



# GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION ON THE FUTURE OF MIGRATION 2020 STRATEGY



MINISTRY  
OF THE INTERIOR



# CONTENTS

<b>TO THE READER</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 MIGRATION TODAY</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Net emigration to net immigration within short period .....	5
1.2 Migration now takes many different forms .....	7
1.3 Migration has an impact on society and its demographic structure .....	8
1.4 Migrant integration in Finland .....	8
1.5 Cautious view of migration .....	9
<b>2 TOWARDS THE 2020s</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Greater mobility .....	11
2.2 Dependency ratio changing .....	11
2.3 Greater diversity in society .....	12
<b>3 MIGRATION POLICY PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PRINCIPLE 1: Finland is an open and safe country</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Mobility is an opportunity for Finland .....	13
Better able to deal with the challenges brought by mobility .....	14
Finland as a responsible member of the international community.....	15
Greater flexibility in migration administration and more effective procedures .....	16
<b>PRINCIPLE 2: Everyone can find a role to play</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Migrants participating in society .....	18
Migrants can make use of their skills .....	18
Services support integration .....	19
<b>PRINCIPLE 3: Diversity is part of everyday life</b> .....	<b>21</b>
Equal rights for all .....	21
Elimination of prejudice.....	22
<b>4 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING</b>	<b>23</b>

## TO THE READER

The Government Programme of Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen's Government states that an updated Future of Migration 2020 Strategy will be produced. In the strategic plan for the implementation of the Government Programme, preparation of an up-to-date Future of Migration 2020 Strategy is listed as part of the action to raise the employment rate among migrants, which is presented under the plan's third strategic priority, namely enhancement of sustainable economic growth, employment and competitiveness.

The aim of the Future of Migration 2020 Strategy is to pave the way for a more active and forward-looking migration policy. The Strategy looks to the coming decade in a situation where mobility is rising, the demographic structure is changing and diversity in Finnish society is increasing.



In setting the direction for future migration policy, the Strategy seeks to ensure that migration issues are given full and proper consideration in Finland's public policy. This will be crucial when, in the coming years, we tackle issues concerning the country's economy, competitiveness and dependency ratio, for example.

Finland needs skilled workers, but this is not enough in itself. The employment rate among Finland's existing migrants must be raised. Migrant communities must be included in the process of building our shared future.

Preparation of the Strategy has involved input from politicians, public officials and researchers and from representatives of working life and civil society organisations. Working together in this way has helped to stimulate a new kind of debate about migration policy and to create closer connections between the different entities involved. Implementation of the Strategy will require continued cooperation. Success will depend not only on the actions of society but also on each of us individually.

**Helsinki, 13 June 2013**  
***Päivi Räsänen, Minister of the Interior***

## FUTURE OF MIGRATION 2020

Diversity will be valued as Finland's internationalisation continues.

Equality and equal opportunities will apply to everyone.

Migration will enhance the wellbeing of the population and boost Finland's competitiveness.

Migrants will be able to use their skills and contribute to the future development of society.

Migration will be foreseeable and controlled.

