

**EMN**

European Migration Network



FINLAND

# Asylum and Migration Overview

## FINLAND 2025



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Migrationsverket  
Finnish Immigration Service



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# Executive summary

The year 2025 involved significant developments in immigration and asylum matters, and shifts in trends in various sectors. Immigration to Finland was affected by changes in the security environment, the economic situation and the implementation of the Government Programme, including legislative amendments. There was a decline in applications based on employment, studies and international protection, and an increase in applications by family members.

In 2025, Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government continued to reform immigration policy with the aim of tightening asylum policy to align with the general Nordic level and preventing abuses, but also to target help to those in need.

In particular, many tightening measures entered into force. International protection was redefined as temporary, and the duration of the permits was reduced to the minimum permitted by EU law. The duration of a residence permit granted on the basis of refugee status was shortened to three years. In addition, in late 2025, preparations were made for the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (aka the 'Pact'), whose aim is to enhance the control of the EU's external borders and return procedures.

There was a clear decline in work-based immigration in 2025: 8,384 first residence permits were granted (compared with 11,103 in 2024). There was a particular decline in healthcare and social welfare (-81%) and the construction sector (-24%) due to the economic downturn and challenges related to funding. Significant political decisions included raising the income limit for a residence permit for an employed person to EUR 1,600 and the new three-month/six-month unemployment rule. Employers' responsibilities were also increased in matters such as the obligation to report the recruitment of foreign nationals.

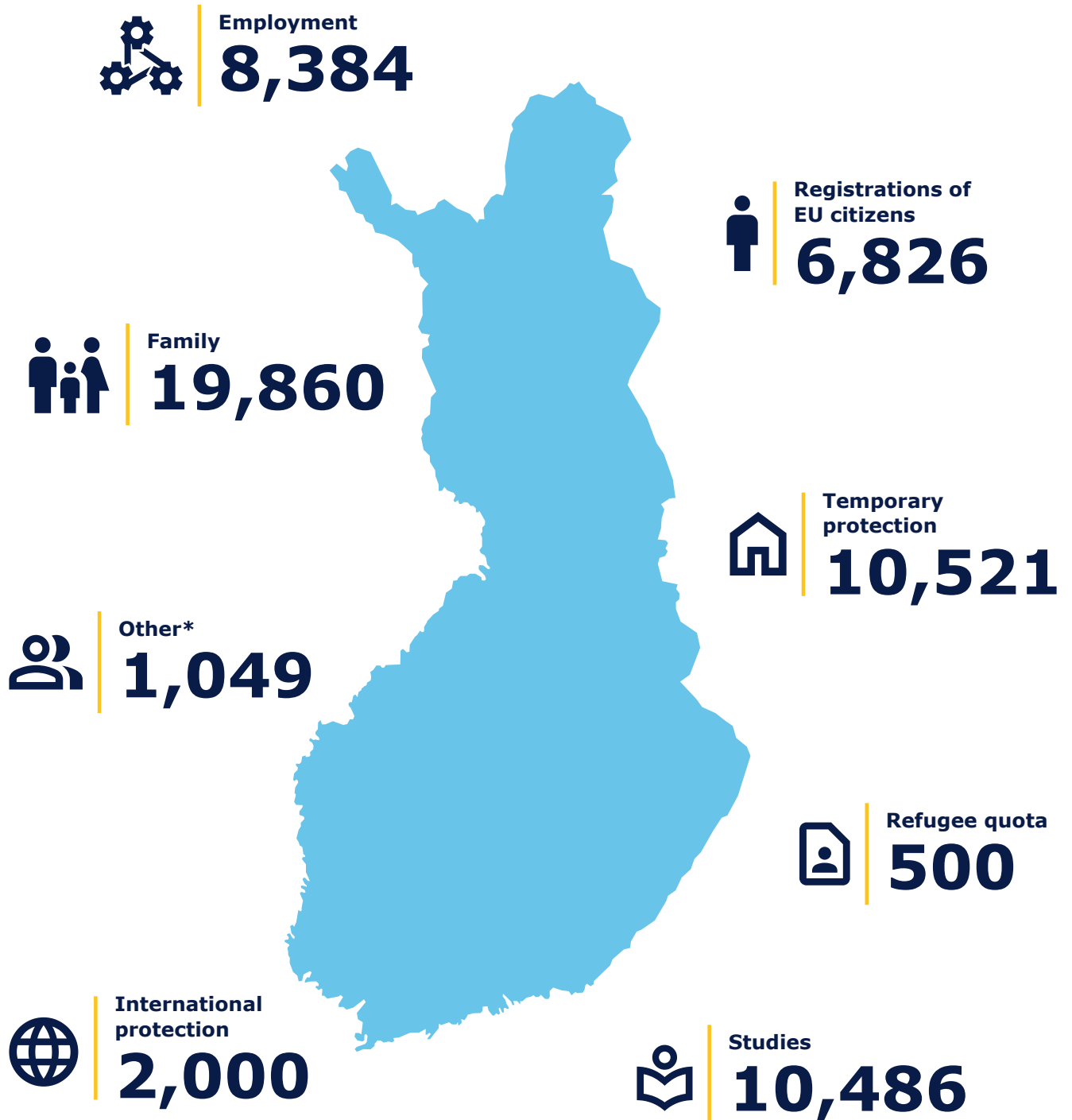
Student immigration remained strong (10,486 permits granted) despite a minor decline in the number of applications. New policy measures included the application fees of higher education institutions and a decision on tuition fees for upper secondary level students from third countries. In family reunification, family members were the largest group of applicants (19,860 permits granted), but the conditions were tightened, for example, by setting the minimum age of 21 for spouses.

The number of asylum applications continued to decline (2,549 applications) and the largest group of asylum applicants was from Afghanistan. The eastern border with Russia remained closed due to a threat of instrumentalised migration, and the validity of Border Security Act was extended until the end of 2026. The refugee quota was set to 500 people, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups. A total of 12,018 Ukrainians applied for temporary protection, and a large proportion of them moved from the reception system to municipalities, resulting in the closure of around 20 reception centres.

The new Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, adopted at the beginning of 2025, transferred the overall responsibility for integration to municipalities. The focus of the integration policy began to increasingly shift to the immigrant's personal responsibility, work and language learning. A record number of people became Finnish citizens (14,703), but the Citizenship Act was tightened, for example, by extending the required period of residence and tightening the income requirements.

As regards returns, a new return centre pilot was launched to enhance the removal of those receiving a negative decision from the country. The number of deportation decisions increased by more than 40%, and the provisions on detention (from 12 months to 18 months) and entry bans (up to 15 years) were tightened. Voluntary returns decreased by about one third compared with the previous year. In the fight against trafficking in human beings, the most significant phenomena that emerged included forced labour and forced marriages, which reached record levels.

## Overview of immigration in 2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

\*Also includes residence permits issued on other grounds in the asylum process

# 1. Introduction

The 2025 Annual Report of the Finnish National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN) presents the key developments in migration in 2025. The reference period of this report is from 1 January to 31 December 2025.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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 certain observer members. The Finnish National Contact Point collected the monitoring information from official resources and allocated 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 Association of Finnish Cities and Municipalities, the Finnish Supervisory Agency, the KEHA-Centre and the Office of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman. 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 the reporting. It is primarily aimed at the national audience. 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 2025. The media analysis concerning public debate in 2025 was conducted by Retriever in cooperation with the European Migration Network. The European Migration Network also publishes a separate statistical review, Key figures on immigration 2025.

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 2025, the National Contact Point also participated in seminars and other events on immigration in Finland and other EMN member countries with the aim of building networks with the parties producing research on immigration and collecting information on ongoing 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, which was last updated in 2025.<sup>2</sup> The structure and headings of the report are based on a model jointly agreed on by the members of 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.

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<sup>1</sup> The reporting duty is stipulated by Council Regulation 2008/381/EC, which was also the basis for establishing the European Migration Network.

<sup>2</sup> European Migration Network (EMN) (2025), Asylum and Migration Glossary 10.0.

## 1.1. Structure of the immigration administration in 2025

**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 administration of justice** guides and directs the implementation of the Government Programme with regard to internal security and administration of justice. The ministerial working group's duties include immigration, integration and anti-segregation policies.

**The ministerial working group on employment** guides and directs the implementation of the Government Programme with regard to social security reform, international recruitment, promotion of competition and deregulation, entrepreneurship and the built environment.

**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 government and represents Finland in migration issues in the European Union and on other international forums.

**The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment** is responsible for promoting integration. 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. Legislative drafting processes are carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is responsible for performance guidance of the Finnish Immigration Service with regard to labour migration in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior.

**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 guidance of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

The Centre of Expertise in Immigrant Integration, which served under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, supported the efforts to promote integration. It produced and disseminated information on integration to decision-makers, authorities and experts involved in integration. Following the entry into force of the new Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (681/2023) at the beginning of 2025, a large proportion of the services provided by the Centre of Expertise in Immigrant Integration under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment was transferred to **the KEHA Centre** (Administration Centre for Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment) effective from 1 January 2025. The responsibilities transferred to the KEHA Centre also include certain tasks related to the monitoring of integration. Going forward, the KEHA Centre will act as the authority responsible for monitoring the promotion of immigrant integration.

**The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres)** handle tasks related to immigration, integration and good ethnic relations on a regional basis. The ELY Centres were abolished at the end of 2025, and the Economic Development Centres started their operations in 2026.

**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 Inte-

rior'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 for Foreign Affairs** is responsible for visa policy. Finnish missions abroad grant visas and accept citizenship declarations and residence permit applications.

**Municipalities** have overall responsibility for promoting integration at the local level. Municipalities are responsible for the development, planning and monitoring of integration promotion locally. Municipalities provide basic services to immigrants living there permanently, in the same manner as to other residents of the municipality.

**The wellbeing services counties** provide social and healthcare services to immigrants in the same manner as for other residents of each municipality. The wellbeing services counties also have responsibilities related to supporting integration and the reception of refugees as specified in the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration. The wellbeing services counties were established at the beginning of 2023. The responsibility for the organisation of accommodation and support for unaccompanied minors, for example, was transferred from municipalities to wellbeing services counties at that time.

In 2025, **the Regional State Administrative Agencies (AVI)** were still responsible for the planning, steering and supervision of the services promoting immigrant integration in matters that are within their remit. AVIs ensure that the needs of immigrants are taken into account when other measures and services falling within the remit of AVIs are planned and organised. In the activities of AVIs, the specific needs of immigrants should mainly be taken into account in health and social services, in education, training and cultural services, and when the accessibility and quality of services provided by municipalities are assessed. 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. As of 2026, the tasks of the Regional State Administrative Agency have been transferred to the new Finnish Supervisory Agency.

**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 National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira)**, operating under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, is responsible for the validation of foreign vocational qualifications in the field of healthcare and social welfare.

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 between Women and Men, 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.



## 2. Overview of migration and asylum policy developments 2025

### 2.1. Legislative changes and developments in immigration policy

In 2025, Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government continued the development of immigration policy in accordance with its Government Programme, A strong and committed Finland<sup>3</sup>. According to the Government Programme, the aim is to reform Finland's immigration policy so that it will allocate assistance to the most vulnerable people and prevent abuses. The programme also aims to tighten asylum policy to be aligned with the general Nordic level.<sup>4</sup>

Several amendments were made to the Aliens Act, based on entries in the Government Programme, to introduce stricter provisions on the issuance of residence permits in 2025. The conditions for family reunification were tightened by introducing the amendments enabled by the EU Family Reunification Directive. In addition, stricter requirements for permanent residence permits entered into force at the beginning of 2026.

In relation to work-based immigration, the income limit for a residence permit for an employed person was raised, and the new three-month/six-month unemployment rule was adopted. The Government aims to bind work-based residence permits more closely to the obligation to work, and to increase supervision and prevent abuses.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the Government also aims to promote immigration based on employment and international recruitment primarily from EU/EEA countries. The Talent Boost programme<sup>6</sup> and the partnership model for international recruitment<sup>7</sup> were continued in 2025. In addition, the Government continued the implementation of the action plan against labour exploitation<sup>8</sup>.

Changes concerning students that entered into force included the application fees of higher education institutions for students from outside the EU and EEA countries. In addition, a government proposal on introducing tuition fees for students from third countries at the upper secondary level was adopted. The Government also set out measures to address challenges related to foreign students' residence permits and adequate financial resources. Planned legislative amendments are related to areas such as students' income requirements and verification of their language proficiency. The aim is to streamline the processing of permits for students, prevent them from falling into a vulnerable position, prevent abuses, and ensure that students and their family members are able to sustain themselves in Finland.<sup>9</sup>

In the area of asylum policy, the conditions of international protection were tightened and efforts were made to develop the application system and streamline the process to enable applicants to

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<sup>3</sup> Government of Finland (2023), A strong and committed Finland – Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government 20 June 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of the Interior (undated a), Government Programme measures to reform migration policy.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (undated a), Measures of the Orpo Government concerning work-based immigration.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (undated a), Talent Boost 2023–2027 : Programme for international recruitment and work-based and education-based immigration.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2024 a), Finland needs international talents State-level international recruitment measures in the countries of origin

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2024 b), Action plan against labour exploitation.

<sup>9</sup> Government (18 December 2025), Government decides on methods to address difficulties with foreign student permits and livelihoods.

obtain decisions on international protection status or its denial as quickly as possible.<sup>10</sup> Stricter rules on the duration of international protection permits and new grounds for refusal to grant international protection and for its ending were adopted. In addition, legislative amendments improving the efficiency of the asylum process were introduced, eliminating, for example, the obligation to check asylum interview protocols with the asylum seeker.

The Government also continued the project on the reform of the Reception Act and made a decision to keep the reception allowance at the minimum level permitted by the Constitution of Finland and the Reception Conditions Directive. The Government aims to improve the efficiency of reception services by using the discretion allowed by the Reception Conditions Directive and the best practices of other EU countries. The amendments aim to promote the objectives of preventing the abuse of the reception system and tightening the asylum policy recorded in the Government Programme.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, the Government's immigration policy focused on efforts to enhance the removal of persons illegally residing in the country and the returns and deportations of asylum seekers who had received a negative decision on their application. Amendments were made to the Aliens Act with the aim of speeding up the implementation of deportation decisions, and the Ministry of the Interior prepared a legislative project to assess whether the regulation concerning the denial of admittance and deportation could be further harmonised more broadly. In addition, the provisions of the Aliens Act on detention and entry ban were tightened, and the staggered system of voluntary return allowance was continued. The right to non-urgent treatment of those residing in the country without a right of residence was also restricted.

In accordance with the Government Programme, amendments were also made to the Citizenship Act in 2025. Based on a Government Programme entry, the Citizenship Act will be updated and the requirements for naturalisation will be tightened. The legislative amendments that entered into force at the end of 2025 affected, in particular, the preconditions for adequate financial resources and integrity and the loss of citizenship. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior continued its efforts to prepare a legislative project related to the introduction of the citizenship test and the dual citizenship system. The citizenship test is set to be introduced at the beginning of 2027.

With regard to integration, the Government Programme emphasises integration through work and the immigrant's personal responsibility for their integration. According to the Government Programme, the integration policy is based on language learning, employment, and familiarisation with Finnish society and compliance with its rules. The Government Integration Programme 2024–2027<sup>12</sup> entered into force at the start of the year, and its measures aim to promote the objectives mentioned above. Additionally, the new Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration entered into force at the beginning of the year. Its objectives include strengthening the integration of immigrants outside the labour market, clarifying the responsibilities of parties responsible for promoting integration, strengthening multi-agency cooperation, and responding to changes in the operating environment. The Government also prepared a reform of integration services whose aim is to shift the focus of the system from the rights of migrants to their duties and responsibilities.

Finland also prepared for the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum ('the Pact'), and legislative amendments related to its implementation were submitted for comments in late 2025. As most of the Pact provisions are directly applicable decrees, the legislative project mainly repeals overlapping national legislation. However, as the Pact also leaves room for discretion at the national level, the Government proposal also contains new legislation and amendments to

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<sup>10</sup> Ministry of the Interior (undated a).

<sup>11</sup> Government (10 July 2024), Reception services to be streamlined in line with Government Programme.

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2025 a), Government Integration Programme 2024–2027.

currently valid acts. The project also involves, for example, implementing the revised Reception Conditions Directive and completing the overall reform of the provisions on international protection laid down in the Government Programme. The implementation of the Pact will be coordinated with the Government Programme. In line with the Government Programme, any tightening measures allowed by the Pact will be implemented and savings will be sought.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2. Migration in public dialogue and the media<sup>14</sup>

In 2025, various themes related to immigration received more even media coverage than before. Although Finland's eastern border remained closed, there was less news coverage related to border control and international protection compared to previous years. The Government's immigration policy, which has been considered strict, was continued and covered a number of themes. Savings affecting integration and international protection and stricter rules on obtaining citizenship were among the topics discussed.

The year 2025 also saw the closure of some reception centres, which particularly affected Ukrainians receiving temporary protection. Immigration issues also undermined the unity of the Government in the summer as a result of Minister of Finance Purra's budget proposal and the racism controversy resulting from statements made by some members of the Finns Party. Ultimately, the Government reached consensus at the government budget session.

Over the year, concerns were repeatedly raised about the sufficiency of the financial resources of immigrants and, in particular, international students. It was reported that it was increasingly difficult for students to find employment and many had resorted to food aid. In late 2025, the Government set out measures to tighten income requirements for students and restrict family reunification, aiming to address challenges related to adequate means of livelihood. A scoring model for work-based immigration, which received some political support, was also related to immigrants' financial resources.

Significant public discussions also emerged on labour exploitation of foreign workers, which many human trafficking investigations addressed. The proceedings related to suspected cases of trafficking in human beings in the berry sector continued in court, and several other cases also emerged. The topic gained more visibility with the Pitkä vuoro ('A Long Shift') book, which was granted the Tieto-Finlandia book award.

As in previous years, themes related to immigration were most widely featured in Helsingin Sanomat. The role of national media gained more prominence compared to the previous year; for example the tabloid Italehti re-emerged as one of the publications with the most articles on the topic. There was more news coverage related to trafficking in human beings in the national media compared to other media.

The proportion of regional media in the news coverage decreased by 3 percentage points, and the coverage differed significantly from the period 2023–2024, when the focus was on the closure of the eastern border and border control, which also resulted in the regional publications from Eastern Finland ranking at the top of most media coverage. Nevertheless, the proportion of regional media

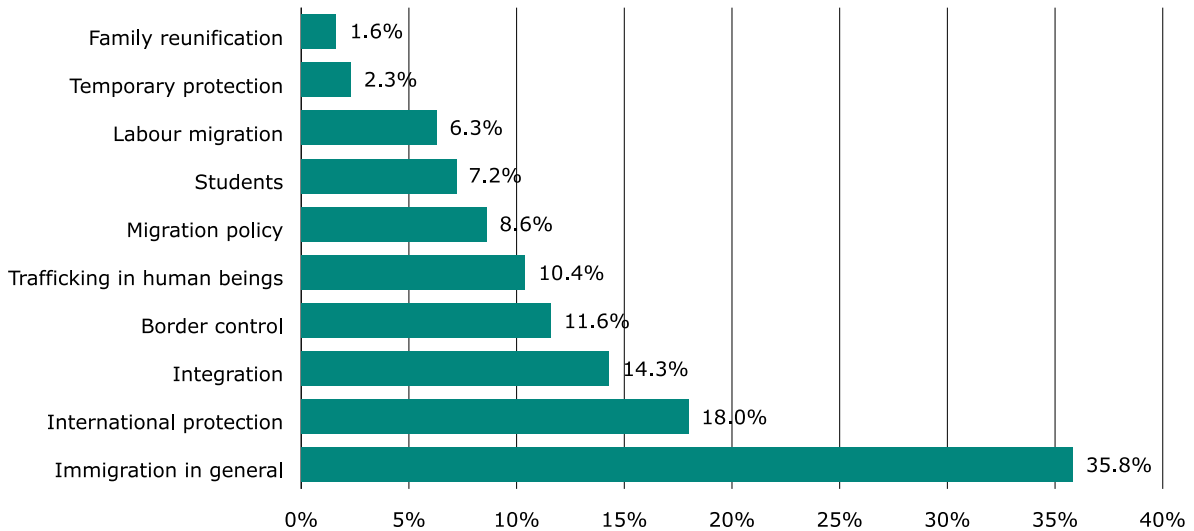
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<sup>13</sup> Ministry of the Interior (undated b), Legislative project on the national implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.

<sup>14</sup> The media analysis concerning public debate was conducted by Retriever in cooperation with the European Migration Network. The analysis is based on editorial online and print media material collected via Retriever's media monitoring for the period 1 January–31 December 2025.

remained clearly higher than before the closure of the border. The coverage in the regional media involved the same themes as in the national media, i.e., the emphasis had shifted away from border control and international protection. Meanwhile, the themes emphasised in local media included integration, as in the previous year, and slightly more attention was paid to international students compared to other media.

## Top 10 immigration topics in the Finnish media in 2025



Source: Retriever<sup>15</sup>

### Labour migration

In 2025, there was a clear decline in immigration based on employment, especially in the health and social services and construction sectors. Key news topics included Minister of Labour Satonen's trips to Vietnam and the Philippines to promote recruitment, and a discussion on the scoring model for work-based immigration, which received extensive support. Controversies were caused by statements made by Members of Parliament representing the Finns party and news articles concerning increased control, resulting in an increase in the withdrawal of work permits.

