length of time
- sufficient financial means for residing in Finland
- proven Finnish or Swedish language skills
- no criminal history



Number of people granted Finnish citizenship in 2016:

**9 375**





Besides Finnish legislation, provisions governing immigration affairs are based on EU law and international human rights and other treaties binding on Finland. The key treaties include **the European Convention on Human Rights, the United Nations Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.**

As a rule, in addition to the acts below, the rights and obligations laid down in Finnish legislation as a whole apply to all residents in Finland.

## 1. Constitution of Finland

The Constitution is the supreme legal act in the hierarchy of norms governing the national judicial system. It defines, for example, the fundamental rights of Finnish citizens and those falling within the jurisdiction of other states. Fundamental rights include personal and political rights and freedoms, equality, and economic, social and cultural rights. Immigrants' rights are strongly protected by the Constitution: those residing in Finland mainly have the same rights as Finnish citizens..

## 2. Reception Act

The purpose of the Reception Act is to guarantee subsistence and care for people applying for international protection and those who have been granted temporary protection. Another purpose is to identify and help victims of human trafficking. The Act lays down provisions on the organisation and management of the reception of asylum seekers and on reception services, including health and social services, employment and education.

## 3. Aliens Act

The purpose of the Aliens Act is to implement and promote good governance and legal protection in immigration affairs. Another purpose is to promote managed immigration and provision of international protection with respect for fundamental and human rights and in consideration of international treaties binding on Finland. The Act applies to aliens' entry into and departure from Finland and their residence and employment in the country.

## 4. Immigrant Integration Act

The purpose of the Immigrant Integration Act is to support the inclusion of immigrants in society by providing them with basic information about Finnish society and working life, and services promoting integration. The Act defines the key integration services, including an integration plan and integration training, and the roles of different actors in the promotion of integration.

## 5. Non-Discrimination Act

The purpose of the Non-Discrimination Act is to promote equality, prevent discrimination and enhance the protection provided by law to those who have been discriminated against. It prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, and incitement to discriminate against others. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of age, ethnic or national origin, nationality, language, religion, belief, opinion, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

## 6. Equality Act

The purpose of the Equality Act is to reduce gender discrimination and to promote equality between women and men, particularly in working life.