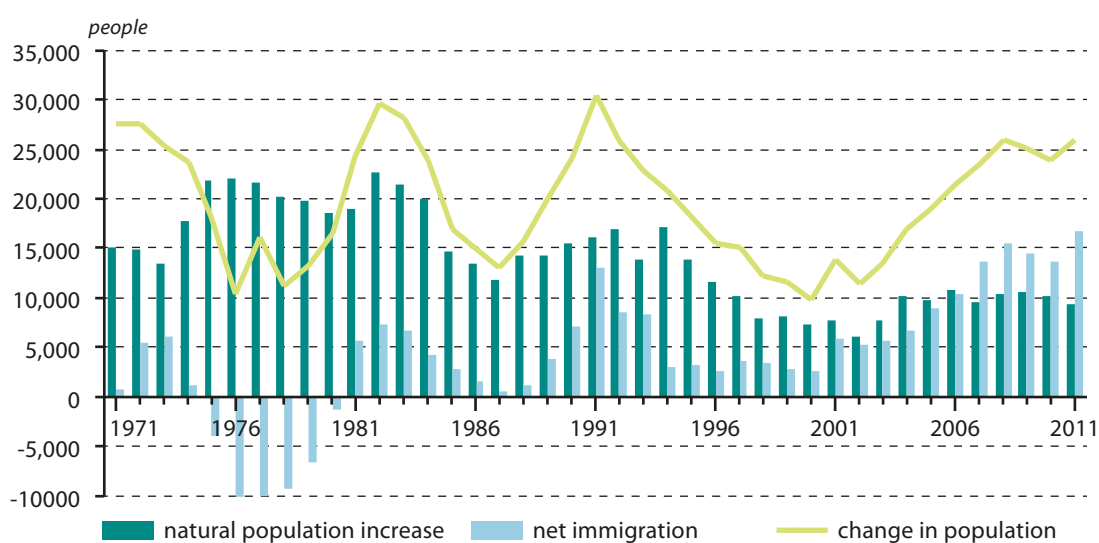


# 1 MIGRATION TODAY

## 1.1 Net emigration to net immigration within short period

With globalisation, Finland has become part of an ever more mobile world.<sup>1</sup> Over the relatively short period since the Second World War, Finland has changed from being a country of net emigration to one of net immigration. The number of migrants in Finland has almost doubled since 2000. In 2011, the number of migrants arriving in Finland was 29,500, which is more than at any time since the country's independence in 1917.