### Students

News coverage focused on the Government's policy to reduce "harmful immigration" by introducing tuition fees, which are also planned for upper secondary schools and vocational schools for students from outside the EU/EEA. Concerns were raised about the financial resources of international students, due to which some had resorted to food aid. At the same time, it was reported that students' interest in Finland had increased and graduates had wanted to stay in Finland for work.

### International protection

The number of asylum applications was reported to have almost halved. The news coverage was particularly focused on refugee quotas and internal trust in the Government. Headlines were made by the view of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, according to which Muslims were discriminated against in the preparation of quotas. This led to a parliamentary vote of confidence in Minister of the Interior Rantanen.

<sup>15</sup> The chart is based on Retriever's media monitoring in 2025. The monitoring is based on editorial online and print media content. In 2025, the total number of media hits concerning immigration amounted to 40,991.

At the same time, the media reported on a proposal by Minister of Finance Purra to discontinue the reception of quota refugees, which also attracted criticism from government partners. The newspapers also covered a change at the municipal level: the number of municipalities receiving quota refugees decreased. The Finnish Immigration Service was reported to have clarified its guidelines related to Palestinians.

The situation on Finland's eastern border also received media coverage, and the newspapers quoted President Stubb, who warned that reopening the border could trigger the instrumentalisation of asylum seekers again. The international media was reported to have covered mass deportations of Russian asylum seekers, and local newspapers reported on a demonstration in Niirala calling for the border to be opened.

### **Return and deportations**

The EU's plans for return centres outside Europe and a Finnish experiment with a reception centre specialising in returns were significant news topics related to returns. The coverage also mentioned the intensification of the border procedure for the return of those who had received a negative decision. Around one in four of those arriving via the eastern border received a negative decision, and some of them were returned to Finland from elsewhere in Europe.

### **Irregular migration**

the new maritime surveillance systems made headlines. A report identified large-scale illegal entry into Finland as one of the threats to Finland's internal security. Keskisuomalainen reported about over 8,000 attempts of illegal entry across the Latvian border since the beginning of the year, and these were estimated to have potential effects on Finland.

### **Family reunification**

Despite a decline in other forms of immigration, the number of applications submitted by students' family members increased. The Government responded by planning a one-year waiting period for students' family reunification. In late 2025, Minister of Finance Purra criticised decisions by Marin's Government regarding student immigration and family reunification. Headlines were also made by the Government's plans to impose a one-year waiting period for students' family reunification.

### **Integration**

Press coverage related to integration included the Government's plan to tighten the conditions for permanent residence permits by making successful integration a requirement. In the government budget session, decisions were made on cuts to integration, including the cessation of compensation paid to municipalities for integration, which caused widespread criticism. The challenges related to immigrants' employment were also highlighted. At the beginning of the year, headlines were also made by a statement by the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, according to which the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior discriminated on the basis of religion in the preparation of the refugee quota.

### **Trafficking in human beings**

News coverage related to trafficking in human beings focused on a number of cases involving labour exploitation, such as threshold fees charged from cleaners from the Philippines and trafficking trials involving the wild berry picking industry. Pitkä vuoro ('A Long Shift'), a book by Paavo Teittinen, sparked extensive debate on the exploitation of foreign labour. Other topics covered included forced marriages and a suspected offence concerning the human trafficking team of the police.

### **Citizenship**

In 2024, Finland received approximately 14,000 new citizens, but the number of those waiting for a decision is 26,000. Parliament decided to tighten the terms of citizenship, such as the requirement for sufficient financial resources without assistance from society. Other topics covered by the media included the content of the new citizenship test, such as questions about values and customs.

## **Temporary protection / Ukraine**

Ukrainians remain the largest group applying for protection. More than 20 reception centres were closed in Finland, as a large proportion of Ukrainians became municipal residents. Prime Minister Orpo also commented on the national defence obligation of young Ukrainian men who had left their homeland.

The news coverage also included the continuation of temporary protection at the EU level until 2027. Other areas highlighted included the increased activity of Ukrainians in the Finnish Orthodox Church and their large-scale transition to municipal residency. Concerns were raised by reports on the exploitation of Ukrainian workers at, for example, the Turku shipyard and Hotel Järvisydän. There was also widespread news coverage on a 13-year-old Ukrainian boy who crossed Finland's eastern border to Russia.

## **Border control**

Most coverage concerned the continuation of the Border Security Act (also referred to as the "deportation act"), which was criticised by the Chancellor of Justice but in whose favour the Constitutional Law Committee and Parliament were. The media followed the construction of a fence on Finland's eastern border and also reported on the statement by Minister of Defence Antti Häkkinen, according to which Finland is subject to "fairly light" hybrid threats. Ursula von der Leyen also visited Finland to learn about border control. Towards the end of the year, there were headlines stating that one in three people crossing the eastern border had received asylum.

## **Migration policy**

The party conference of the Finns Party in June received wide media coverage. The conference called for even stricter tightening measures in the Government's immigration policy. The consequences of these demands on the Government's future were discussed in the media. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman commented on the refugee quota for the previous year, which it deemed to discriminate against Muslims.

Statements made by the representatives of the Finns Party stirred debates on racism. While language use was addressed in the government budget session, decisions on tightening the immigration policy were also made there. At the same time, several parties expressed their support for the development of a scoring system.

## **Immigration in general**

At the beginning of the year, the Bank of Finland predicted weak population growth and economic development without investments in attracting international talent, among other things. Minister of Finance Purra blamed immigration for the decline in Finland's PISA results and stated that Finnish identity was under attack. Discussion on racism intensified as a result of Teemu Keskisarja's appearance on the A-studio TV programme. In late 2025, it was reported that the population projection of the MDI consultancy company showed that immigration is the only way to influence the number of the working-age population. While Statistics Finland reported that there was a decline in immigration, immigration continued to maintain population growth.

## **EU and migration**

It was decided within the EU to continue temporary protection and to accelerate asylum procedures for the citizens of certain countries. An EU plan to make it easier to send asylum seekers to 'safe third countries' also made headlines. Other topics covered by the media included Milan Jaff's deportation and entry ban covering the entire EU area, and the introduction of the new Entry/Exit System. Finland was preparing tuition fees for non-EU students in accordance with EU policies.

# 3. Legal migration

## 3.1. Labour migration

### Decisions<sup>16</sup>

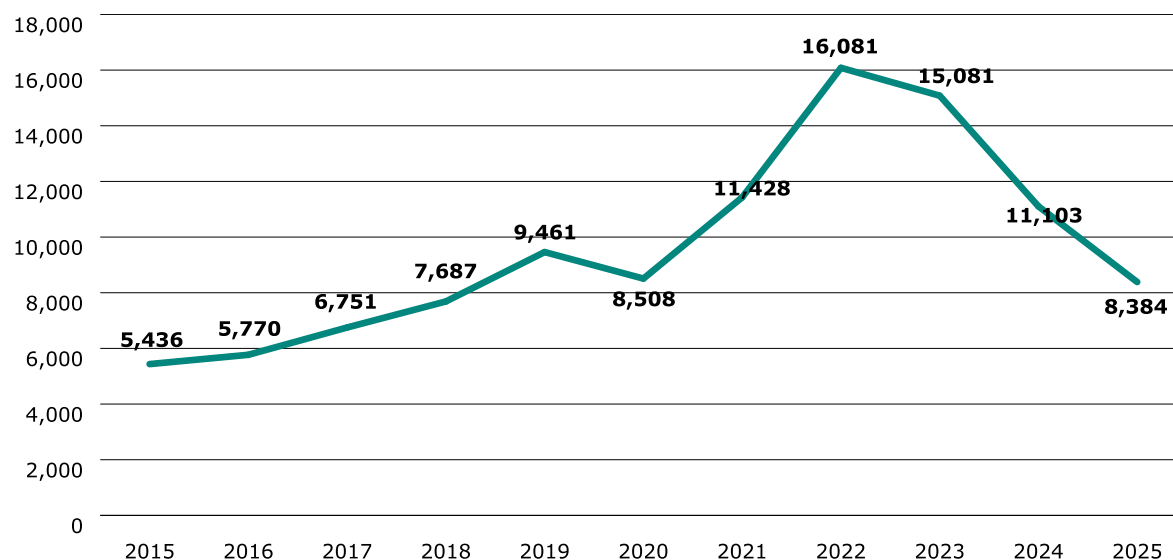
In 2025, first residence permits for Finland on the grounds of employment were issued to a total of 8,384 individuals, representing a decrease from the previous year's figure of 11 103.

The number of residence permits for Finland issued on the grounds of employment was growing steadily for many years, except for the dip caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Compared to the numbers in the period 2022–2024, the number for 2025 indicates a slight downward trend.

Despite the weak economic situation in Finland, the number of residence permit applications lodged on the grounds of employment was higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic. The Finnish Immigration Service issued decisions on a total of 11,813 applications for a first residence permit on the grounds of employment. Of the decisions given, 71 per cent were positive, and 27 per cent were negative.

The most common nationalities remained partially unchanged from the previous year, but there were some changes. Philippine citizens were the largest group in terms of residence permits issued on the grounds of employment, as was the case in 2024, but Chinese citizens emerged as the second-largest group. Citizens of Thailand, which were the second-largest group last year, fell to fifth place.

### First residence permits issued on the grounds of employment 2015–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

<sup>16</sup> The statistics are taken from the Finnish Immigration Service's statistical services, unless otherwise stated.

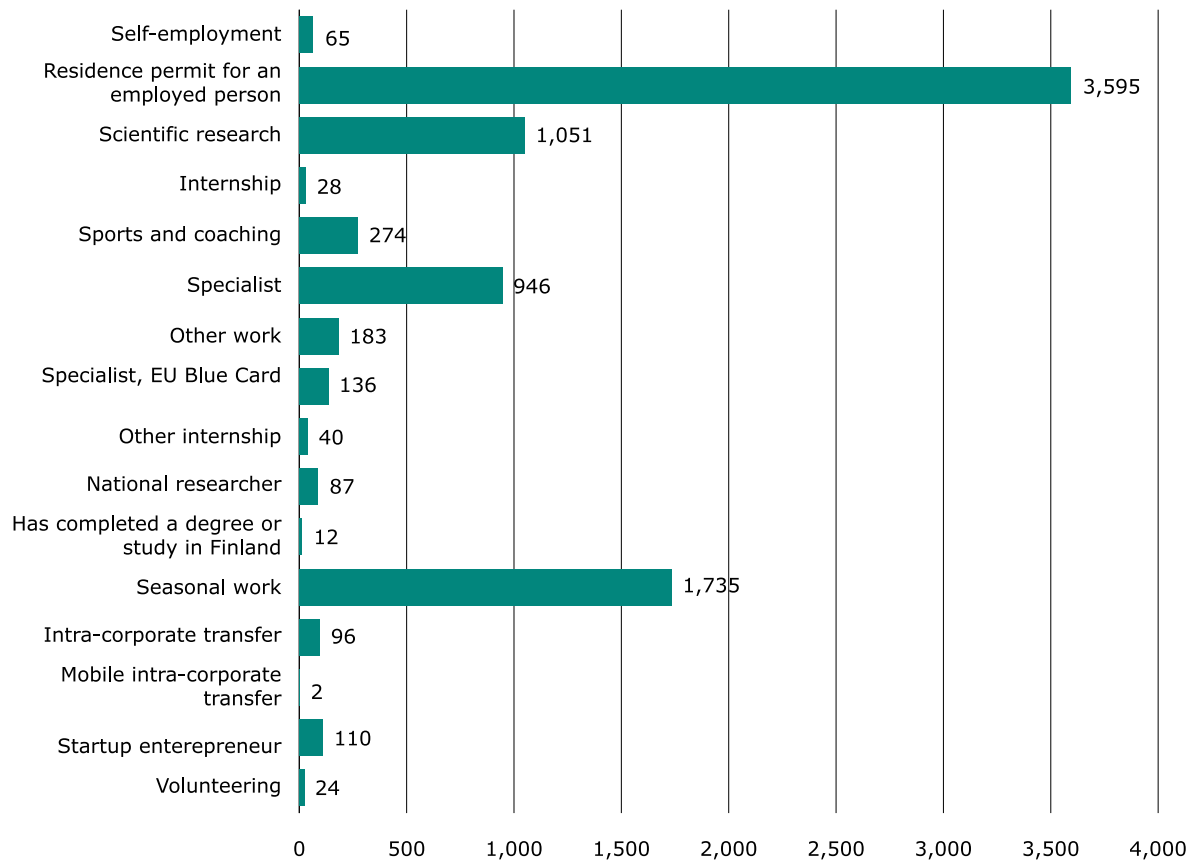
Based on the Finnish Immigration Service’s estimate, the decline in work-based immigration is primarily due to the weak performance of the Finnish economy in recent years. Uncertain prospects for businesses and organisations and the high unemployment rate have reduced the demand for foreign labour.<sup>17</sup>

Residence permits issued on the grounds of employment are divided into subcategories according to the chart below. As in the previous years, the most common case was that a first residence permit was a so-called residence permit for an employed person.

A total of 3,595 residence permits for an employed person were issued, showing a substantial decrease from 2024 (6,269). The largest group by nationality was citizens of the Philippines (883 residence permits).

A total of 6,186 decisions were made in 2025 on residence permit applications on the grounds of employment. Approximately 40% of the decisions were negative, showing a clear increase compared to the previous years. In recent years, the share of negative decisions has been around 20%; in 2025, it was 30%. The percentage of negative decisions was increased, particularly by the tighter Aliens Act provisions that entered into force in autumn 2024, the challenging situation of employer companies and the increase in unemployed jobseekers in Finland’s labour market (labour market testing).

### First residence permits issued on the grounds of employment, by type of permit, 2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

<sup>17</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (30 January 2026), Immigration Statistics 2025: Immigration to Finland Decreasing

There was a significant decline in the number of positive decisions for persons employed in the healthcare and social welfare sector, remaining at the 2020 level. In the period 2022–2023, there was a sharp increase in the number of positive decisions for persons employed in healthcare and social services. This growth was primarily driven by the labour shortage in the sector and increased international recruitment activity by organisations over a short period. However, the number of residence permits granted took a clear downward turn in 2024.

In 2025, a total of 200 first residence permits were issued to healthcare and social welfare employees, which is 81% less than in 2024. The decline in the number of permits granted has been due to funding challenges in the healthcare and social welfare sector, which have significantly affected the recruitment of international experts in the sector.<sup>18</sup>

As in the previous years, citizens of the Philippines continued to be the largest group receiving positive decisions for workers in healthcare and social services (130).

Aside from the decline in the number of permits issued for workers in healthcare and social services, the continuation of the decrease in permits issued to workers in the construction sector was a significant phenomenon in 2025. Only 425 permits were issued to workers in the construction sector in 2024. The corresponding figure for 2025 was only 321, showing a 24% decline.

The Finnish Immigration Service is of the view that the decline in the number of permits issued is attributable to the weak economic situation and higher interest rates. In general, there has been a downward trend in the number of decisions since the end of 2022.<sup>19</sup>

The number of residence permits issued to persons employed as specialists continued to decline from the highs seen in 2022, but remained at the level of the previous year. A total of 946 residence permits for persons employed as specialists were granted, which was close to the figure for 2024 (960).

When specialists issued an EU Blue Card are also included, the number of specialists increases to 1,082, which, too, is close to the 2024 level (1,090).

In 2025, Indian citizens were the largest group by nationality in residence permits issued to persons employed as specialists (319). Indian citizens were also the largest applicant group in the periods 2019–2021 and 2023–2024. Behind citizens of India, citizens of China and the UK were the largest groups, as was the case in the previous year.

According to information from the Finnish Immigration Service, the majority of specialists work in the ICT sector. ICT has also been the largest sector employing specialists in previous years. The manufacturing industry was another significant sector for specialists.

**The number of residence permits issued for seasonal work clearly increased from the previous year:** A total of 1,735 permits were issued, including seasonal work of 3–6 months and seasonal work of 6–9 months, which required a preliminary decision until the end of 2024.

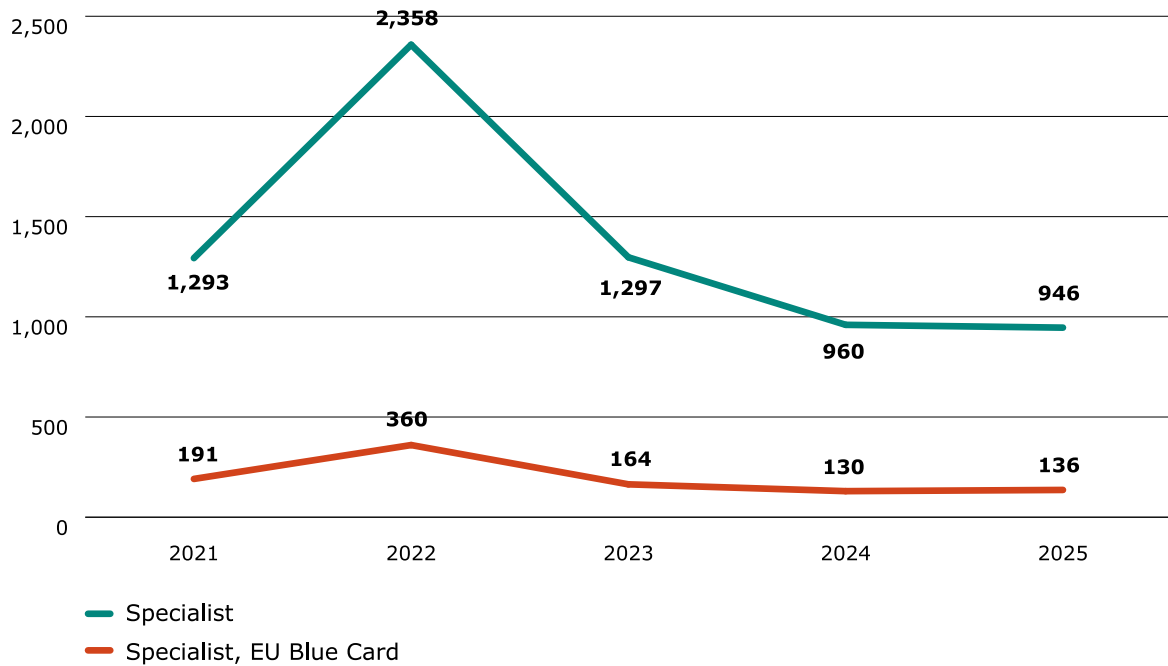
Seasonal workers in Finland are particularly employed by gardens, greenhouses, berry farms and forest berry picking companies. Ukrainians have traditionally been the largest country of origin of seasonal workers by a significant margin (e.g. in 2021, approximately 70% of all residence permits

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<sup>18</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (2026), Immigration to Finland 1/2026.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

## First residence permits issued to specialists 2021–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

issued on the grounds of seasonal work), but Russia’s war of aggression changed that completely. As temporary protection granted to Ukrainians includes the right to work, a separate seasonal work permit is not required.

As in the previous year, persons from Southeast Asia — such as citizens of Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand — were at the top of the statistics on seasonal work in 2025.

Seasonal workers also enter Finland for periods of less than three months, in which case they are not required to apply for a residence permit. People who enter Finland for short-term seasonal work and come from a visa-exempt country are required to apply for a seasonal work certificate from the Finnish Immigration Service.

A total of 1,954 seasonal work certificates were issued in 2025. As in the previous years, Ukrainian citizens were the largest group in terms of the number of seasonal work certificates issued (1,125), although the number of seasonal work certificates issued to Ukrainians continued to decline sharply when compared to the previous years (2024: 1,386, 2023: 1,790, 2022: 4,474).

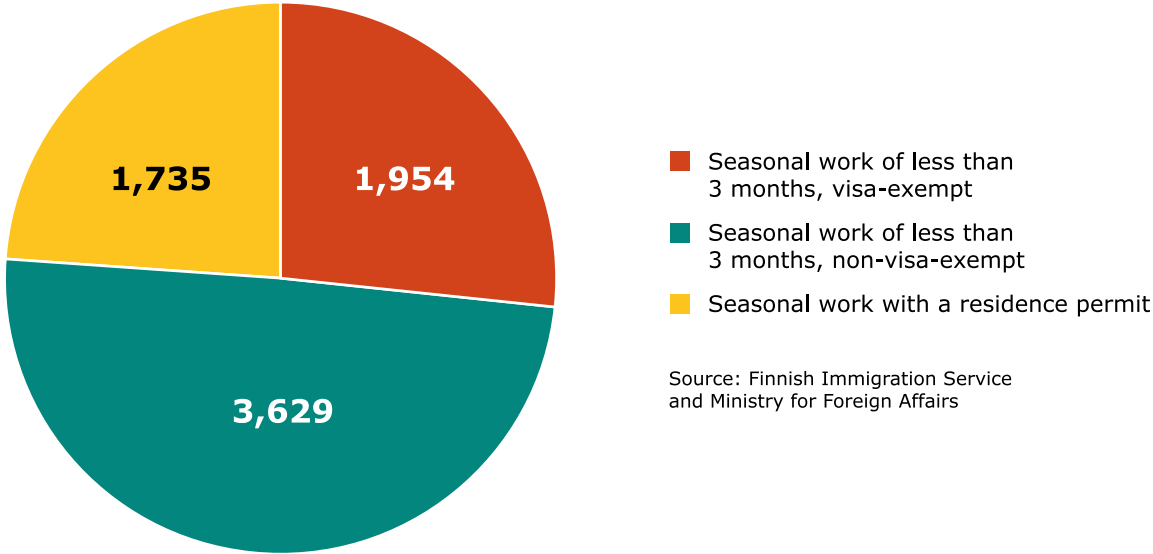
Seasonal workers who enter Finland for the purpose of short-term work from a non-visa-exempt country are required to apply for a seasonal work visa. A total of 3,629 seasonal work visas were issued in 2025, representing a significant increase from the previous year (2024: 1,076). The largest group for seasonal work visas was citizens of Thailand, as in the previous year (3,036 issues).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs statistics on seasonal work visas in 2025. Received by email on 17 March 2026. The figure also includes wild berry pickers who have to also apply for a seasonal work visa from 2025 onwards. Previously, wild berry pickers could also use a Schengen visa if the duration of work was less than 3 months.