**Natural population increase, net immigration and change in population in Finland, 1971–2011**

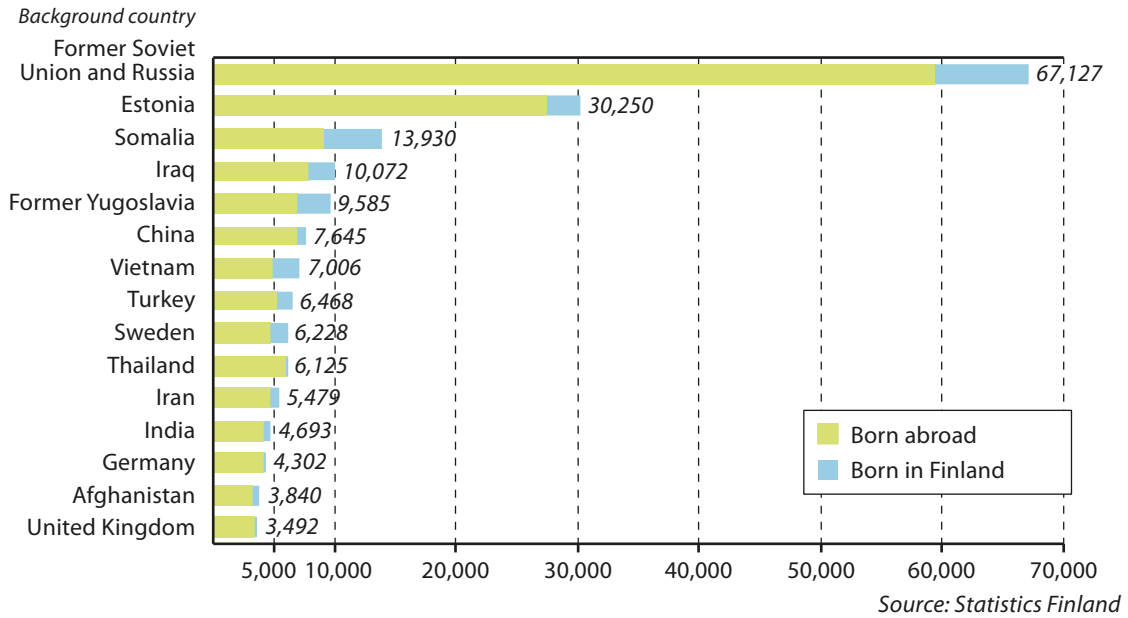


Source: Statistics Finland

At the end of 2011, the number of foreign nationals living in Finland totalled approximately 183,000. Including those granted Finnish citizenship, the number of people of foreign origin permanently residing in the country was 257,000 or about 5% of the total population. Approximately 220,000 of these people were born abroad, and about 37,500 in Finland. Among persons of foreign origin, 59% were of European background, 23% were of Asian background and 12% were of African background.

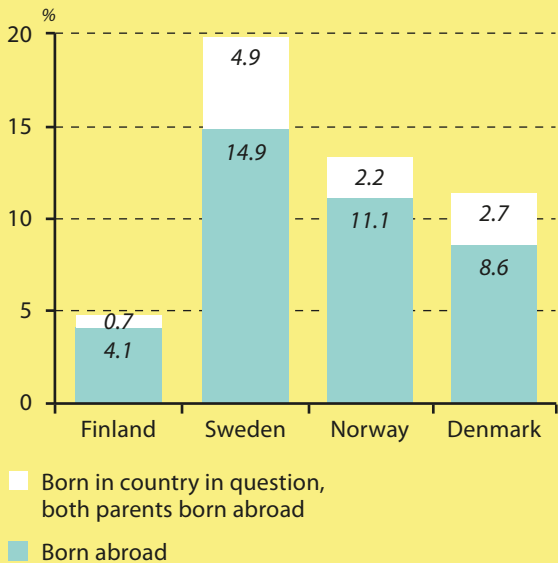
<sup>1</sup> Migration and mobility: The concepts of migration and mobility are sometimes understood differently in different contexts. In this document these concepts are used in general terms and broadly refer to all cross-border mobility and migration.

### Largest groups among population of foreign origin, 2011



The number of foreigners in Finland is still few compared with other Nordic countries and most European countries. The reasons for this include the relatively small need for foreign workers, the rarity of Finland's languages and the country's distant location. By following migration developments elsewhere, Finland is in a position to learn from the successes and mistakes of others.

### Proportion of persons with foreign background in total population, Nordic countries, 2011



## 1.2 Migration now takes many different forms

The main reasons for moving to Finland are family, study and work. More than half of all migrants come from outside the EU ('third-country nationals'). Migration to Finland from EU Member States has also increased significantly. Third-country nationals and EU citizens are subject to various entry and residence requirements and permit procedures.<sup>2</sup>

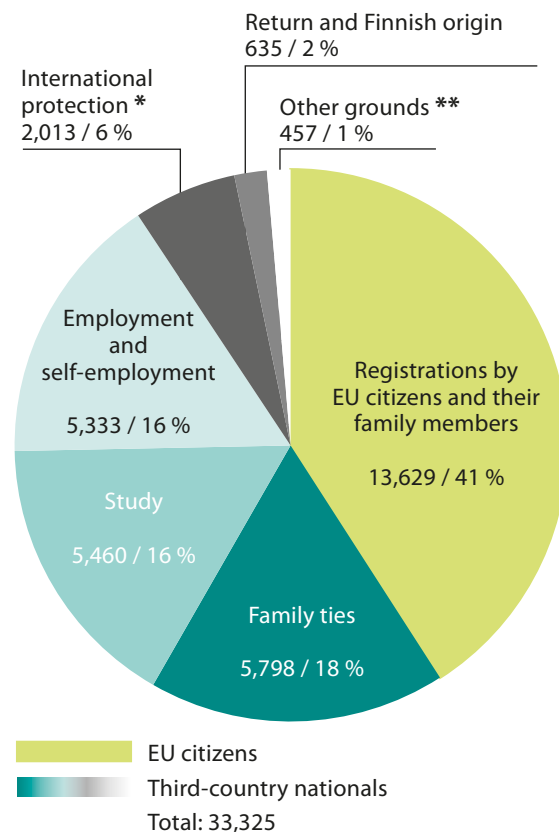
The number of first residence permits granted to third-country nationals has been 12,800–19,600 annually since 2005. In 2011, the Finnish Immigration Service granted 17,683 first residence permits on grounds other than international protection, and the Finnish police granted about 60,000 permit extensions. The biggest groups of recipients granted residence permits were citizens of Russia, India and China.