A total of 14,912 extended permits were issued on the grounds of employment, showing a decrease from the previous year (2024: 20,415). Extending the right of residence on the grounds of employment was the most common among citizens of the Philippines, India and Ukraine.

Of those who were issued a residence permit on the grounds of employment, 38 per cent were women and 62 per cent were men.<sup>21</sup>

**Persons entering Finland for seasonal work in 2025**



**Applications**

The number of applications for a first residence permit on the grounds of employment decreased somewhat from the previous year. The total number of applications lodged was 11,324. Employment fell to third place as the ground for an application. Family ties continued to be the most common ground, while studies climbed to the second position.

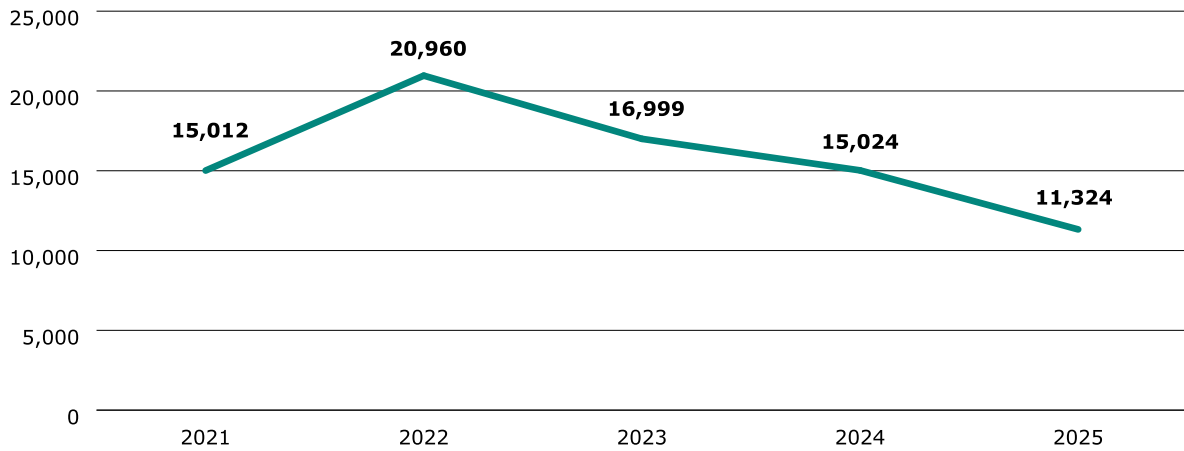
The largest groups by nationality were citizens of India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Nepal. Of these, the Philippines and India are international recruitment partner countries specified in the Government Programme.

Applications for a residence permit for an employed person were the largest application category (5,609), with the largest groups of applicants for that category of residence permit being citizens of the Philippines, India, China, Bangladesh and Thailand last year. Overall, there was a 40% decline compared to the previous year (9,450 in 2024). The decline in applications lodged by the citizens of the Philippines continued from the peak year of 2023 (2,698), dropping to 1,027 in 2025.

A total of 17,795 extended permit applications were lodged, showing a clear 25% decline from the 2024 figures (23,875). Citizens of Ukraine, the Philippines, Russia and India were the largest groups of applicants for extended permits, as was the case in the previous year. The most common application type was a residence permit for an employed person.

<sup>21</sup> This includes both first residence permits and extended permits.

## First applications for a residence permit on the grounds of employment 2021–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

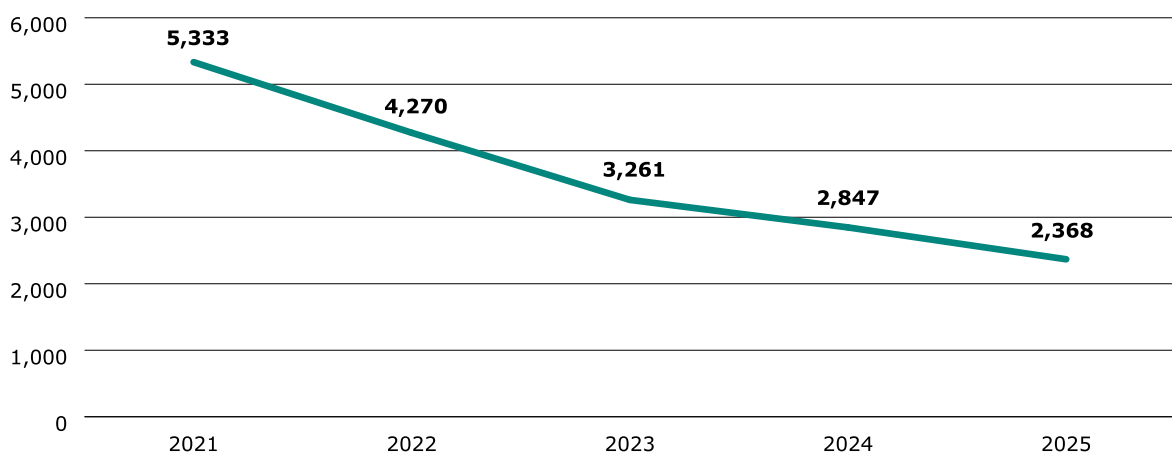
## EU and EEA citizens

The number of residence permits issued on the grounds of employment does not provide 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 2025, a total of 2,368 EU citizens registered their right of residence on the grounds of employment. This represents a slight decrease from the previous year (2,847), continuing the generally declining trend.

The largest group of EU citizens who registered their right of residence on the grounds of employment were Estonians (382). There was a clear shift in countries of origin compared to the previous year. In 2024, those coming to Finland on the grounds of employment came from Estonia, as well as Romania and Latvia, whereas in 2025, Italy, France, Germany and Spain were among the top countries of origin.

## Registrations of EU citizens on the grounds of employment - Positive decisions 2021–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

## Legislative amendments and other developments related to labour migration

Several legislative amendments were introduced in 2025 with regard to residence permits on the grounds of employment. At the start of the year, the income limit for a residence permit for an employed person was raised to EUR 1,600 from the previous limit, which corresponded to either the wages under the applicable collective agreement or the minimum income requirement, i.e., EUR 1,399. Going forward, the requirement will be that the wages are in line with the collective agreement but amount to EUR 1 600 per month at a minimum. The level of the income limit is determined by government decree, and it must be such that labour immigration strengthens general government finances and the availability of labour is not unnecessarily jeopardised. The aim of the minimum income limit is to ensure that those coming to work in Finland receive enough pay to get by.<sup>22</sup>

Additionally, the new three-month/six-month unemployment rule was introduced in June. According to the rule, an immigrant working in Finland with a residence permit on the basis of employment will have three or six months to find a new job if their employment relationship ends prematurely. The period of unemployment depends on the type of permit and the duration of previous residence. If the person fails to find a new job or has no other grounds for residence in the country, their permit is cancelled.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the Government issued a decree on national sectors with labour shortages, in which the holder of a residence permit for an employed person may work, in addition to the field of employment for which the permit was originally granted.<sup>24</sup>

Employers' responsibility also increased as a result of the same legislative amendments. In the future, employers must inform the Finnish Immigration Service if they hire a person who comes from outside the EU/EEA and already has a valid residence permit and right to work. Additionally, the employer submits a notification of the ending of employment if the employment of a person living in Finland with a residence permit for an employed person ends earlier than agreed in the employment contract.<sup>25</sup>

Vuonna 2025 valmisteltiin myös kiristyksiä pysyvän oleskeluluvan ehtoihin, ja muutokset tulivat voimaan tammikuussa 2026. Hakijalta edellytetään tätä nykyä yhtäjaksoista oleskeluaikaa kuusi vuotta aiemman neljän sijaan sekä tiukempaa nuhteettomuutta, suomen tai ruotsin kielen taitoa sekä työhistoriaa.

In 2025, measures to tighten the conditions for a permanent residence permit were also prepared, and the related amendments entered into force in January 2026. Currently, applicants are required to have a continuous period of residence of six years instead of the previous four, and the rules on integrity, proficiency in the Finnish or Swedish language and work history have also been tightened.

As a rule, after a six-year residence, applicants with satisfactory Finnish or Swedish proficiency and a two-year work history in Finland may be granted a permanent residence permit. The continuous legal period of residence is interrupted if a foreign national is sentenced to unconditional imprisonment, and the calculation of the period of residence recommences once the sentence has been served.

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<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (19 December 2024), Income limit of EUR 1,600 for a residence permit for an employed person set.

<sup>23</sup> Government (22 May 2025), Three-month/six-month unemployment rule to enter into force in June 2025

<sup>24</sup> Government (5 June 2025), Government issues a decree on current labour shortage sectors.

<sup>25</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (11 June 2025), Employer: The Aliens Act will change on 11 June – employee announcements will be affected.

Obtaining a permanent residence permit based on a four-year period of residence will still be possible for applicants with a minimum annual income of EUR 40,000, a master's degree or a postgraduate degree recognised in Finland and a two-year work history in Finland, and high proficiency in Finnish or Swedish and a three-year work history in Finland. Those applying for the permit based on their work history may not have resorted to unemployment security or social assistance for a period exceeding three months. Applicants who have completed a master's degree, a postgraduate degree or a university bachelor's degree in Finland may obtain a permanent residence permit without having to meet the required period of residence in terms of years.<sup>26</sup>

The implementation of the action plan against labour exploitation also continued in 2025. In February, a legislative amendment entered into force, based on which companies must employ foreign berry pickers in a contractual employment relationship to enable them to apply for a permit to enter the country. For a residence of less than three months, berry pickers must currently apply for a seasonal work visa and for a longer, 3–9 month residence, they apply for a seasonal work permit. Previously, berry pickers came to Finland with a Schengen tourist visa, which allowed them to stay in the country and collect berries for a maximum of three months.<sup>27</sup> The provision of information on the rights of foreign employees in multiple languages also continued, and the continuation of the Work Help Finland application was ensured. Ethical recruitment practices were also introduced in the partner countries.<sup>28</sup>

A report by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment on the need to renew residence permits for start-up entrepreneurs and other entrepreneurs was completed in December. As a result, the ministerial working group on employment and entrepreneurship outlined changes to residence permits for start-up entrepreneurs. Based on the report, the Government decided that there would no longer be a separate advance application for Business Finland's statement. Instead, the statement would be part of the residence permit application later submitted to the Finnish Immigration Service. Additionally, the first residence permit for an entrepreneur would no longer require a Finnish business ID if the business activities in Finland have not yet started, the initial screening of applications and oral hearings of start-up entrepreneurs by the Finnish Immigration Service would be increased to prevent abuse, and the conditions for granting an extended permit to a start-up entrepreneur would be clarified. The amendments aim to ensure a smoother process, especially for high-growth startup entrepreneurs who are looking to set up a company in Finland, as well as to prevent abuses.<sup>29</sup> The actual legislative project was set up at the beginning of 2026, and the Government proposal is expected to be circulated for comments in May 2026.<sup>30</sup>

As a result of an overall reform of TE Services, the employment permit services were transferred from the TE Office to the Finnish Immigration Service on 1 January 2025, making the Finnish Immigration Service fully responsible for processing residence permits for employed persons. The change resulted in abandoning the two-phase system for the processing of residence permit applications for employed persons and residence permit applications for seasonal work lasting more than six months. Previously, the TE Office first made a partial decision on the application, after which the

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<sup>26</sup> Government (22 December 2025 a), Stricter conditions for permanent residence permits as of 8 January.

<sup>27</sup> Government (6 February 2020), Legislative changes improving the status of foreign berry pickers to enter into force in February 2025.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, email 5 December 2025.

<sup>29</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (19 December 2025), Government to reform residence permits for start-up entrepreneurs

<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (undated c), Legislative project for reforming the residence permit process for entrepreneurs and start-up entrepreneurs and the residence permit requirements for entrepreneurs and start-up entrepreneurs.

processing was transferred to the Finnish Immigration Service. Centralising residence permit matters aims to improve customer experiences and streamline the processing of applications.<sup>31</sup>

At the beginning of the year, the Finnish Immigration Service introduces automated post-decision monitoring of residence permits for employed persons to verify whether the holders of a residence permit for an employed person still meet the requirements for the permit. The examination concerns, for example, whether the employee has been paid a salary that meets the income requirement. Post-decision monitoring is carried out to intervene in residence permit infringements, withdraw permits that no longer meet their requirements, and detect and take measures against labour exploitation and human trafficking. The Finnish Immigration Service has carried out post-decision monitoring since 2017, and automated post-decision monitoring has previously been applied to monitor the permits of start-up entrepreneurs, specialists and students.<sup>32</sup>

## **Talent Boost programme: Promoting the availability of experts**

The implementation of the intersectoral Talent Boost programme<sup>33</sup>, focusing on work-based and education-based immigration and the promotion of the availability of experts, continued in 2025. The programme brings together the work-based immigration measures of the Government programme.

As part of the programme, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment launched a project to explore the opportunities to streamline official activities related to the entry stage of labour migrants.<sup>34</sup> The Government aims to strengthen the appeal of Finland to international experts, and the purpose of the project is to facilitate moving to Finland for work to access the necessary official services. In the first stage of the project, a report will be prepared on the services provided by the authorities and the ease of the service path from one service to the next. The report will also examine what a one-stop shop model would mean in this context. The report is set to be completed in spring 2026, and the Government will decide on further measures on the basis of the report.<sup>35</sup>

As part of the Talent Boost activities and the partnership model for international recruitment under the Government Programme, the Government also continued its efforts to attract top experts to Finland. In September 2025, Work in Finland – the national body for international recruitment – launched a new campaign to attract international top talent in the deep technology sectors, especially from India, the United States, Brazil, and European countries. The aim of the campaign is to help Finnish companies, research institutions and universities to find and recruit international experts and researchers, especially in the technology sector. It also provides Finnish employers and vacancies visibility through digital marketing, international media, events and networks.<sup>36</sup> The work to develop the Work in Finland website also continued; among other things, information videos for seasonal workers were produced for the website.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (18 December 2024), Employment permit services of the TE Office transferred to the Finnish Immigration Service on 1 January 2025.

<sup>32</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (20 January 2025), Finnish Immigration Service introduces automated post-decision monitoring of residence permits for employed persons.

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (undated b).

<sup>34</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (undated d), Report on streamlining official activities related to the entry stage of labour migrants.

<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (25 September 2025), New project launched to create seamless services for skilled workers moving to Finland.

<sup>36</sup> Government (24 September 2025), Finland launches campaign to attract quantum experts and advanced researchers from abroad.

<sup>37</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, email 5 December 2026.

In addition, the Government advanced its cooperation with partner countries, India, Vietnam, the Philippines and Brazil, with the aim of promoting the recruitment of talent to Finland. Among other things, Finland signed a joint letter of intent with the Philippines and a memorandum of understanding with Vietnam<sup>38</sup>.

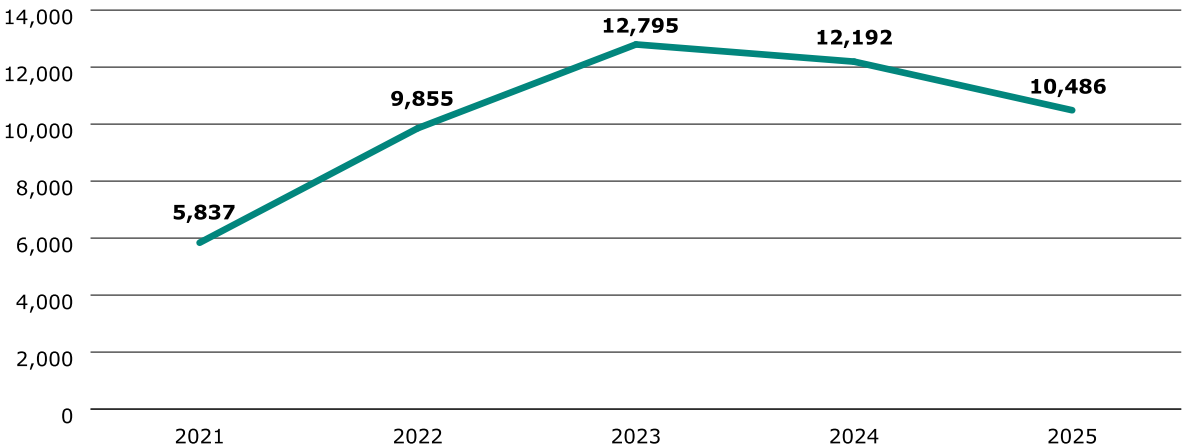
### 3.2. Students

#### Decisions and applications<sup>39</sup>

A strong, growing trend continued in student immigration despite a slight dip in the numbers. The number of applications lodged for first residence permits on the grounds of studies was 13,565, representing a decline of approximately 4% compared to the record high of 14,163 in 2024, but it was still more than in the years preceding 2024.

The number of first residence permits issued on the grounds of studies was 10,486 (2024: 12,192). The share of positive decisions was 88%.

#### First residence permit issued on the grounds of studies 2021–2025 - Positive decisions



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

Asian countries, especially South Asia, were again significantly represented in education-based residence permits in 2025. In 2025, Asian countries accounted for nine of the 10 largest groups of nationalities among the applicants.

Last year, the highest number of residence permit applications on the grounds of studies were lodged by citizens of Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan. Of these, only the number of applications submitted by Indian citizens decreased from 2024 (-15%). There was a moderate increase in the number of applications lodged by citizens of other countries.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> The statistics are taken from the Finnish Immigration Service’s statistical services, unless otherwise stated.

According to the assessment of the Finnish Immigration Service, Finland’s visibility and attractiveness have increased among international students. The affordability of studies in Finland and the possibility of family reunification and work have been key pull factors for international students. At the same time, economic push factors (e.g. standard of living, employment prospects) sustain migration.<sup>40</sup>

In 2024, it was reported that the number of applications lodged by Russian citizens had been declining since 2023. In 2025, Russian citizens lodged a total of 257 applications, showing a continuation in the declining trend, and the number of applications was at a record low, the lowest ever recorded. According to the assessment of the Finnish Immigration Service, this trend is still likely to be attributable to the deterioration of relations between Finland and Russia with regard to cooperation with educational institutions, for example, as well as the closure of the eastern border and the closure of Finland’s Consulate General in St. Petersburg in autumn 2023.

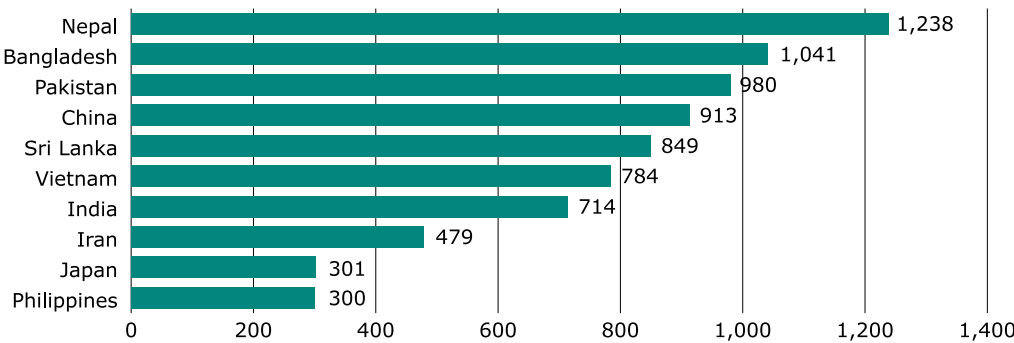
The number of new fixed-term residence permits, i.e. extended permits, issued on the grounds of studies was 2,252. This figure was close to the previous year’s level (2024: 2,027). The most common nationalities among people who extended their right of residence in Finland on the grounds of studies were Russia, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

After their graduation, students who completed their education in Finland may apply for a permit for a person who has completed a degree or research in Finland. The precondition is that the person has completed a degree in Finland and has a job or works as a private trader or entrepreneur. This is a work-based residence permit, which the person may apply for at any time after their graduation.

The number of extended permit applications for a person who has completed a degree or research lodged in 2025 was 3,454, which is 33% more than in 2024. This development is in line with the increase in the number of international students. In 2025, the number of decisions made on extended permit applications for a person who has completed a degree or research in Finland was 3,218, of which 98% were positive.