Due to the freedom of movement for EU citizens and their family members, it is difficult to obtain precise information on citizens of EU Member States who migrate to Finland on a short-term basis, in particular. In 2011, approximately 13,600 EU citizens migrated to Finland for a longer period and registered their stay. It is estimated that there are about 50,000 EU citizens working in Finland on a temporary basis.<sup>3</sup> These people are principally from Estonia and other EU countries close to Finland.

Under international agreements and national legislation Finland is obliged to provide international protection to those who require it. Since 2000, Finland has received 1,500–6,000 asylum seekers annually. The variation in the number of asylum seekers year by year is mainly associated with the occurrence of different conflicts around the world. For example, the situation in Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia, and most recently in Syria, has led to an increase in the number of asylum seekers around the world and in Finland, too. The number of asylum seekers in Finland is nevertheless small in comparison with the other Nordic countries and many other European countries.

In addition to those receiving a permit in the asylum process, Finland also grants international protection to persons being resettled as quota refugees on the basis of a submission by UNHCR. Since 2001, Finland's refugee quota has amounted to 750 people per year. The Finnish Parliament confirms the amount of the quota each year when it approves the Budget. International protection may also be granted to family members of those already receiving protection in Finland.

**Registrations by EU citizens and residence permits granted to third-country nationals, 2011**



\* Asylum seekers with first residence permit (1,271) and quota refugee arrivals (742).

\*\* 'Other grounds' consists of residence permits applied for on grounds of e.g. adoption, au pair placement, intimate relationship, trafficking victim and other specific reason.

Source: Ministry of the Interior

<sup>2</sup> Foreign nationals coming to Finland from outside the EU generally require a residence permit for the purpose of long-term residence or work in Finland. Provided certain conditions are satisfied, EU citizens can stay in Finland for up to three months without registering their right to reside. After this they must register their stay in Finland.

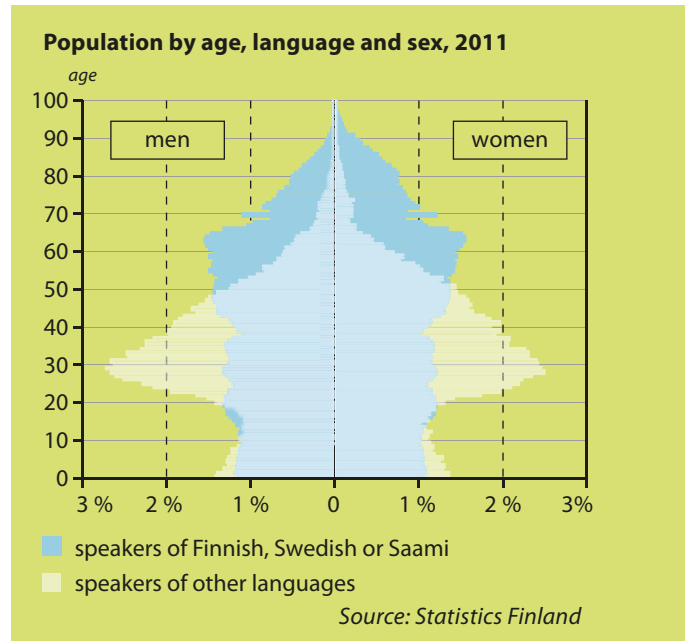
<sup>3</sup> This estimate may also include EU citizens who have moved to Finland for a longer period and have registered their right to reside.