Of those who were issued a residence permit on the grounds of studies, 48 per cent were women, and 52 per cent were men.<sup>41</sup>

**Positive decisions on applications for the first residence permit on the grounds of studies in 2025 - top 10 nationalities**



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

<sup>40</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (2026), Immigration to Finland 1/2026

<sup>41</sup> This includes both first residence permits and extended permits for students.

## Legislative amendments and other developments related to students

In 2025, legislative amendments affecting students were adopted and prepared, and the need to amend the residence permits of students and their family members was examined more broadly.

In accordance with the legislative amendments made in 2024, application fees for non-EU and non-EEA students were introduced at the beginning of the year. The application fees do not apply to postgraduate students or students in the Erasmus Mundus programme. The purpose of the fees is to ease the administrative burden of higher education institutions and to reduce the number of injudicious and low-quality applications.<sup>42</sup>

In 2025, the Government adopted a proposal, based on which students from non-EU countries will be required to pay tuition fees in both general upper secondary education and vocational education and training. The legislative amendments will enter into force on 1 August 2026. The tuition fees will not apply to non-EU nationals who are permanently resident in the EEA, to exchange students arriving under established programmes, nor to persons granted temporary protection. In addition, the amendment will enable providers of vocational education and training to sell commissioned education leading to a qualification to citizens of EU Member States and EEA countries.<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment was preparing a government proposal to amend the post-decision monitoring of education-based residence permits. The residence permit of a foreign student could be revoked in future if the student receives social assistance in Finland, and frequent automated post-decision monitoring would be used to determine whether a student receives social assistance. The aim of the amendment is to ensure that Finnish students fulfil the conditions of their residence permit and provide for their own livelihoods during their studies in Finland.<sup>44</sup> The proposal was submitted for a consultation round at the beginning of 2026, and it is to be submitted to Parliament during the spring session of 2026.<sup>45</sup>

In addition, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment produced a report on the necessary legislative amendments regarding students from third countries, i.e. non-EU states, and their families<sup>46</sup>. The report resulted in making decisions on legislative amendments related to areas such as requirements for student livelihood and language skills. The Government has outlined that a student's family can only move to Finland one year after the student, the livelihood requirement will be determined as a monetary value in the law, and a language skill requirement will be added to the student's residence permit. Furthermore, the Government has outlined that the denial criteria of the Aliens Act would apply to upper secondary students and all their family members to prevent the risk of students falling into a vulnerable position and circumventing immigration regulations already in the permit processing stage. The work on these legislative amendments began in early 2026.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Government (16 May 2024), Government proposes changes to tuition fees for non-EU and non-EEA students.

<sup>43</sup> Government (9 October 2025), Tuition fees to be introduced for upper secondary students from non-EU countries – commissioned education to be extended to EU and EEA nationals.

<sup>44</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (16 January 2026), Consultation round: Monitoring of residence permits for international students to be enhanced.

<sup>45</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (undated e), Foreign students and researchers.

<sup>46</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2025 b), Report on Regulatory Vulnerabilities of Work-based and Education-based Residence Permits.

<sup>47</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (18 December 2025), Government decides on methods to address difficulties with foreign student permits and livelihoods.

### 3.3. Family reunification

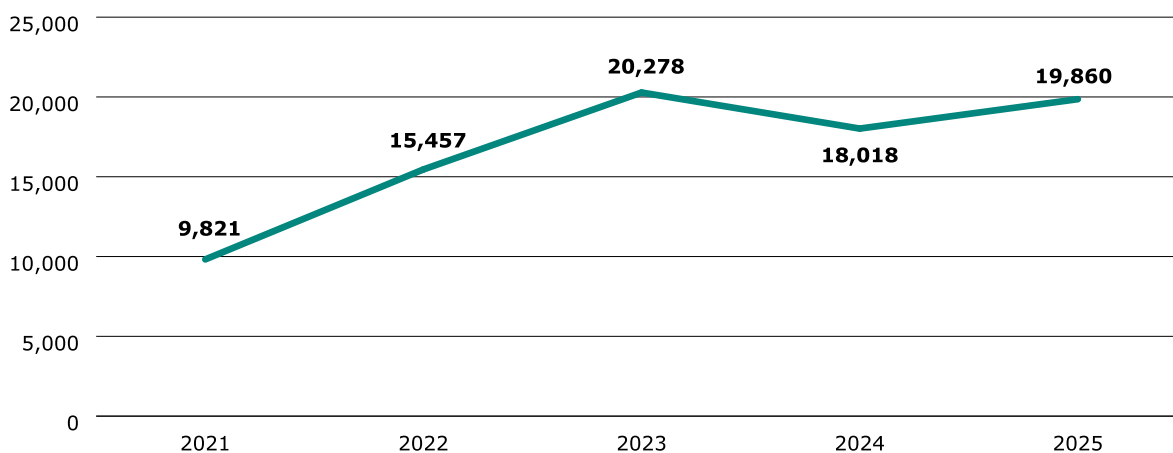
#### Decisions and applications<sup>48</sup>

In 2025, a first residence permit on the grounds of family ties was issued to 19,860 persons, representing an increase compared to 2024 (18,018). However, the number was still lower compared to the record-breaking figure of 20,278 seen in 2023.

The trend concerning the number of residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties has generally been growing over the long term, but the number of permits issued has been around 10 000 per year. However, in 2022, a sharp uptick saw the number exceed 15,000 permits issued, and in 2023, the number of applications reached more than 20,000. Since 2023, family members have constituted the largest basis for applying for the first residence permit. In 2025, 89% of the decisions were positive, and 10% were negative. The rest (about 1%) expired.

The increase in the number of first residence permit applications lodged by family members in recent years is particularly attributable to the increased migration of international students from Asia. Citizens of the Philippines emerged as the largest group in this category in 2024, and the situation remained unchanged in 2025. Following the Philippines, the top nationalities were Sri Lanka, India and Nepal.

#### First residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties - Positive decisions 2021–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The number of first applications for a residence permit on the grounds of family ties was 23,831, which was close to the 2024 status (23,701 applications). Citizens of Sri Lanka also emerged as the largest group in terms of the number of applications lodged (2,221), bypassing the Philippines.

According to the assessment of the Finnish Immigration Service, the trend in the number of applications lodged by family members is linked to other types of migration to Finland. The growth of work and study-based migration after the COVID-19 pandemic has also been reflected in the growth in migration by family members.

<sup>48</sup> The statistics are taken from the Finnish Immigration Service's statistical services, unless otherwise stated.

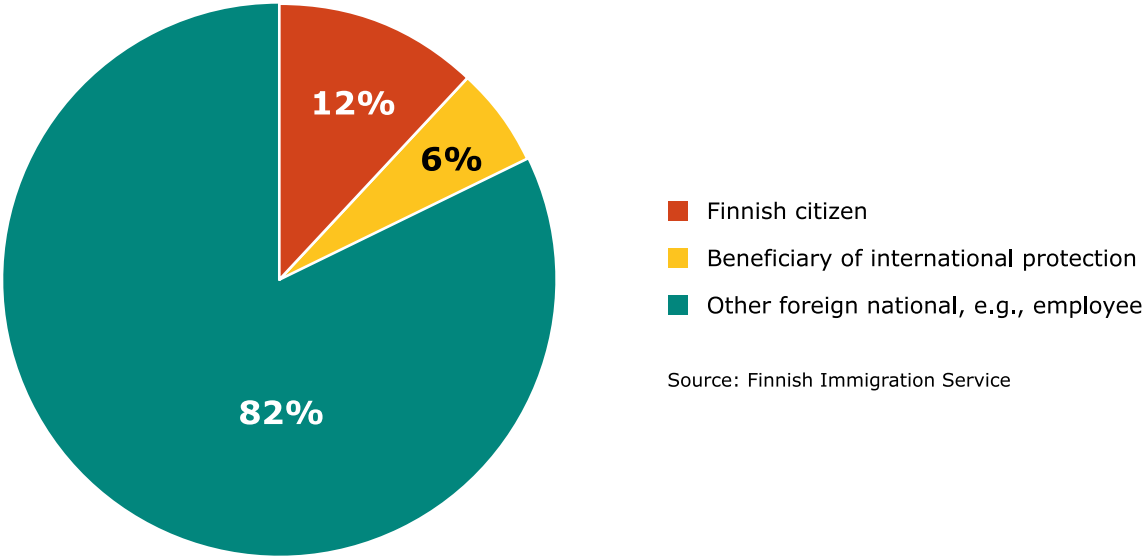
A clear majority of family members apply for a residence permit on the basis of a spouse or custodian residing in Finland with a residence permit based on employment or studies. The number of applications lodged by family members of students has increased sharply in recent years in particular. The reasons behind this growth include the amendments to legislation on students and researchers that entered into force in 2022 and were intended to facilitate the entry and stay of international students in Finland.

First residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties can be categorised by the sponsor.

In approximately 12% of the cases, the sponsor was a Finnish citizen, which means that the residence permit on the grounds of family ties was issued to a family member of a Finnish citizen. Cases where the sponsor was a beneficiary of international protection in Finland were the smallest category (6%) by a clear margin.

In most of the cases, the sponsor was in the category "other foreign national", meaning a person issued a residence permit for Finland, such as a person residing in Finland by virtue of holding a residence permit for an employed person (82%, a total of 16,225 cases).

**First residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties in 2025, broken down by sponsor**



A total of 23,063 extended permits were issued on the grounds of family ties, representing a slight decline from 2024 (25 395). The most common nationalities among people who were issued an extended permit on the grounds of family ties were India, the Russian Federation and the Philippines.

Of those who were issued a residence permit on the grounds of family ties, 54 per cent were women and 46 per cent were men.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> This includes both first residence permits and extended permits.

Apart from third-country nationals, family reasons also brought EU citizens to Finland. A total of 1,043 EU citizens registered their right of residence in Finland on the grounds of family ties in 2025. Their number decreased clearly from the previous year: in 2024, the corresponding figure was 1,342. As in the previous years, the most common nationality among these registrations was Estonian by a clear margin.

In addition, the Finnish Immigration Service granted a residence card to a family member to 774 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 a residence card for a family member of an EU citizen was Russian Federation.

## **Legislative amendments and other developments related to family reunification**

In 2025, the conditions for family reunification were tightened on the basis of the EU Family Reunification Directive.<sup>50</sup> The objective of the legislative amendment is to promote the integration of immigrants, prevent situations that involve abuse and exploitation, increase internal security, and bring the national policy and legislation concerning family reunification to the pan-European level.<sup>51</sup>

The minimum age limit for spouses was increased. As a result of the amendments, if a residence permit is granted to a spouse on the basis of family ties, both spouses need to be of a minimum age of 21 years. The minimum age requirement will not apply to the spouse of a Finnish citizen.

When a family member of a minor who has been granted international protection applies for family reunification, the family member is required to have sufficient financial resources. As a rule, the requirement for sufficient financial resources applies when a minor refugee lives in Finland with one of their parents or guardians. The requirement for sufficient financial resources does not apply if the sponsor is an unaccompanied minor residing in Finland without a parent or guardian, but it applies if the minor sponsor has received temporary or subsidiary protection. This requirement for sufficient financial resources also applies to other relatives of a minor who has been granted international protection, with certain exceptions.<sup>52</sup>

Section 38 of the Aliens Act on the determination of a child's minority was amended in accordance with a judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union.<sup>53</sup> As a result of the amendment, only unaccompanied minors who have been granted international protection and children of a guardian who has been granted asylum are in a special position when determining their minority status. A family member may be granted a residence permit if the unaccompanied minor who has been granted asylum was a minor on the day they lodged the asylum application on the basis of which they were granted asylum. In turn, a residence permit may be granted to the child of a person who has been granted asylum when the child was a minor on the day when the sponsor submitted the application on the basis of which asylum was granted. If a sponsor who has been granted asylum arrived in Finland as an unaccompanied minor and has been a recipient of subsidiary protection, the sponsor must have been a minor on the day when their family member's residence permit application was lodged in order to grant the family member a residence permit. This also applies to situa-

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<sup>50</sup> Government (12 June 2025), Government to tighten conditions for family reunification.

<sup>51</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (16 June 2025), Legislative amendments and new requirements for family reunification; Government (12 June 2025).

<sup>52</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (16 June 2025).

<sup>53</sup> Judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 1 August 2022 in Case C-279/20.



tions where the sponsor is a parent or guardian receiving temporary protection and the applicant is their child.<sup>54</sup>

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment produced a report on the necessary legislative amendments regarding students from third countries, i.e. non-EU states, and their families<sup>55</sup>. As a result of the report, the Government also decided on legislative changes related to the family reunification of students. In the future, a student's family could only move to Finland one year after the student, and the livelihood requirement will be determined as a monetary value in the law. Furthermore, the denial criteria of the Aliens Act would apply to upper secondary students and all their family members to prevent the risk of students falling into a vulnerable position and circumventing immigration regulations already in the permit processing stage. The work on these legislative amendments began in early 2026.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (16 June 2025).

<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2025 b).

<sup>56</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (18 December 2025).

# 4. International protection

## 4.1. Asylum seekers<sup>57</sup>

The number of asylum seekers entering Finland continued to decline from the previous year. A total of 2,549 asylum applications (including subsequent applications and applications of EU citizens) were lodged, compared to 2,948 in 2024. The declining trend is due to a decrease in the number of applications for many key nationalities. Of applications lodged in 2025, 497 were subsequent applications. Citizens of Iraq were the largest group among those who lodged subsequent applications.

Based on the assessment of the Finnish Immigration Service, the number of asylum applications lodged in the EU (and in Norway and Switzerland) decreased by approximately one fifth in 2025 compared to the previous year. Approximately half of the decline is explained by the decrease in applications lodged by Syrian citizens. There was also a decline in applications lodged by other nationalities (including Turkish and Colombian citizens). Despite this decline, the number of asylum applications lodged was higher than before the COVID-19 pandemic. These figures are driven by, among other things, conflicts, political instability and lack of economic prospects in the countries of origin.

In the EU, the number of first asylum applications by Venezuelans increased the most due to their visa-free status, and the number of subsequent applications submitted by Afghan nationals increased compared to previous years. The increase in subsequent applications by Afghan nationals was influenced by the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union of October 2024, declaring Afghan women eligible for refugee status solely on the basis of their gender and nationality. The number of applications for international protection was strongly concentrated in Germany, France, Spain and Italy, while the number of asylum applications in the Nordic countries remained low.<sup>58</sup>

Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq, which have traditionally been at the top of the statistics, were again the most common countries of origin for asylum seekers in 2025, except that Afghan nationals emerged as the largest group. The number of applications lodged by citizens of each of these countries remained at the 2024 level. The number of applications lodged by Russian citizens in 2025 was low, with only 140 first applications for asylum lodged.

In 2025, the Finnish Immigration Service made a total of 5,280 decisions on asylum applications, which was more than in 2024 (4,176).

The number of positive decisions was 2,284, representing 43 per cent of all decisions. Most of these decisions concerned asylum (1,835), with the others concerning subsidiary protection or other residence permits.

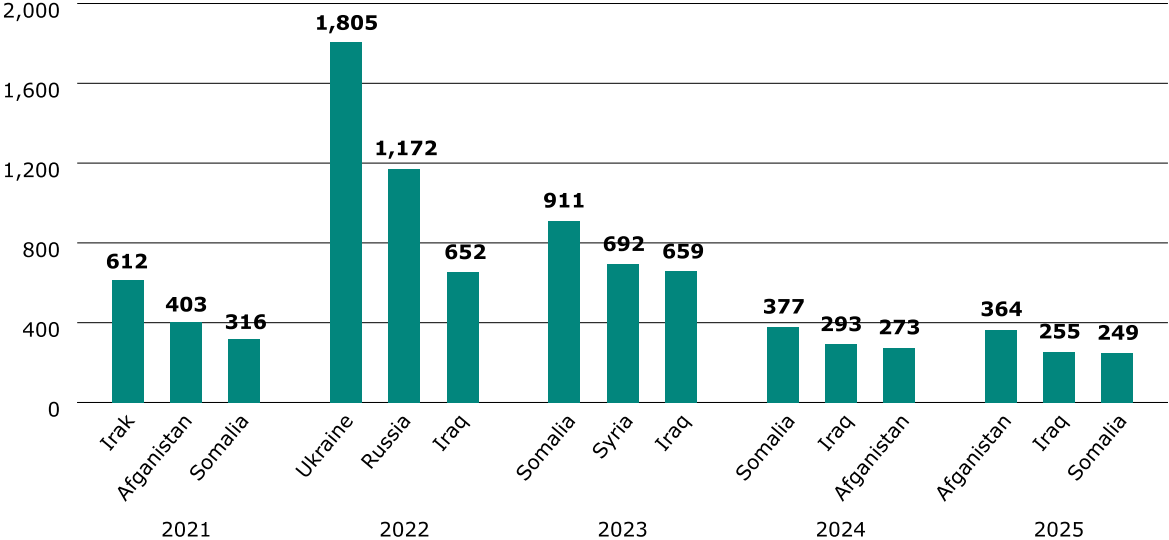
A negative decision was made on 34 per cent of the applications (1,807), of which 107 were manifestly unfounded. Of the applications, 12 per cent (644 applications) were dismissed either because they were subsequent applications in which no new grounds for asylum were presented, because a different EU Member State was responsible for processing the application, or the applicant already had the right of residence in a different Member State. The case expired in approximately 10 per cent of the cases.

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<sup>57</sup> The statistics are taken from the Finnish Immigration Service's statistical services, unless otherwise stated.

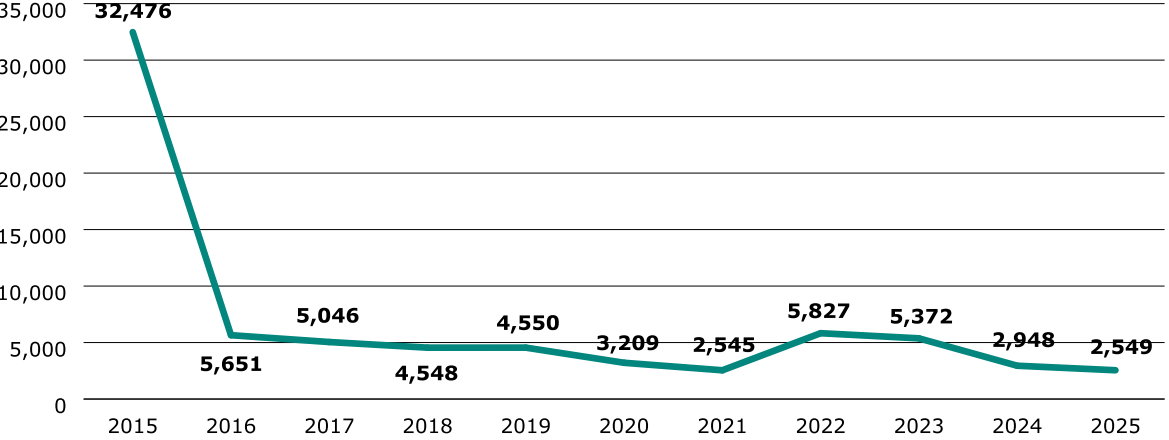
<sup>58</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (2026), Immigration to Finland 1/2026

### Asylum seekers, top 3 nationalities, 2021–2025 (applications lodged)



Source: Finnish Immigration Service. Note that the table does not include applications for temporary protection.

### Asylum applications 2015–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

## Quota refugees

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 Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, prepares a proposal on the allocation of the refugee quota. The Finnish Immigration Service and the Finnish Security Intelligence Service also participate in the preparation of the allocation decision. The decision on regional allocation is made by the Government.

In 2025, Finland committed to receiving 500 quota refugees. The Government made the decision on the allocation of the refugee quota at the plenary session of the Government on 28 November 2024, and the reception of the same refugee groups continued in 2025 as in 2024. The selection placed special emphasis on the most vulnerable groups.

Finland decided to receive 150 Afghan refugees from Iran, 120 Congolese refugees from Rwanda, 100 Syrian refugees from Turkey and 50 Venezuelan refugees from Peru. In addition, Finland made the decision to receive 30 refugees evacuated from Libya to Rwanda and 50 emergency cases without regional or nationality restrictions.<sup>59</sup>

### Quota refugees in 2025<sup>60</sup>

Country	Accepted	Nationality of the accepted quota refugees
Iran	149	Afghanistan
Peru	48	Venezuela
Rwanda (ETM)	31	Sudan 10, Ethiopia 7, Eritrea 14
Rwanda	117	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Turkey	100	Syria
Emergency cases 2025	50	Various nationalities
Children born*	3	Various nationalities
<b>Total</b>	<b>498</b>	

\*Children born after the decision of the Finnish Immigration Service but before arriving in Finland.

In 2025, a total of 498 quota refugees were selected to enter Finland. The schedule of the selection process depends on proposals made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Integration.fi (29 November 2024) Afghan, Congolese, Syrian, Venezuelan and Libyan evacuees received as part of the 2025 refugee quota

<sup>60</sup> Source: Finnish Immigration Service (undated), Quota Refugee selections

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

In 2025, a total of 621 quota refugees arrived in Finland. Refugees usually move to Finland in the year they are selected or in the following year. 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. Finland granted residence permits and the required travel documents to the selected persons before their arrival in the country.<sup>62</sup>

## **Legislative amendments and other developments related to international protection**

### **Tightening of international protection based on Government Programme entries**

Amendments to the Aliens Act entered into force at the beginning of 2025. In accordance with the Government Programme, stricter provisions on international protection were introduced within the scope permitted by the EU Qualification Directive.<sup>63</sup>

International protection was redefined as temporary with an amendment to the Aliens Act<sup>64</sup>, and the duration of the permits was shortened to the minimum allowed by EU law. In future, a refugee will be granted a residence permit for three years instead of the previous four years. The length of an extended permit was also shortened from four years to three years. The first residence permit based on subsidiary protection will be issued for one year instead of the previous four years. An extended permit will be issued for two years instead of the previous four years. In practice, the temporary nature of international protection means that the Finnish Immigration Service will assess the need to extend the duration of international protection more frequently than before.<sup>65</sup>

The legislative amendment also resulted in introducing new grounds for refusing or ending international protection status. In the future, persons who are considered to be a danger to society because they have committed a particularly serious offence will not be granted refugee status or their status will be terminated. If a person commits or is suspected of having committed a crime against peace, war crime or crime against humanity, or an act contrary to the purposes and principles of the UN, they will also lose their refugee status or subsidiary protection status. Refugee status or subsidiary protection status will also be refused or ended when there is reason to assume that a foreign national poses a risk to Finland's national security. The legislative amendments entered into force on 2 January 2025.<sup>66</sup>

Legislative amendments whose aim is to improve the efficiency and quality of the asylum system and prevent abuses of the asylum system in line with the Government Programme also entered into force in June. As a result of the amendments, the protocol of the asylum interview will, as a rule, no longer be reviewed at the end of the interview. Instead, applicants for international protection may submit additions and corrections to the protocol within the specified time limit. The validity of travel documents granted by Finland was also limited so that they no longer entitle a person receiving international protection to travel to their country of nationality or former country of residence for reasons other than exceptionally serious grounds. In addition, to improve the efficiency of the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> The Qualification Directive sets out the grounds for granting international protection and the rights of refugees or persons in need of protection.

<sup>64</sup> Aliens Act 301/2004.

<sup>65</sup> Ministry of the Interior (21 November 2024), International protection becomes temporary – more attention paid to security concerns.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

procedure for removing applicants for international protection from the country, the practices for enforcing deportation decisions were amended to correspond to the enforcement of decisions on denial of admittance or stay. This means that deportation decisions can be enforced more quickly than before.<sup>67</sup>

At the end of the year, legislative amendments related to the application and implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (the 'Pact') were submitted for a consultation round. The Pact aims to enhance the control of the EU's external borders, the identification of non-EU nationals, and asylum and return procedures. However, as the provisions of the Pact also leave room for discretion at the national level, the Government proposal also contains new legislation and amendments to currently valid acts.<sup>68</sup> The project also involves, for example, implementing the revised Reception Conditions Directive and completing the overall reform of the provisions on international protection laid down in the Government Programme. The implementation of the Pact will be coordinated with the Government Programme. In line with the Government Programme, any tightening measures allowed by the Pact will be implemented and savings will be sought.<sup>69</sup>

## Developing the asylum process at the Finnish Immigration Service

The Finnish Immigration Service worked to reduce the backlog of applications. At the beginning of 2025, the number of applications pending at the Finnish Immigration Service was 4,300; at the beginning of 2026, the number had decreased to just 1,700 applications. To work to reduce the backlog was particularly focused on the oldest applications, which were applications by persons who had crossed the eastern border in 2023. In addition, the asylum process was developed by clarifying the decision templates and developing them to enable the collection of some information automatically from systems. The Finnish Immigration Service also provided interviewers with interview training to shorten the duration of the interviews, and the system for booking interviews was made clearer.<sup>70</sup>

The Finnish Immigration Service also launched projects funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to improve the efficiency of the asylum process. The ADERE 2 project will make decisions on asylum applications more effective by reducing manual labour and increasing automation. Meanwhile, the ResAid 3 project will continue the work to renew the reservation system for asylum interviews and hearings.<sup>71</sup>

The Finnish Immigration Service also launched several AMIF projects related to the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum (the 'Pact'). The Access to Procedure and Referral of Applications project adapts the national asylum system to the changes brought about by the EU Asylum Procedure Regulation. The Improving Information Provision project involves streamlining the work processes of the Finnish Immigration Service and developing information systems to strengthen the provision and access to information. The Finnish Immigration Service also launched the Digital Responsibility and Solidarity project, which develops an electronic case processing system to meet the requirements set out in the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Ministry of the Interior (22.5.2025), Legislative amendments improving efficiency of asylum system to enter into force on 1 June

<sup>68</sup> Ministry of the Interior (22 December 2025), Legislative amendments related to the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum circulated for comment.

<sup>69</sup> Ministry of the Interior (undated b).

<sup>70</sup> Finnish Immigration Service, international protection process, 5 February 2026.

<sup>71</sup> EU Home Affairs Funds (undated a), Funded AMIF projects.

<sup>72</sup> Ministry of the Interior (9 July 2025), EU funding for internal security and immigration management projects amounted to EUR 29.9 million.



## Instrumentalised migration at Finland’s eastern border

The eastern border of Finland, in other words, the land border between Finland and Russia, has been closed entirely for border crossings since late 2023 due to Russia’s targeted instrumentalised migration. While the phenomenon of irregular entry into the country, which began at the Finnish eastern border in November 2023, has been interrupted, according to the assessment of the authorities, there is a high likelihood that the phenomenon will re-emerge and expand. For this reason, the Government decided to continue its decision on closing the border crossing points until further notice and centralising the application for international protection.<sup>73</sup>

In June, the Government also decided to extend the validity of the Act on Temporary Measures to Combat Instrumentalised Migration<sup>74</sup>, also known as the Border Security Act, until 31 December 2026, but no amendments were made to the Act. The Act lays down the conditions under which Finland may make a decision to restrict the reception of applications for international protection in a limited area on Finland’s national border and in its immediate vicinity. The Border Security Act has not yet been applied, but by extending the validity of the Act, the Government aims to ensure that border authorities have sufficient powers to act preventively and effectively in the most serious incidents of instrumentalised migration.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Government Decision SM/2025/32.

<sup>74</sup> Act on Temporary Measures to Combat Instrumentalised Migration 482/2024.

<sup>75</sup> Government (18 June 2025 a), Validity of Border Security Act to be extended until 31 December 2026.

## 4.2. Reception

### Capacity of the reception system

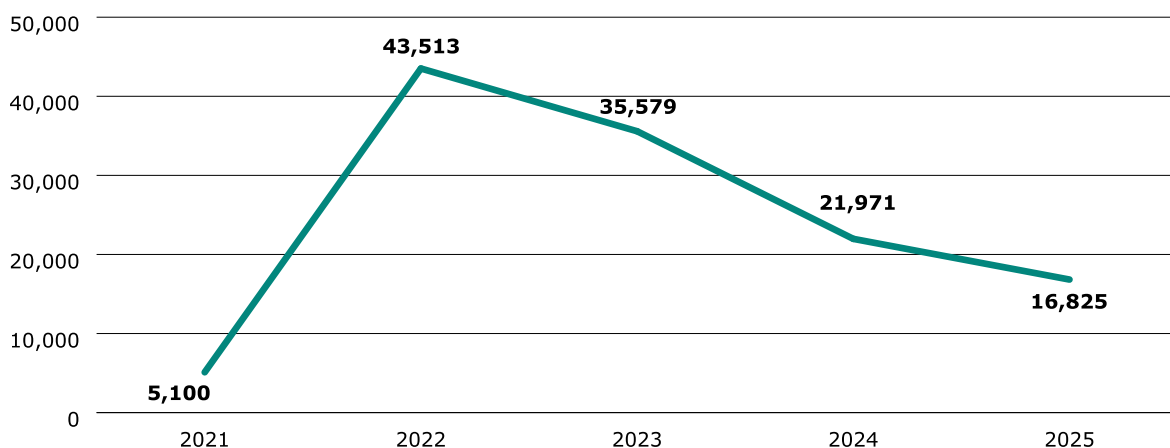
At the beginning of 2025, there were a total of 68 reception centres and group homes for unaccompanied minors in operation. The reception centre capacity was adjusted during the year, and at the end of 2025, there were a total of 48 centres and group homes. Following adjustments that took effect at the turn of the year, a total of 68 units were in operation at the beginning of 2025.

There was a considerable decline in the number of customers in the reception system until summer 2025, and as a result, in the spring of 2025, the Finnish Immigration Service announced that the contracts of around 30 reception centres would be closed down. The closures of the reception centres were due to a reduction in the need for customer places in the reception system and the transfer of Ukrainian citizens to municipalities as residents, which had continued actively for a long period.

After the summer of 2025, the number of new migrants rose sharply and remained above the level at the beginning of the year until the end of the year. The increase was particularly due to an increase in the number of applications for temporary protection and a slowdown in the moves of Ukrainians to municipalities. In December 2025, a total of 16,825 customers were registered in the reception system. Approximately 74% of them were Ukrainians.

The most common type of accommodation in the reception system is accommodation in a reception centre. At the end of 2025, 53% of the customers were accommodated in a reception centre and 46% were in private accommodation. The rest were in other types of accommodation.

### Persons covered by reception services 2021–2025 (includes all types of accommodation)



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

## Legislative amendments and other developments related to reception

In 2025, the Government enacted several legislative amendments to streamline reception activities. The Ministry of the Interior continued a legislative project launched in the previous year on the reform of the Reception Act, and this follow-up work was combined with a legislative project on the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. The purpose of the amendments is to implement the objectives of the Government Programme, which include preventing the abuse of the reception system and tightening asylum policy. The project includes preparing to limit reception services to the minimum level permitted under the scope of the Reception Conditions Directive with regard to the processing times of subsequent applications, updating the system of representatives of unaccompanied minors, and reducing the reception allowance.<sup>76</sup> The project also implements the renewed Reception Conditions Directive under the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.<sup>77</sup> In line with the objectives set in the Government Programme, all tightening measures permitted by the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum will be introduced.<sup>78</sup>

The Government also decided to extend the validity of the act that has reduced the reception allowance and the spending allowance until 11 June 2026.<sup>79</sup> The reception allowance and spending allowance can be granted to those applying for international protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection and victims of trafficking in human beings covered by the reception system. The basic amount of the allowance is intended for paying for daily essentials, and the spending allowance is intended for unaccompanied minors who receive full maintenance from the reception units for minors. The level of the reduction varies depending on whether the person lives alone or in a shared household, and whether the person concerned is a single parent or a child. In line with the Government Programme, the reception allowance will be reduced to the minimum permitted by the Constitution and the Reception Conditions Directive.<sup>80</sup> The intention is to make the permanent legislative amendments as part of a broader reform of the Reception Act.<sup>81</sup>

In addition, a government decree<sup>82</sup> entered into force at the beginning of the year to increase the fee for reception services. A fee may be charged for reception services from reception centre customers who have regular income or significant assets. The previous fee charged for reception services was a maximum of EUR 9, which was increased to a maximum of EUR 12 per day. The decisions to charge the fee are based on income and asset statements requested from the customers. The fee was previously increased in 2011. As part of the measures to streamline reception activities, the aim is to gradually increase the fee to correspond to the actual costs of reception activities, which have grown significantly since 2011.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ministry of the Interior (undated c), Reform of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings.

<sup>77</sup> Directive (EU) 2024/134 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection in the Member States (recast).

<sup>78</sup> Ministry of the Interior (undated c).

<sup>79</sup> Government (18 September 2025), Government proposes keeping reception allowance at reduced level.

<sup>80</sup> Ministry of the Interior (4 July 2024), Legislative amendment to reduce reception allowance; Government (2023).

<sup>81</sup> Government (18 September 2025).

<sup>82</sup> Government Decree 857/2024.

<sup>83</sup> Government (19 December 2024), Changes to the fees of the Finnish Immigration Service and reception centres in 2025.

# 5. Temporary protection

## Applications and decisions<sup>84</sup>

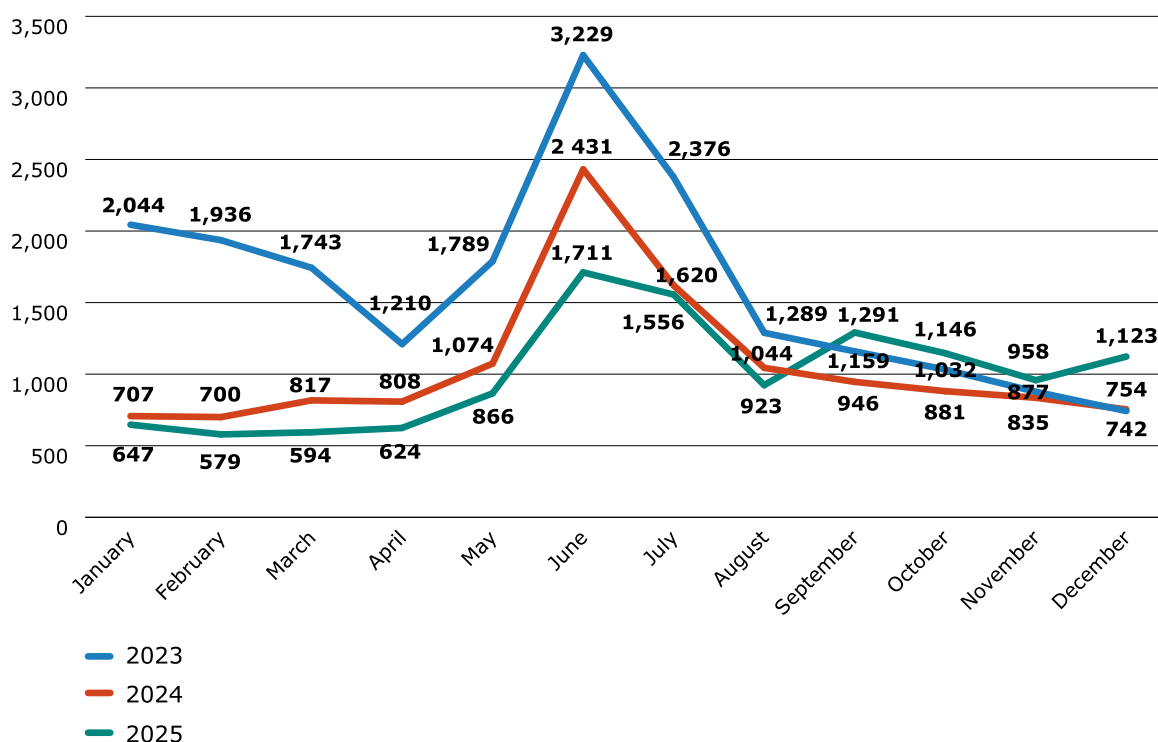
The number of applicants for temporary protection continued to show a declining trend in 2025. In 2025, a total of 12 018 new applications for temporary protection were lodged in Finland, representing a decrease of around 5% from the previous year (2024: 12,617).

Temporary protection was granted to 10,521 persons fleeing Ukraine (2024: 12,210), and 39 negative decisions were made (2024: 28). In addition, 338 applications expired.

The number of applications remained stable in 2025, with the exception of an uptick in applications in early summer due to Ukrainians arriving for seasonal work under temporary protection.

According to a government decision that entered into force in Ukraine at the end of August, men between the ages of 18 and 22 may leave and return to the country freely despite the state of war. The Finnish Immigration Service reported that after the decision, the number of applications for temporary protection began to increase, and between 1 September and 31 December 2025, a total of 937 applications for temporary protection were lodged by young men. The number of applications has since stabilised.<sup>85</sup>

## Applications for temporary protection per month 2023–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

<sup>84</sup> The statistics are taken from the Finnish Immigration Service’s statistical services, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>85</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (2026), Immigration to Finland 1/2026

## Legislative amendments and other developments related to temporary protection

Legislation on temporary protection was amended to correspond to the continuing need for temporary protection, and the Finnish Immigration Service changed its decision-making practices related to temporary protection for those already protected in another EU country.

The maximum period of temporary protection laid down in the Aliens Act was three years, which was reached for the temporary protection granted on the basis of the war in Ukraine on 4 March 2025. As a result, it was necessary to amend the Act to extend the period of temporary protection beyond this date.<sup>86</sup> As a result of the amendment, residence permits and residence permit cards granted on the grounds of temporary protection will continue to be valid for as long as the government decision on granting temporary protection is in force. The amendment entered into force on 4 March 2025.<sup>87</sup>

The same legislative project also included an amendment to the scope of temporary protection for third-country nationals. Finland will no longer grant temporary protection to those third-country nationals who have fled Ukraine and who have not been granted a permanent residence permit or international protection in Ukraine. However, temporary protection will still apply to third-country nationals who have obtained a permanent residence permit in Ukraine or been granted international protection in that country. The amendment entered into force on 5 March 2025.<sup>88</sup>

In late 2025, the Finnish Immigration Service changed its decision-making practice concerning applicants who already hold a residence permit on the basis of temporary protection in another EU Member State. As a rule, this group will no longer be granted temporary protection. The purpose of this change was to bring the decision-making practice of the Finnish Immigration Service in line with the new decisions of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the Council of the European Union<sup>89</sup>. According to the Council decision made in July, the main principle is that a person can benefit from the rights linked to temporary protection only in one Member State at a time. However, the Finnish Immigration Service makes an individual assessment of each application, taking into account factors such as the protection of family life<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Ministry of the Interior (3 September 2024), Temporary protection for Ukrainians displaced by war to continue.

<sup>87</sup> Ministry of the Interior (27 February 2025), Government to ensure seamless continuation of temporary protection.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 27 February 2025 in Case C-753/23; Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2025/1460.

<sup>90</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (8 December 2025), Temporary protection no longer granted to applicants who already hold a residence permit on the basis of temporary protection in another EU Member State.

# 6. Unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups

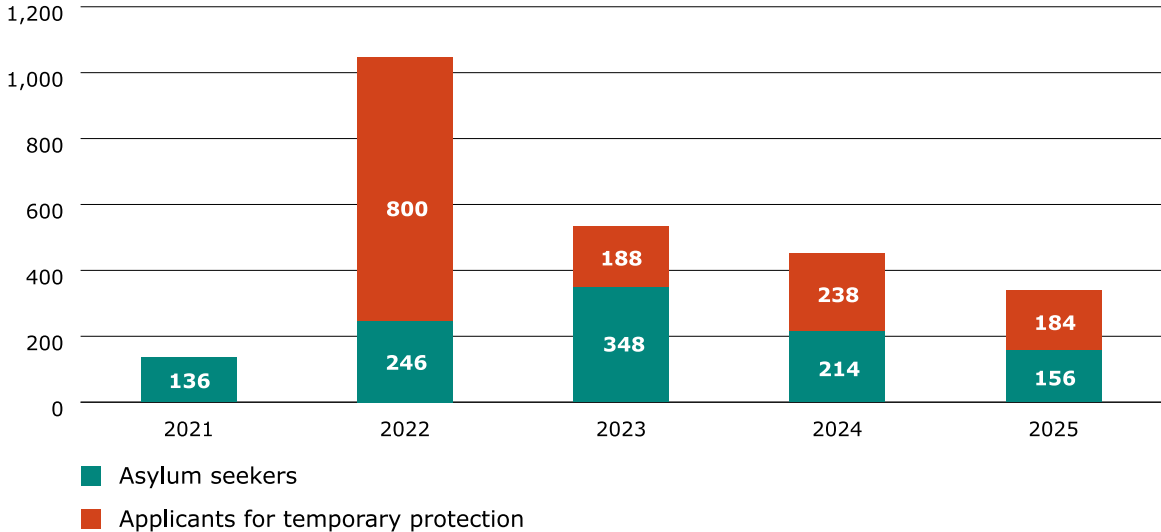
## Applications and decisions<sup>91</sup>

A total of 156 asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors entered Finland in 2025. This represented a clear decrease from the previous years, which can be attributed to the general decline in the number of asylum seekers.

In addition, 184 unaccompanied minors fled Russia’s war of aggression from Ukraine to Finland and applied for temporary protection, also representing a decline when compared to the previous year (2024: 238).

The countries of origin with the most asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors entering Finland were Somalia (93), Afghanistan (19) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (6).

## Unaccompanied minors - Applications 2021–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

A total of 187 decisions were made with regard to unaccompanied minor asylum seekers during the year. Positive decisions accounted for 93 per cent of all decisions (175 decisions). Most of the positive decisions concerned asylum (139 decisions on granting asylum).

Subsidiary protection was granted to nine persons and, in 27 cases, a residence permit was issued on some other grounds. There were three negative decisions, and a decision on the expiry of the application for asylum was made in nine cases.

<sup>91</sup> The statistics are taken from the Finnish Immigration Service’s statistical services, unless otherwise stated.

## Legislative amendments and other developments

An amendment to the provision of the Aliens Act on the determination of a child's minority affected the status of unaccompanied minors in family reunification. As a result of the amendment, only unaccompanied minors who have been granted international protection are in a special position when determining minority. A family member of an unaccompanied minor who has been granted asylum may be granted a residence permit if the unaccompanied minor was a minor on the day they lodged the asylum application on the basis of which they were granted asylum. If a sponsor who has been granted asylum arrived in Finland as an unaccompanied minor and has been a recipient of subsidiary protection, the sponsor must have been a minor on the day when their family member's residence permit application became pending in order to grant the family member a residence permit.<sup>92</sup>

The validity of the temporary act that has reduced the reception allowance and the spending allowance paid to those covered by the reception system was extended until 11 June 2026.<sup>93</sup> The amendment also affected unaccompanied minors, as the spending allowance may be granted to unaccompanied children who receive full maintenance from the reception units for minors.<sup>94</sup> The intention is to make the changes to the reception allowance and the spending allowance permanent as part of a broader reform of the Reception Act.<sup>95</sup>

The new Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, which entered into force at the beginning of 2025, also brought some changes to the services for unaccompanied minors residing in Finland. As a result of the amendments, the wellbeing services counties are now responsible for organising the housing and care of unaccompanied minors who have been granted a residence permit in Finland. They are now organised under the Social Welfare Act. The wellbeing services counties now also issue an appealable administrative decision on the accommodation of an unaccompanied minor. In addition, the Economic Development Centres are now responsible for the guidance, planning and supervision related to the representatives of unaccompanied minors who have been granted a residence permit.<sup>96</sup>

At the beginning of the year, amendments to the Criminal Code on the criminalisation of female genital mutilation also entered into force. While female genital mutilation was already punishable before the adoption of the amendments to the Criminal Code, it is now more clearly criminalised under the act, as separate provisions were introduced criminalising female genital mutilation and its preparation. The new provision on the preparation of female genital mutilation covers aspects such as taking a woman or girl abroad for the purpose of genital mutilation, and the coercion and persuasion of a woman or girl to undergo FGM. The amendment aims to strengthen the protection of the life and health of women and girls, as well as their physical integrity and sexual self-determination.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (16 June 2025).

<sup>93</sup> Government (18 September 2025).

<sup>94</sup> Ministry of the Interior (4 July 2024).

<sup>95</sup> Government (18 September 2025).

<sup>96</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, email 5 December 2026.

<sup>97</sup> Government (13 June 2024), Amendments to the Criminal Code to clarify the punishability of female genital mutilation.

# 7. Integration

## Legislative amendments and other developments

### Comprehensive reform of the Integration Act

Several legislative amendments concerning the promotion of integration entered into force in 2025. The comprehensive reform of the Integration Act is the largest of the legislative amendments. The new Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (Integration Act)<sup>98</sup> was approved in 2023 and entered into force at the beginning of 2025. The objectives of the comprehensive reform of the Integration Act include strengthening the employment of immigrants and, in particular, the integration of immigrants who are outside the labour force, clarifying the responsibilities of the different bodies responsible for the promotion of integration, and strengthening multi-sectoral cooperation.<sup>99</sup>

The comprehensive reform also updated the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration to correspond to the changes arising from transfers of responsibilities between the authorities. As part of the reform of employment and economic development services, the responsibility for the promotion of integration for customers who are job-seekers was transferred to municipalities. The responsibility for integration services organised as employment-promoting services, such as integration training, also now lies with municipalities. This means that, starting from 2025, municipalities have had overall responsibility for the promotion of integration.<sup>100</sup>

The adopted Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration also contains more detailed provisions on issues such as the integration programme and the organisation of integration training. As part of the integration programme, integration customers have been offered classes on orientation to Finnish society available in multiple languages since the beginning of 2025. The aim of the classes is to provide immigrants with a comprehensive understanding of activities in Finnish society, and aspects such as Finnish values and norms, rights and obligations.<sup>101</sup>

Under the new Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, integration training for immigrants registered as jobseekers is primarily organised as labour market training. The new model aims to support the capability of municipalities to provide sufficient integration training services and respond to regional training needs, and to support immigrants in transitioning to working life or further studies more quickly.<sup>102</sup>

Meanwhile, the aim for adult immigrants aged under 25 is to complete at least upper secondary-level education. This is intended to support the acquisition of the skills and professional qualifications required in the Finnish labour market, which, in turn, aims to further promote the person's employment and career development in the long term.<sup>103</sup>

The new Act also lays down provisions on the final examination of language proficiency as part of integration training courses. The final examination of language proficiency was introduced to inte-

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<sup>98</sup> Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration 681/2023.

<sup>99</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (undated f), Comprehensive reform of the Integration Act (KOTO24) strengthens employment of immigrants and clarifies responsibilities of operators.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> KEHA Centre, email, 6 February 2026.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, email, 5 February 2026.

gration training courses beginning after the start of 2025. The Finnish National Agency for Education is in charge of organising the examinations and the related system. The final examination is used to test the different types of language skills acquired by those who have completed integration training, i.e., their listening and reading comprehension and speaking and writing skills.<sup>104</sup>

## **New responsibilities of the KEHA Centre**

As a result of the comprehensive reforms of the Integration Act, the KEHA Centre (Development and Administrative Centre for the ELY Centres and TE Offices) will have responsibility for supporting the development of skills and services in the promotion of integration, contributing to the coordination of services and providing legal advice related to the implementation of the Integration Act. The KEHA Centre will also serve as the authority responsible for monitoring the promotion of integration in the future.<sup>105</sup>

Due to the legislative amendment, most of the services provided by the Centre of Expertise in Immigrant Integration of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment were transferred to the KEHA Centre. For example, the KEHA Centre became responsible for the Integration Partnership Programme as of the start of 2025.<sup>106</sup> Four strategic priorities were selected for the Partnership Programme for the period 2025–2026: increasing and diversifying partners, identifying the role of the third sector, strengthening competence in partnerships and supporting access to information while building the future.<sup>107</sup>

In addition, the responsibility for administering the Integration.fi online service and the partnership platform operating on the website was transferred to the KEHA Centre.<sup>108</sup> The responsibility for the integration database and the Integration Indicators Database related to the monitoring of integration was also transferred from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment to the KEHA Centre.<sup>109</sup> Since the beginning of 2025, the KEHA Centre has also been responsible for developing integration client information systems related to promoting integration. At the beginning of the year, the integration client information system ICDS, aimed at municipal integration services, was introduced, and the system will be further developed in the period 2025–2026.<sup>110</sup>

The KEHA Centre is now also responsible for the maintenance, development and distribution of basic information material on Finland provided to immigrants. Under the new Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, the provided information kit must contain basic information on the rights and obligations of immigrants in Finnish society. Currently, the Welcome to Finland guide<sup>111</sup> serves as the basic information kit, but it was updated in 2025, and a new updated version will be published in 2026. In the future, the information will be provided as a combination of a mobile application and an online service.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Integration.fi (23 January 2025), Final examination of language proficiency begins – Finnish National Agency for Education is in charge of the system.

<sup>105</sup> Integration.fi (16 December 2024), KEHA Centre to offer work and skills support to professionals from 1 January 2025.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Integration.fi (undated), The partnership programme is leading us towards an inclusive society.

<sup>108</sup> Integration.fi (16 December 2024).

<sup>109</sup> KEHA Centre, email, 6 February 2026.

<sup>110</sup> Integration.fi (28 January 2025), Integration client information system ICDS has been launched.

<sup>111</sup> Government (20 May 2022), Welcome to Finland.

<sup>112</sup> KEHA Centre, email, 6 February 2026.

## Government actions to promote integration

The Government Integration Programme also entered into force at the start of 2025.<sup>113</sup> In accordance with the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, the Government Integration Programme presenting objectives and measures will be drawn up for each government term. The Government's integration policy is based on learning Finnish or Swedish, employment, and familiarisation with Finnish society and compliance with its rules. The objectives of integration during the government term are integration in Finland through work, immigrants to take more responsibility for their integration with an increased focus on obligations, combating the emergence of parallel societies in Finland and making sure that the whole family, including women and children, integrate. The programme for promoting integration contains a total of 32 measures used to pursue the objectives.<sup>114</sup>

The year 2025 also included the work to prepare the integration services reform. The proposal for the reform was submitted for a consultation round at the end of the year. The purpose of the project is to make amendments to the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration and the integration to shift the focus of the system from the rights of migrants to their duties and responsibilities.<sup>115</sup> In the future, the objectives of integration, individual integration plans and integration training would be defined more clearly, and in connection with services for immigrants, the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration would mainly focus on early-stage integration services. The initial phase of integration and access to services would also be accelerated. The amendments would also bring updates to the training that promotes integration and language proficiency. In the future, the municipal employment authorities would organise integration and literacy training. The funding system for training that promotes integration and language proficiency would be clarified and simplified by merging funding into a single channel, i.e., the responsibility would shift to municipalities. The purpose of the proposal is also to implement the Government's decisions on savings in integration, and the aim is to submit it to Parliament during the spring session of 2026.<sup>116</sup>

In line with the Government Programme, the Government also aimed to strengthen the learning of Finnish and Swedish among pupils with an immigrant background in basic education. For instance, the Government made amendments to the Basic Education Act<sup>117</sup> whose aim is to improve the Finnish and Swedish proficiency of pupils with an immigrant background. The purpose of the changes is to enable the provision of additional preparatory training after pupils have completed preparatory education for basic education to ensure that they have adequate language skills. Moreover, as a result of the amendments, only those pupils with an immigrant background not born in Finland may participate in the training. The legislative amendments will enter into force on 1 August 2026.<sup>118</sup>

In its mid-term policy review session, the Government decided to allocate EUR 8 million to provide opportunities for education providers to make instruction more effective in the syllabus for Finnish and Swedish as a second language. The Finnish National Agency for Education updated the National core curriculum for primary and lower secondary (basic) education with regard to the syllabus in Finnish and Swedish as a second language and literature and specified issues such as who the

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<sup>113</sup> Government (2025), Government Integration Programme 2024-2027.

<sup>114</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (16 January 2025), Government Integration Programme emphasises employment, personal responsibility and obligations

<sup>115</sup> Government (undated a), Government proposal for the integration services reform.

<sup>116</sup> Government (30 December 2025), Integration services reform submitted for consultation round.

<sup>117</sup> Basic Education Act 628/1998.

<sup>118</sup> Government (13 January 2026), Improving the language proficiency in Finnish and Swedish of pupils with an immigrant background; Finnish National Agency for Education, email, 10 February 2026.

instruction is intended for. The aim is that pupils transition from the syllabus in Finnish and Swedish as a second language and literature to the syllabus in Finnish/Swedish language and literature once they have achieved sufficient language proficiency. Other measures introduced by the Government included increasing resources for the number of weekly lesson hours in Finnish and Swedish instruction and remedial instruction in the language of education, and awarded equality grants for early childhood education and care, and pre-primary and basic education.<sup>119</sup>

Additionally, EUR 5 million of the 2025 Budget was allocated to facilitating the integration of immigrant women in liberal adult education, and the funding for providing integration training in Swedish was increased by EUR 1 million.<sup>120</sup> The aim is to improve the opportunities of immigrant women to have acquired the level of Finnish and Swedish language proficiency necessary in working life at the end of the integration period.<sup>121</sup>

## Examples of projects promoting integration

Several AMIF-funded projects promoting integration were also launched in 2025. The City of Lappeenranta received project funding to strengthen language-supported education in basic education provided in Lappeenranta, and the City of Turku received funding to develop guidance for young people arriving in Finland in lower secondary school age and support their families.<sup>122</sup>

In the non-governmental organisation sector, the Finnish Federation of Graduate Women launched a project, *Sosiaalista suomea – Toisto-menetelmä kouluihin* ('Finnish through social interactions – the Toisto method for schools'). The aim of the project is to create a model for the education preparing pupils for basic education to support the language learning of foreign-language speaking children and their families, and to learn other information useful in daily life. The Deaconess Institute received project funding for the *Vamos - Stay and Study* project, which supports student engagement among young people from third countries and their graduation from partner institutions. *Nuorten Ystävät*, a youth organisation, received funding for their *Make It* project, which aims to prevent school drop-outs and promote systemic support for families. Additionally, *Kuopion Setlementti Puijola ry* received project funding for its *Growing Together* project, which organises family club activities for immigrant families. The aim is to promote the overall well-being of families, cooperation between schools and homes, and integration.<sup>123</sup>

## Anti-racism work & non-discrimination

In 2025, the work on the Government's action plan to combat racism, *A New Boost for Equality in Finland: Government action plan to combat racism and promote equality*.<sup>124</sup> The measures carried out under the programme are implemented in various ministries and are coordinated by the Prime Minister's Office.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Government (13 January 2026).

<sup>120</sup> Government (23 September 2024), EUR 8.45 billion budget proposal for the Ministry of Education and Culture for 2025.

<sup>121</sup> Ministry of Education and Culture, email, 6 February 2026.

<sup>122</sup> EU Home Affairs Funds (undated a).

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Government (2024), *A New Boost for Equality in Finland: Government action plan to combat racism and promote equality*.

<sup>125</sup> Prime Minister's Office, email, 23 January 2026.

The Government carried out some of the measures in 2025. Under Prime Minister Orpo's leadership, a roundtable discussion was held to promote good relations between population groups.<sup>126</sup> Additionally, the Prime Minister's Office organised a call for applications for discretionary government grants to support work to combat racism in 2025 and 2026, and grants amounting to EUR 240,000 were awarded to ten different projects.<sup>127</sup> A discussion session, "Muslim youth and the media", was organised in May. Its participants included representatives of the media, researchers, authorities and representatives of Muslim communities, and an anti-racism cooperation network was set up in the following autumn. During the year, anti-racism training was also organised for political and administrative leaders with the aim to raise awareness of equality, fairness and racism, and how to identify and prevent it in Finnish society.<sup>128</sup>

The "Action, not only words" campaign against racism was also continued in 2025. The campaign included organising webinars and other events for various target groups, and by the end of the year, 95 partners, including municipalities, educational institutions, companies, non-governmental organisations and sports and exercise associations, had joined the campaign by taking in total nearly 500 concrete anti-racism measures.<sup>129</sup>

The Government also appointed the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) for the new four-year term 2025–2029. The Advisory Board, operating in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice, serves as a forum for dialogue and promotes cooperation between immigrants, ethnic minorities, public authorities, political parties and civil society organisations.<sup>130</sup> In 2025, ETNO's activities included events enabling dialogue between decision-makers and young people who had experienced racism. ETNO also conducted a survey among its members and professionals in municipalities and the wellbeing sector on their information needs related to the prevention of honour-based violence, and the obtained data will be used as the basis for planning events for 2026. In addition, a coordination network for a constructive public debate was established.<sup>131</sup>

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Culture published a programme to develop equality and non-discrimination in education in 2025.<sup>132</sup> The purpose of the programme is to promote equality and non-discrimination in early childhood education and care, schools and educational institutions. It aims to provide education and training professionals with tools to combat bullying, harassment and discrimination based on personal traits such as gender, physical appearance, worldview, sexuality, ethnic background, membership in national minorities, disability or illness in early childhood education and care, schools and educational institutions.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Government (11 March 2025), Prime Minister Orpo's roundtable selects measures to promote good relations between population groups.

<sup>127</sup> Government (undated b), Discretionary government grants for developing civil society organisations' work to combat racism.

<sup>128</sup> Prime Minister's Office, email, 23 January 2026.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Government (18 June 2025 b), New Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) appointed.

<sup>131</sup> Prime Minister's Office, email, 23 January 2026.

<sup>132</sup> Ministry of Education and Culture (2025), Programme to develop equality and non-discrimination in education.

<sup>133</sup> Ministry of Education and Culture (undated), Programme to develop equality and non-discrimination in education.

# 8. Citizenship

## Applications and decisions<sup>134</sup>

In 2025, a record-breaking 14,703 persons acquired Finnish citizenship, which represents an increase from 2024 (13,973). Of these persons, 13,483 obtained citizenship by application and 1,206 by declaration.<sup>135</sup>

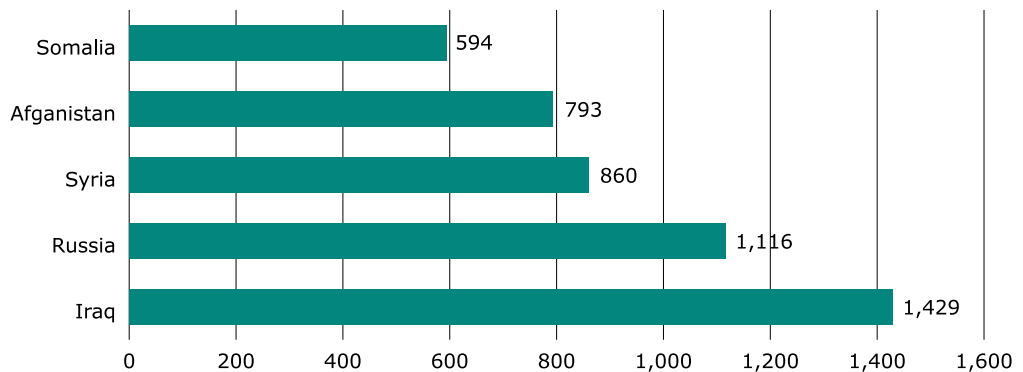
In 2025, a total of 11,237 citizenship applications were lodged, which is 34% less than in 2024. Following the record years of 2023–2024, the number of applications returned to earlier levels. The number of applications reached an exceptionally high level from 2023 to 2024 before legislative reforms in line with the Government Programme entered into force.

According to the assessment of the Finnish Immigration Service, there was a particular uptick in applications lodged during the autumn and the end of the year after the Government accepted the second-phase amendments to the Citizenship Act in October. The legislative reform, which entered into force on 17 December 2025, brought along stricter requirements concerning the applicants' livelihoods and integrity, and the establishment of their identity.<sup>136</sup>

As in the previous year, the highest numbers of citizenship applications came from citizens of Iraq, the Russian Federation, Syria and Afghanistan. Approximately 28 per cent of those who applied for citizenship had been beneficiaries of international protection.

The number of decisions on citizenship applications and declarations was 15,809, representing a slight increase from the previous year (2024: 14,112). Of the decisions, 85 per cent were positive and 11 per cent were negative.

## Citizenship applications - top 5 nationalities 2025



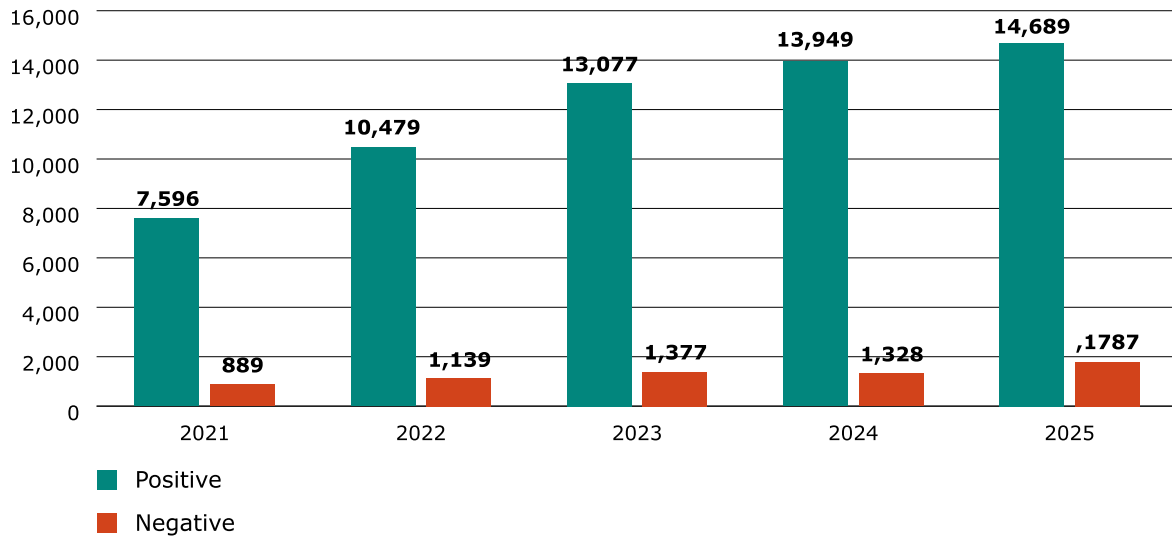
Source: Finnish Immigration Service

<sup>134</sup> The statistics are taken from the Finnish Immigration Service's statistical services <https://tilastot.migri.fi>, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>135</sup> Certain groups can also acquire citizenship through the declaration procedure, which provides a faster and simpler way to obtain Finnish citizenship. These groups include former Finnish citizens, Nordic citizens, young persons between 18 and 22 years of age who have lived in Finland long enough, adopted children between 12 and 17 years of age, children born abroad and out of wedlock to a Finnish father or a Finnish non-birth mother.

<sup>136</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (17 December 2025), Amendments to Citizenship Act enter into force on 17 December 2025

## Decisions on citizenship applications and declarations 2021–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

In 2025, approximately 92 per cent of those who were granted citizenship acquired it through the application procedure. However, the following groups can also acquire citizenship through the declaration procedure:

- former Finnish citizens,
- Nordic citizens,
- young persons aged 18–22 who have lived in Finland for a sufficient period of time,
- adopted children aged 12–17,
- children born abroad and out of wedlock to a Finnish father or a Finnish non-birth mother

A total of 1,294 decisions were made on citizenship declarations, 93 per cent of which were positive (1,206). In the declaration procedure, the most common grounds for granting Finnish citizenship were the person being aged 18–22 and having lived in Finland for a long time (498 persons). This was in line with the previous year, when this ground surpassed the most common grounds for granting Finnish citizenship in earlier years, namely former Finnish citizenship.

As in the previous years, the largest group to acquire citizenship through the declaration procedure was citizens of Sweden (27 per cent, 264 persons). The number of Swedish citizens granted Finnish citizenship by declaration fell by over a third from the previous year (408).

## Legislative amendments and other developments related to citizenship

Based on a Government Programme entry, the Citizenship Act will be updated and the requirements for naturalisation will be tightened. The Government aims to introduce tighter provisions regarding the period of residence, the integrity requirement, the requirement for sufficient financial resources and the revocation of citizenship, among other things. The Government will also explore the possibility of introducing a citizenship test. According to the Government Programme, successful integration must be a prerequisite for citizenship.<sup>137</sup> The reform of the Citizenship Act will be implemented in stages through three legislative projects.

In 2025, several measures to tighten the provisions of the Citizenship Act were prepared, and the legislative amendments that entered into force at the end of 2025 affected, in particular, the preconditions for adequate financial resources and integrity and the loss of citizenship. The amendments aim to encourage immigrants to successfully integrate into Finnish society, engage in employment, and act in compliance with the rules of Finnish society.<sup>138</sup>

The requirements for acquiring Finnish citizenship have been made stricter. As a rule, a person may no longer obtain Finnish citizenship if they have received unemployment benefits or social assistance for longer than three months in total during the past two years.<sup>139</sup>

In the context of the integrity requirements, the amendments extended the waiting period that is imposed on the basis of criminal offences from a maximum of seven to eight years. As a rule, Finnish citizenship cannot be obtained during the waiting period. Moving forward, the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service and the National Bureau of Investigation may issue security statements also on citizenship declarations in addition to citizenship applications. This means that even if the applicant meets all the requirements for becoming a Finnish citizen, they may no longer acquire citizenship if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that granting of citizenship would endanger national security.<sup>140</sup>

Amendments regarding establishing the identity of the applicant were made in the Citizenship Act, and the applicant's obligation to establish their identity was increased. The amendments will only apply to those who can be reasonably expected to present their national passport.<sup>141</sup>

The threshold for losing citizenship was also lowered. Previously, a person could lose their Finnish citizenship if they had committed a serious offence, such as an act of terrorism or a treason or high treason offence and the sentence imposed was at least five years. As a result of the amendments, the Act now provides that a person may lose their citizenship if they have been sentenced to at least two years of unconditional imprisonment or a combination sentence for one of the offences mentioned above. The amendment also doubled the time during which a decision can be made on the loss of citizenship on the basis of giving false information. This period used to be five years and has now been increased to ten years.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Government (2023).

<sup>138</sup> Ministry of the Interior (23 October 2025), Sufficient financial resources to be required for Finnish citizenship.

<sup>139</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (17 December 2025), Amendments to Citizenship Act enter into force on 17 December 2025.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Government (23 October 2025), Sufficient financial resources to be required for Finnish citizenship.

<sup>142</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (17 December 2025).



In 2025, the Ministry of the Interior also prepared a third project related to the reform of the Citizenship Act, whose purpose is to introduce a citizenship test and to prepare a report on the dual citizenship system in line with the Government Programme. At the beginning of the year, a working group of the Ministry of the Interior published a report on how the citizenship test could be introduced as part of the conditions for obtaining Finnish citizenship. At the end of the year, the Ministry of the Interior submitted its proposals for amendments to the Citizenship Act and other acts for comments. In the future, the citizenship test would be used to assess applicants' knowledge of how Finnish society works, its key principles, and the rights and responsibilities of individuals. The citizenship test would not be required for those who have completed a matriculation examination or a higher education degree in Finnish or Swedish. The proposed legislative amendments are intended to enter into force at the beginning of 2027, at which point the citizenship test would be introduced.<sup>143</sup>

For its part, the Finnish Immigration Service reviewed the definition of a national travel document, which was required for issuing a residence permit, and examined the determination of citizenship status in this context. In 2024, a valid national travel document was set out as a requirement for issuing a residence permit. Based on the Finnish Immigration Service's interpretation of the new legislation, groups such as Palestinians do not meet the requirement as they are considered stateless persons. However, in 2025, the Finnish Immigration Service reassessed its interpretation and determined that travel documents issued by the Palestinian Authority meet the requirements mentioned set for a national travel document, and that Palestinians can be considered Palestinian nationals and not stateless. As a result, they may be granted a residence permit if they meet the other requirements laid down by law.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Government (22 December 2025 b), Citizenship test to assess knowledge of Finnish society and its key principles

<sup>144</sup> Finnish Immigration Service, e-mail, 3 February 2026; Finnish Immigration Service (3 October 2025), Determination of citizenship status and definition of national travel document for residence permit applications reviewed by Finnish Immigration Service.

# 9. Borders, visas and Schengen

## 9.1. Border control and border traffic<sup>145</sup>

Based on the Finnish Border Guard's assessment, the situation at Finland's eastern border and sea areas has continued to be exceptional and marked by tensions since 2022, and this has continued to be the case in 2025. In accordance with Government decisions, border crossing points along the eastern border have remained closed since December 2023. The Government also decided to extend the validity of the Act on Temporary Measures to Combat Instrumentalised Migration until the end of 2026.<sup>146</sup> At the same time, applications for international protection continued to be centralised at border crossing points for air and maritime transport.

The border crossing points at the eastern border were closed throughout 2025. External border traffic increased at the Helsinki-Vantaa and Rovaniemi airports. Approximately 4.8 million people passed through the external border crossing points, representing a 13.4% increase compared to 2024.

In 2025, the Finnish Border Guard received 385 asylum applications, granted a visa to 149 people and issued a decision on refusal of entry or a return decision to 495 persons. The number of refusals of entry remained at the same level as in the previous year, but the number of return decisions increased. The number of asylum applications received decreased from the previous year.

There was no large-scale entry or instrumentalised migration to Finland in 2025. The number of detected illegal border crossings from Russia to Finland was 10. A total of 75 pre-trial investigations related to the arrangement of illegal migration or trafficking in human beings were initiated (2024: 103 cases). The number of investigations related to the arrangement of illegal entry and human trafficking offences was higher compared to the previous year. The number of completed pre-trial investigations for offences concerning the arrangement of illegal entry into Finland was 53, and for a human trafficking offence was one, which was the only pre-trial investigation for a human trafficking offence initiated in 2025.

The activities of the Border Guard liaison officers are a key part of the four-tier access model for border security, and their purpose is to combat illegal migration already in the countries of origin. Prevention of cross-border crime, such as the prevention of illegal entry into Finland and the Schengen area, is a key part of the activities. The liaison officers usually work in Finnish embassies located in different countries. In addition, the liaison officers support carriers operating flights to Finland, provide them with training at the carriers' points of departure, and support them in carrying out check-ins to prevent illegal entry into Finland. In 2025, the liaison officer activities helped prevent a total of 513 unauthorised border crossings.

Bilateral border security cooperation with Russia continued in accordance with the agreement concerning the settlement of border incidents. The Border Guard continued to participate in European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) operations and developed the provision and reception of bilateral border security assistance.

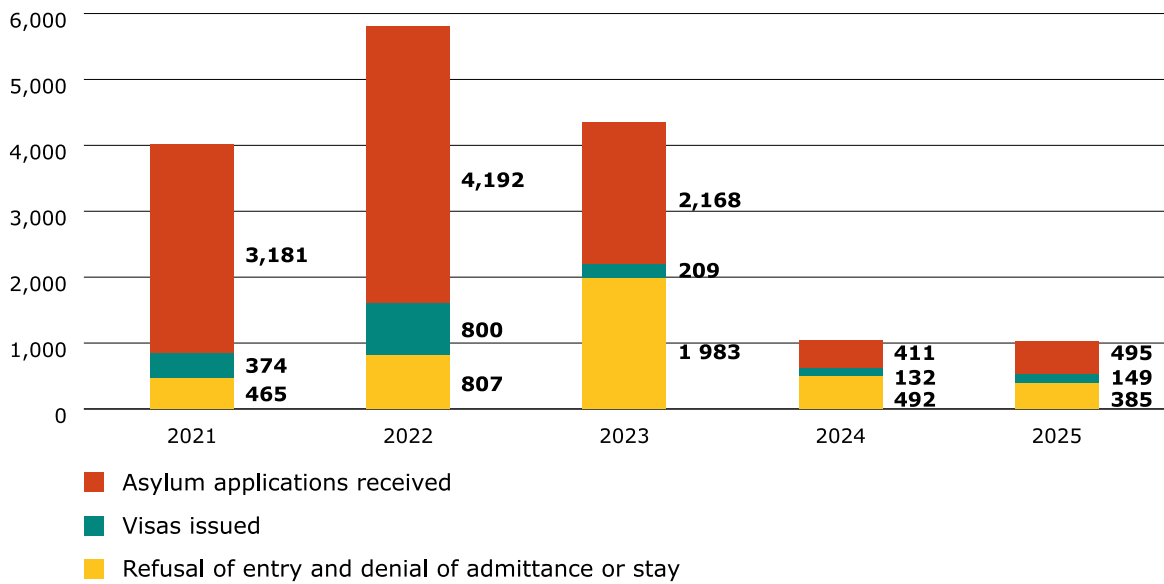
In October 2025, Finland began the gradual introduction of the EU Entry/Exit System (EES). The system is part of the efforts of the EU to enhance the control of its external borders and strengthen its internal security. Border crossings of non-EU nationals and possible data on refusal of entry are

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<sup>145</sup> The information is taken from the 2025 annual report of the Finnish Border Guard, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>146</sup> Government proposal HE18/2025vp

## Observations and follow-up measures of the Border Guard 2021–2025



registered in the EES. As a result of the introduction of the EES, Travel documents will no longer be stamped.<sup>147</sup> The Finnish Border Guard also continued technical preparations for the introduction of the EU Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS).<sup>148</sup>

The Finnish Immigration Service and the National Police Board also launched BMVI projects for the introduction of the EES and ETIAS. A project by the Finnish Immigration Service involved carrying out system development for the UMA electronic case processing system required by the EES Regulation. The National Police Board launched the SIESTA project, which aims to ensure that the police information systems meet the EES and ETIAS system requirements in accordance with EU regulations.<sup>149</sup>

In 2025, the Police began to store biometric identifiers in SIS alerts. The purpose of the measure is to improve the identification of persons wanted in the Schengen area. The measure was initiated based on proposals included in the previous Schengen evaluation.<sup>150</sup>

### 9.2. Visas<sup>151</sup>

A total of 78,031 Schengen visas were issued in Finland in 2025, which was slightly more than in the previous year (2024: 75,386). A total of 91,068 Schengen visa applications were lodged, which was close to the previous year's figure (2024: 91,176).

The figures recorded in 2023 showed a significant decrease from the preceding year (e.g. 2022: 146 463), and the same trend continued in 2024 and 2025. Approximately 13% of the decisions were negative in 2025.

<sup>147</sup> Finnish Border Guard (undated), EES Entry/Exit System.

<sup>148</sup> Finnish Border Guard, email, 3 February 2026.

<sup>149</sup> EU Home Affairs Funds (undated b), Funded BMVI projects.

<sup>150</sup> National Police Board, email, 4 February 2026.

<sup>151</sup> Statistics obtained from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs by email on 17 March 2026, unless otherwise stated.

In spite of the decrease, the number of applications in 2025 showed a continuation of a slightly growing trend when compared to the figures for 2021, when the number of visas issued was fewer than 60,000. While the numbers are growing slightly, they are still far from the peak year of 2019 before the pandemic, when nearly 900,000 visas were issued.

In 2025, Finland continued the restrictions regarding the entry into Finland of Russian nationals in accordance with a Government resolution. Despite this, Russian nationals continue to apply for visas to Finland, for example, for family reasons, but the number of applications has continued to decline sharply, reaching only around 3,800 in 2025. The situation is not expected to change for a long time.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs also reports that the focus of the demand for visas has clearly shifted to Asia, especially China and India. The number of applications is expected to remain significantly below the pre-COVID-19 level also in the longer term.<sup>152</sup>

The diplomatic missions with the largest numbers of visa applications received were New Delhi (17,564), Beijing (11,441), Shanghai (8,871) and Bangkok (8,334). These diplomatic missions also issued the most visas. A total of 15132 visas were issued by the Embassy of Finland in New Delhi, which was slightly more than in the previous year (2024:13,878). In addition to visas issued by diplomatic missions, the Finnish Border Guard issued 149 visas at the Finnish border in 2025.<sup>153</sup>

In addition to Schengen visas, Finland also grants national long-stay visas, known as Type D visas. Type D visas were introduced in Finland in 2022. The visa is related to the streamlining of work-based and study-based immigration. The D visa makes it possible for residence permit applicants to enter Finland immediately after their residence permit has been issued. This means that they will not need to wait for a residence permit card abroad.

A total of 3,305 long-stay visas were issued in 2025. A total of 4151 decisions were made, of which 525 were negative. The remaining applications expired. The most common nationalities in terms of visas issued were Iran (817), India (575) and China (312). In 2025, a total of 4,383 applications were lodged. The most common nationalities were the same: Iran (913), India (889) and China (383).<sup>154</sup>

The Commission Implementing Decision of 6 November 2025 limited the issue of multiple-entry visas to Russian nationals. As a result, Finland also further tightened its national policies and guidelines. Currently, multiple-entry visas may primarily only be issued to close relatives and workers in the transport sector. The Commission's implementing decision concerns visa applications lodged in Russia, but Finland also applies the new rules and policies more broadly. The national policies also include stricter maximum periods of validity (mostly may not exceed 6 months).<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2026), Annual report of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2025

<sup>153</sup> The statistics are taken from the Finnish Immigration Service's statistical services

<sup>154</sup> The statistics are taken from the Finnish Immigration Service's statistical services

<sup>155</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, email, 6 February 2026.

## 10. Irregular migration<sup>156</sup>

In 2025, a total of 662 irregular migrants were found in Finland, a slight decrease from the previous year (2024: 875 people).<sup>157</sup>

There is a degree of ambiguity with regard to statistics on irregular stay. The figure mentioned above is from Eurostat, and it is based on the statistics on irregular stay maintained by the National Bureau of Investigation in line with Eurostat's EIL statistics criteria. The statistics on irregular stay include third-country nationals found to be staying in the country irregularly. This also includes asylum seekers who have been found to have arrived in the country or to be present in the country without residence documentation before applying for asylum.

The figure also includes persons found to be in violation of an entry ban. Persons working without a permit include persons who have worked without any type of permit that gives them the right to work. This does not include persons who have worked in a manner that violates the terms of their permit, or whose working hours have exceeded the maximum number of hours allowed.

The statistic includes cases found within the country, at the internal borders, at the external borders when entering outside the border crossing points and when leaving the country through border crossing points at the external borders. Cases found when arriving at the border crossing points at the external borders are not included in the statistics. The statistics only include cases found by the authorities in the context of a permit process, in monitoring activities, or in a criminal investigation. The statistics are person-based, meaning that each individual appears only once in each table. The person's identity is established based on their full name and date of birth.

### Irregular migrants who are citizens of third countries, top 10 nationalities in 2025 (Note: excluding persons working without a work permit)

India	60
China	57
Somalia	37
Turkey	34
Russia	32
Gambia	30
United States	30
Iraq	27
Belarus	27
Stateless	12
<b>Top 10 total</b>	<b>346</b>
<b>Total all</b>	<b>662</b>

Source: National Bureau of Investigation

<sup>156</sup> The Finnish equivalent for the term is "säännösten vastainen maahanmuutto", which is found also in the latest EMN Glossary (2025). Finnish legislation and authorities, however, still use also the terms "laiton maahantulo" (illegal entry into the country) or "laiton maassa oleskelu" (illegal stay in the country). Source: EMN (2025), Asylum and Migration Glossary 10.0

<sup>157</sup> Source: Police

The National Bureau of Investigation also maintains statistics on irregular stay and working without a permit, with statistical criteria that differ from those of the aforementioned statistics reported to Eurostat. Unlike in the statistics reported to Eurostat, the NBI's statistics also include asylum seekers found within the country who have reported themselves to the authorities when applying for asylum, but who did not, at the time of applying for asylum, have the right of residence in Finland. Many asylum seekers do not have a travel document or a residence permit or visa when they arrive in the country, so they are registered as irregular migrants. Furthermore, in those statistics, the figures are based on the number of cases, not persons, which means that one individual may be counted multiple times in the statistics.

Based on these statistics, in 2025, the total number of cases of irregular migration was 2,153, which is 31 per cent less compared to 2024. The most significant decrease was found in the number of first-time asylum applicants staying in the country irregularly.

In 2025, the most common nationalities reported for illegal stay were Somalia (239) and Iraq (204). Citizens of Somalia were the largest group of first-time asylum seekers illegally present in the country, and Somalia was also the biggest nationality in violations of the Aliens Act related to residence permits, whereas citizens of Russia were the largest group in violations of the Aliens Act related to travel documents.

The NBI has stated that, in practice, a significant proportion of the cases that are recorded in the statistics as irregular stay are minor offences, such as brief periods without a valid permit, which are detected when a document or permit process becomes pending. It should further be noted that a significant proportion of the cases of irregular stay are identified during the permit process, not through active monitoring efforts by the authorities.

## **Irregular employment**

The Police compile separate statistics on illegal employment. In 2025, a total of 120 third-country nationals working without any work permit were found in Finland, which is on the same level as in the previous year (2024: 111).

Persons working without a permit include persons who have worked without any type of permit that gives them the right to work. This does not include persons who have worked in a manner that violates the terms of their permit, or whose working hours have exceeded the maximum number of hours allowed.

Irregular employment is part of the informal economy. It is linked to irregular stay, as undeclared employment is the most convenient means of livelihood for most irregular migrants. However, not nearly all of the persons who work illegally are staying irregularly in the country.

## Third-country nationals working without a work permit, top 10 (11) nationalities, 2025

Turkey	11
Ukraine	11
Stateless	9
Vietnam	8
Kosovo	7
Uzbekistan	7
Iraq	6
United States	6
China	5
Tajikistan	5
Russia	5
<b>Top 10 (11) total</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Total all</b>	<b>120</b>

Source: National Bureau of Investigation

## Legislative amendments and other developments related to irregular migration

Last year, the Government aimed to remove incentives for irregular migrants by restricting their right to health services and therefore restoring the legal situation that existed before the previous parliamentary term.<sup>158</sup>

The Act on Organising Healthcare and Social Welfare Services<sup>159</sup> was amended so that the wellbeing services counties no longer have a statutory obligation to provide non-urgent services for third-country nationals irregularly residing in the country. However, urgent care must still be arranged for everyone in the future, particularly where refusal would be manifestly unreasonable due to a person's state of health or disability, or refusal would seriously endanger the health of another person, the population or a minor for whose care the person is responsible. Furthermore, children should receive necessary healthcare services to the same extent as the residents of the wellbeing services counties, and healthcare services related to pregnancy for women staying or residing illegally in the country must be provided to the same extent as before.<sup>160</sup>

The Finnish Immigration Service also introduced a new guideline on the establishment of identity using a reliable identity document. Section 35 of the Aliens Act was amended in 2024, as a result of which, a requirement for the reliable establishment of an applicant's identity using a national travel document was added as a condition for the issue of a permit.<sup>161</sup> The guidelines harmonise the Finnish Immigration Service's practices related to the establishment of identity, and the reliable establishment of identity aims to prevent abuses related to, for instance, permit processes.

<sup>158</sup> Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (undated), Legislative amendment concerning health services for individuals residing in the country without a right of residence.

<sup>159</sup> Act on Organising Healthcare and Social Welfare Services 612/2021.

<sup>160</sup> Government (15 May 2025), Government proposes changes to rights of migrants with illegal status to healthcare services.

<sup>161</sup> Finnish Immigration Service, email, 2 February 2026.



## 11. Actions addressing trafficking in human beings

### Residence permits issued to victims of trafficking in human beings

When processing applications, the Finnish Immigration Service may observe indications of trafficking in human beings. This does not necessarily mean that the applicant is a victim of trafficking in human beings. Rather, it means that the authorities suspect this could have happened. The grounds for a residence permit can include international protection, compassionate grounds or being a victim of trafficking in human beings.

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 2025, first residence permits for a victim of trafficking in human beings were issued to just two persons, which represents a major decrease from the previous year (2024: 26 cases). Extended permits for victims of trafficking in human beings were issued to 66 persons, which, by contrast, showed a substantial increase from the previous year (2024: 42).<sup>162</sup>

### Victims of trafficking in human beings included in the Assistance System<sup>163</sup>

In 2025, the number of applications registered in the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking was 467. The number of clients entering the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking was 271, representing an increase from the previous year (2024: 207). In addition, 32 minor children of clients entered the Assistance System. The number of negative decisions was 154. The main reasons for receiving a negative decision were the absence of a need for assistance (49%) and that the case was not considered to constitute trafficking in human beings (40%).

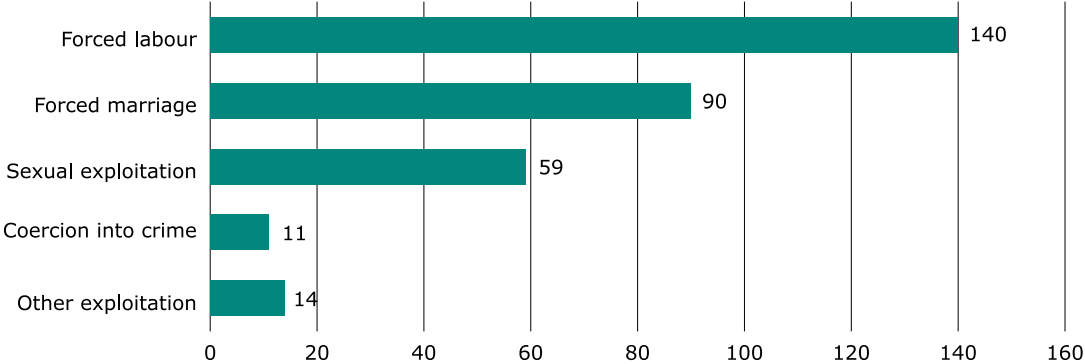
Half of the applications were received from the Finnish Immigration Service and reception centres. One in five applications was lodged by victims themselves. The share of applications submitted by wellbeing services counties doubled from the previous year.

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<sup>162</sup> Source: Statistical services of the Finnish Immigration Service

<sup>163</sup> Information taken from the Annual Review of the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking 2025, unless otherwise stated

### Forms of trafficking – New clients of the Assistance System 2025



Source: Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking  
 \*(primary and secondary cases, total of 314 cases, 271 person)

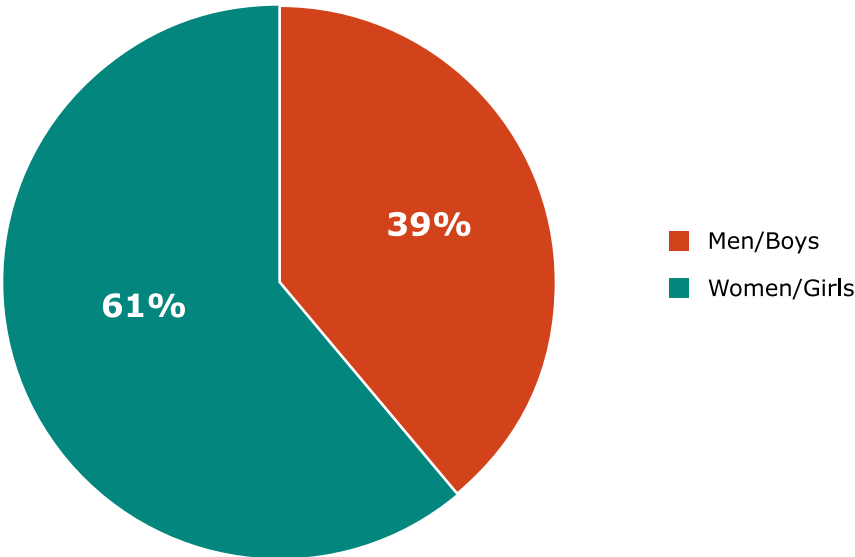
Forced labour was the most significant form of trafficking in human beings (51%) in 2025, as was the case in previous years. Forced marriage emerged as the second-most common form of trafficking in human beings (33%). The number of forced marriages (90) increased from the previous year (66) and reached its highest level ever. Victims of sexual exploitation accounted for 21% of all new clients (59).

The new clients represented 50 different nationalities. The most common nationalities were Nepal and Somalia. There were also Finnish nationals among those exploited. There were 18 of them in total (7%).

There were gender-specific differences in the forms of exploitation. For men, forced labour was the most common form of exploitation (82%). For women, forced marriage (45%) and sexual exploitation (24%) were the most common forms.

In total, 4% of the clients were minors, 42% were aged from 18 to 29, 35% from 30 to 39, 15% from 40 to 49 and 3% from 50 to 59. Three clients were older than 59 years of age. In other words, the majority of the clients were young adults. According to the Assistance System, the age structure of the clients has become slightly younger.

### Gender distribution – New clients of the Assistance System 2025



According to the Assistance System, 141 people were victims of trafficking in human beings in Finland in 2025. Of them, 86 were men and 55 women. The victims represented 31 nationalities. The most common nationalities were Nepal (42%, 59 people) and Finland (12%, 17 people).

Most (101 cases, 68%) of those who had become victims in Finland were victims of forced labour. The number of victims of forced labour in Finland increased considerably from the previous year, when their number was 54. The most common sectors where forced labour occurred included the forestry and logging, the catering industry, agriculture and gardening, and construction.

In recent years, the trend has been that an increasing number of persons who have potentially become victims of trafficking in human beings in Finland have entered the Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking. In previous years, a majority of the persons entering the Assistance System were classified as having become victims of trafficking in human beings outside Finland.

## **Legislative amendments and other developments related to the prevention of trafficking in human beingsa**

A Ministry of Justice project to combat trafficking in human beings (“Tehoa ihmiskaupan vastaiseen työhön”)<sup>164</sup> prepared a national referral mechanism (NRM) for victims of trafficking in human beings, on which the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Handbook for Identification and Assistance of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings was published. The handbook provides information and support for the identification and assistance of victims of trafficking in human beings, and it is intended to serve as a practical tool to help improve the identification of victims, their referral to services, and the organisation of services and care for them. A further aim is to support the development of harmonised practices nationally.<sup>165</sup> During the project, the implementation of the handbook was supported through 31 training sessions, whose participants included over 1,800 professionals from different parts of Finland. An online course was also developed based on the handbook and published in the digital eOppiva learning environment.<sup>166</sup>

In addition, the amendments to the Seasonal Workers Act, intended to improve the position of foreign berry pickers, entered into force on 6 February 2020. Due to the problems discovered in the wild berry sector, the Government outlined in May 2024 that in future the picking of wild berries will no longer be equated with tourism and will be instead treated as an activity based primarily on seasonal work in an employment relationship. This means that companies will be required to employ pickers in a contractual employment relationship. As a result, the wild berry sector will be brought into line with other sectors requiring seasonal labour. The aim is that an employment relationship will make it easier to monitor that the rights of pickers are realised already during the application process for a residence permit and after the entry into the country. Improving the status of berry pickers is part of the Government’s Action plan for preventing work-related exploitation.<sup>167</sup>

Efforts were also made in 2025 to promote cooperation between police officers investigating human trafficking offences and occupational safety and health authorities, as the number of cases concerning labour exploitation has increased and the police are unable to process all cases on their own. For example, the occupational safety and health authority shared its premises with the police,

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<sup>164</sup> Ministry of Justice (undated a), Tehoa ihmiskaupan vastaiseen työhön.

<sup>165</sup> Ministry of Justice (2025), National Referral Mechanism (NRM): Handbook for Identification and Assistance of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings.

<sup>166</sup> Ministry of Justice, email, 16 January 2026.

<sup>167</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (10 October 2024), Government proposes amendments to Seasonal Workers Act to improve status of foreign berry pickers.



enabling police investigators to work in the same facilities with its staff. The aim is to make the sharing of information easier, plan operations more effectively, and conduct investigations in real time.<sup>168</sup>

In addition, a separate mention of forced marriage was added to the provisions on trafficking in human beings in the Criminal Code. In the future, forced marriage or comparable union will be treated as an act punishable as trafficking in human beings. A union comparable to marriage may be, for example, a religious marriage that has not been officially registered. Forced marriage may refer to both forcing a person to marry as well as preventing a person from leaving their marriage or comparable union. The act entered into force on 1 January 2025.<sup>169</sup>

In September 2025, amendments to the Act on Crime Prevention by the Border Guard were adopted<sup>170</sup>, which included giving the Finnish Border Guard new powers related to preventing and investigating human trafficking offences. Additionally, the scope of the Finnish Border Guard's use of secret intelligence gathering methods and covert coercive measures was expanded.

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<sup>168</sup> Finnish Supervisory Agency, email, 29 January 2026.

<sup>169</sup> Ministry of Justice (6 June 2024), The punishability of forced marriage clarified; Ministry of Justice (undated b), The criminalisation of forced marriage under the Criminal Code.

<sup>170</sup> Act amending the Act on Crime Prevention by the Border Guard (399/2025)

## 12. Return and readmissions

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.<sup>171</sup>

**Refusal of entry** concerns persons who have not had a residence permit for Finland and who do not fulfil the requirements for residence.<sup>172</sup>

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

### Removal decisions

In 2025, the number of refusal of entry decisions was 4,307.<sup>173</sup>

The Finnish Immigration Service made a total of 3,128 decisions on refusal of entry<sup>174</sup> and the Police made 891 such decisions.<sup>175</sup> The Finnish Border Guard, in turn, refused entry to 288 people.

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. The figure also includes refusal of entry decisions made by the Finnish Immigration Service on the proposal of the Police or the border control authorities. Typically, the largest category among these is refusal of entry decisions made in connection with a negative asylum decision. Consequently, the number of removal decisions correlates somewhat with the number of asylum seekers entering the country.

As in the previous year, relatively few asylum seekers entered Finland in 2025. Consequently, as in the previous year, the number of refusal of entry decisions made by the Finnish Immigration Service was relatively low when compared to the years when large numbers of asylum seekers entered Finland.

A total of 2,774 deportation decisions were made in 2025, which is over 40 per cent more than in the previous year (2024: 1,965).<sup>176</sup> The clear majority (2,605) of the deportation decisions were related to irregular stay.

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<sup>171</sup> 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)

<sup>172</sup> The most common scenario for refusal of entry is removing a person who has already entered the country (Section 142, subsection 2, paragraph 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, paragraphs 1–3 of the Aliens Act).

<sup>173</sup> The total number of decisions on refusal of entry made by the Finnish Immigration Service, the Police and the Finnish Border Guard.

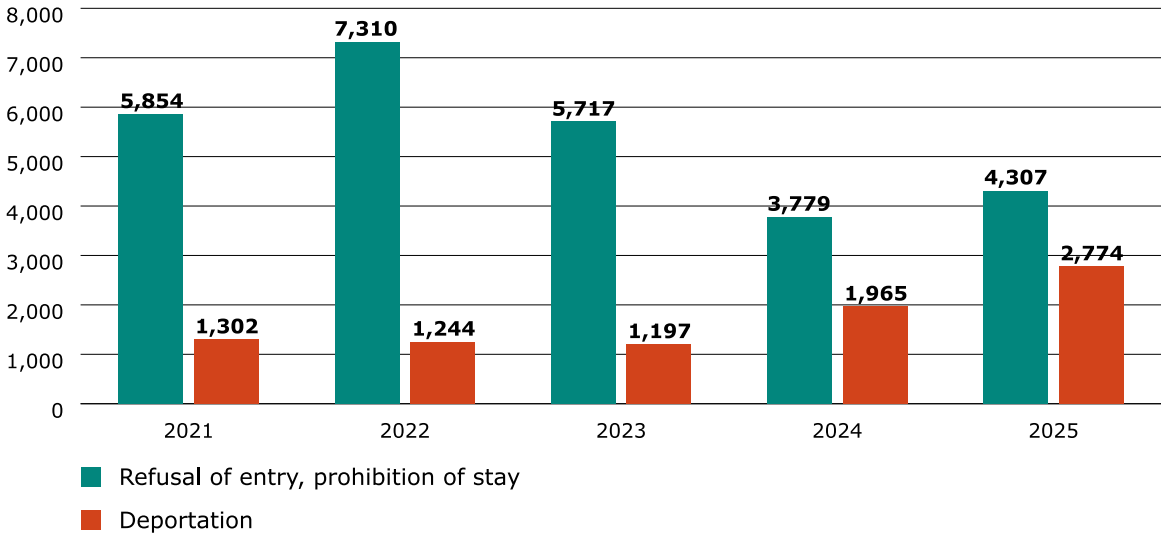
<sup>174</sup> Statistical services of the Finnish Immigration Service

<sup>175</sup> Source: Police

<sup>176</sup> Statistical services of the Finnish Immigration Service

The number of deportation decisions based on criminal offences was 169, which was close to the previous year's level (126). 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.

### Removal decisions 2021–2025



Source: Finnish Immigration Service, Police, Finnish Border Guard

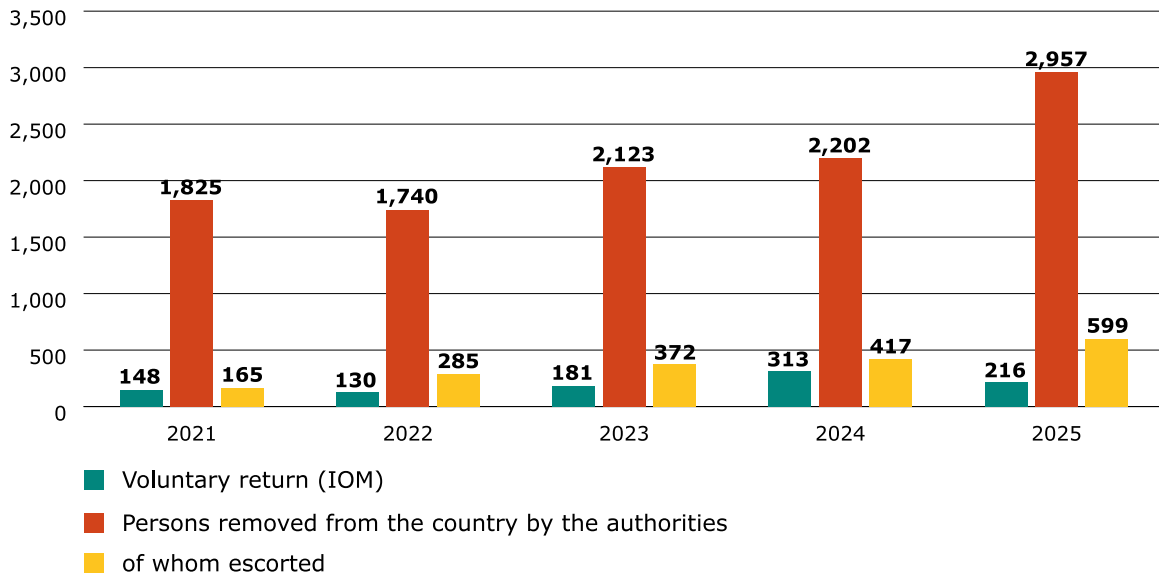
### Voluntary return

In 2025, the number of people returning to their countries of origin through the voluntary return programme was 216, representing around 30 per cent reduction from the previous year (2024: 313). There were altogether 38 countries of return. Most returnees returned to Russia (56), Iraq (25) and Turkey (22).<sup>177</sup>

The number of voluntary returnees has decreased steadily each year since the record-breaking year of 2016. This is partly due to the declining number of asylum seekers, which has, over the past few years, also been influenced by the travel restrictions introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The decrease in the number of returnees compared to last year is especially explained by the change in assistance for voluntary return, introduced at the beginning of 2024, and the higher-than-usual amounts of assistance during the transition period.

<sup>177</sup> IOM Finland, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Statistics 1 January to 31 December 2024 (Finland).

## Returnees through the voluntary return programme and persons removed from the country by the authorities 2021–2025



Source: IOM and Police

## Legislative amendments and other developments related to return matters

The Aliens Act<sup>178</sup> was amended in 2025 to speed up the implementation of deportation decisions. In the future, the implementation of the deportation decision for those who have applied for international protection will correspond to the implementation of the refusal of entry decisions. For example, the amendment that entered into force last year applies to cases where a person has been ordered to be deported and seeks international protection in order to delay their removal from the country.<sup>179</sup>

whether the regulation on deportation and denial of admittance or stay can be further harmonised or combined into a single procedure for removal from the country. The project also prepared a legislative amendment that would make it possible to impose an entry ban on aliens residing outside Finland who have no permit history in Finland, an EU Member State or the Schengen area, or whose residence permit is no longer valid. The draft government proposal was submitted for a round of comments at the end of 2025.<sup>180</sup>

In addition, the provisions of the Aliens Act on detention and entry ban were tightened in 2025. The amendments are based on the objectives of the Government Programme to ensure efficient removal of individuals who are staying in the country illegally, to better safeguard public order and national security, and to prepare for new kinds of situations that could jeopardise security. The amendments also introduced the more stringent provisions and best practices made possible by the EU's Return Directive to support the Government's objectives to tighten asylum policy.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>178</sup> Aliens Act 301/2004.

<sup>179</sup> Government (31 October 2024), New project aims to develop regulation on denial of admittance or stay and deportation.

<sup>180</sup> Government (undated c), project to develop the provisions of the Aliens Act on removal from the country.

<sup>181</sup> Ministry of the Interior (3 April 2025), New amendments to provisions on detention and entry ban help safeguard public order and security.

The maximum duration of detention was extended from 12 months to 18 months in situations related to removal from the country. Moreover, detention may be extended from six months to 12 months even before the removal decision is made if the person is considered a danger to public order and security or to national security. The provisions concerning the detention of children were also amended. The definition of the risk of absconding was also clarified by specifying in the Act detailed criteria for assessing when there is reason to assume that the person to be returned may abscond. In addition, returnees are now obliged to cooperate with the Finnish authorities at all stages of the return process.<sup>182</sup>

Additionally, the maximum duration of an entry ban was extended from the previous five years to up to 15 years. An entry ban may also still be imposed until further notice. Additionally, an entry ban may be imposed on an alien staying outside Finland due to the person being a danger to public order and security or to national security without hearing the person in Finland.<sup>183</sup>

The Ministry of the Interior issued a decree on assistance for voluntary return for 2026–2027.<sup>184</sup> The decree entered into force on 1 January 2026. The new decree mainly corresponds to the previous one: the Government continued the staggered assistance that was introduced for the first time for 2024–2025. Based on the staggered approach, the assistance for voluntary return is higher if the asylum seeker applies for the assistance within 30 days of the notification of the first negative asylum decision or the withdrawal of the application. The staggered approach encourages people to leave the country as quickly as possible and to refrain from requesting a review of the asylum decision.<sup>185</sup>

Starting in June 2025, the Finnish Immigration Service began to pilot a new type of reception centre with a focus on promoting returns – a return centre. The return centre aims to support a functioning asylum system by improving the efficiency of returns. In addition to normal reception services, the return centre provides asylum seekers with more extensive advice on voluntary return and support with return arrangements. The centre will primarily house asylum seekers who have submitted a subsequent application or received a final decision on removal from the country, whose applications show signs of being manifestly unfounded, and whose applications should be examined by a country other than Finland.<sup>186</sup> In addition, the Finnish Immigration Service launched the AMIF-funded Support for Voluntary Return and Return Advice project, which aims to improve the efficiency of advice on voluntary return, reach persons illegally residing in the country and increase returns.<sup>187</sup>

The National Police Board also received AMIF project funding. The project grant was used to hire a police contact person to build effective cooperation with the Somali authorities, to coordinate Finland's activities with other Member States, to help to ensure the functioning of the long-term readmission cooperation between Finland and Somalia, and to support the conditions for sustainable return in the target country. The project also aims to establish readmission cooperation with Somalia and to build a sustainable foundation for continuous activities and, overall, to strengthen cooperation with Somalia and possibly also with other Eastern African countries.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Decree of the Ministry of the Interior on Assistance for Voluntary Return in 2026 and 2027 1250/2025.

<sup>185</sup> Government (22 December 2025 c), Changes in the government branch of the Ministry of the Interior at the turn of the year.

<sup>186</sup> Finnish Immigration Service (9 May 2025), Finland pilots a reception centre specialised in promoting returns.

<sup>187</sup> EU Home Affairs Funds (undated a).

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.



Meanwhile, the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman published statements on the impacts of the Government's immigration policy on human rights and especially the impacts of the efforts to make returns more effective on fundamental rights. The Non-Discrimination Ombudsman oversees the implementation of returns in Finland. According to the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, in 2025, the authorities involved in implementing the returns were under significant pressure to improve the efficiency of returns, and this sense of urgency increased the risk of violations of fundamental rights during return operations.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, email, 4 February 2026; Non-Discrimination Ombudsman (2026), The report of the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman to the Parliament 2026.



## 13. Migration and development

Policy coherence is one of the key principles in the development policy and development cooperation of Finland. Finland aims to promote the coherence of development policy in cooperation with other policy sectors, such as immigration, food security, trade and safety. The website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs states that the impacts on developing countries must be assessed and taken into account in the decision-making of different policy sectors, and one policy sector must not negate the achievements of another.<sup>190</sup>

The Government Programme further strengthened the link between development policy and immigration policy. According to the Government Programme, bilateral financial assistance to be provided to third countries will be made conditional upon the country readmitting their citizens who are to be returned.<sup>191</sup>

The Finnish Immigration Service and the Somali authorities launched cooperation within the framework of the FSEA ICI project. The project's name is "Finland and Somalia Cooperating in Enhancing the Capacities of Migration Authorities" and will be implemented in the period 2026–2028. The project's goals include strengthening the capacity of the Somali authorities to prevent, detect and combat trafficking in human beings, and improving migration management and coordination between agencies in Somalia. The project is focused on training and mentoring authorities with the aim of improving their skills and capacity.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs (undated), Goals and principles of Finland's development policy.

<sup>191</sup> Government (2023).

<sup>192</sup> Ministry for Foreign Affairs, email, 9 February 2026.

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