### 1.3 Migration has an impact on society and its demographic structure

Although Finland has never had just a single, homogeneous culture, it is today more diverse than ever before. Migration has led to the emergence of new ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious minorities. These bring new influences to Finnish society and culture.

Permanent migration to Finland has a positive impact on the age structure of the population, as migrants to Finland are, for the most part, young adults, and many of them create a family here.

Migration does not affect all parts of Finland evenly. Most migrants live in the largest urban areas. In the Helsinki metropolitan area, the number of residents with a migrant background is already one in ten. The migrant population is also very mobile within the country. In the future, population growth in some regions may become largely dependent on migration.



### 1.4 Migrant integration in Finland

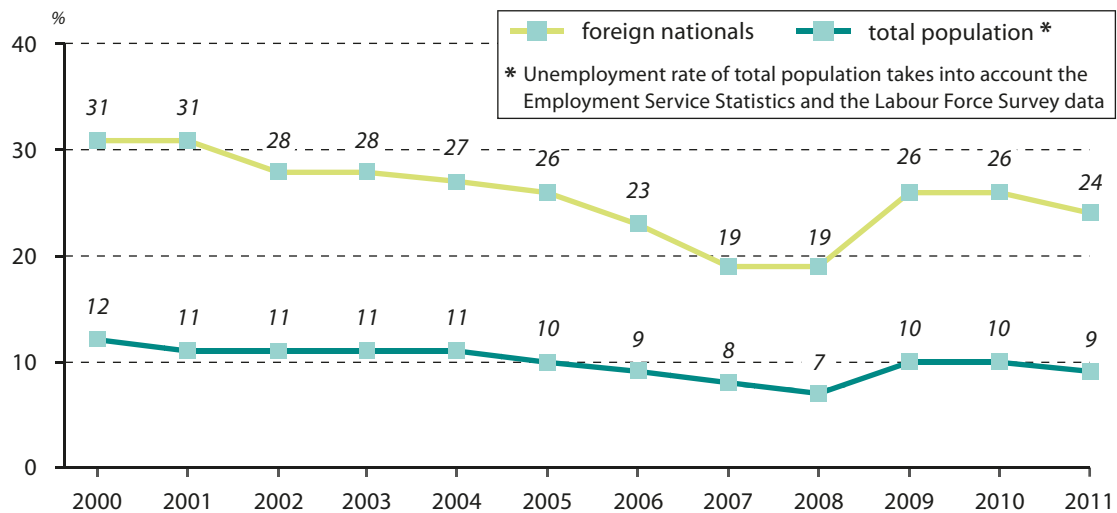
Finland's first legislation on migrant integration entered into force in 1999. Reform of the legislation was begun in 2009, and the new Act on the Promotion of Integration came into force at the start of September 2011. The Act required that a national integration programme be drawn up at the start of the Government's term, and the first programme was duly approved in 2012. The programme examines the needs of the migrant population on the basis of the mainstreaming principle in all policy sectors, especially employment, education and training, housing and social and health care services. The main aim of the programme, which covers the period to 2015, is to increase migrant participation in society.

The unemployment rate among migrants in Finland is three times higher than in the majority population. The risk of unemployment is also greater among migrants than in the rest of the population. The employment rate nevertheless rises with time residing in Finland, and in the longer term it corresponds with that of the majority population.

In 2011, the Employment and Economic Development Offices listed among their customers a total of 15,600 migrants classified as unemployed jobseekers and receiving integration assistance. In addition to this, there were also migrants outside the labour force who were using municipal integration services.



### Unemployment rate among foreign nationals and total population



Sources: Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Statistics Finland

## 1.5 Cautious view of migration

Finland has had relatively little experience as a host country for migrants, and this is perhaps one explanation for the dominance of rather negative views of migration among Finns, whereby internationalisation and migration have been seen as a threat to national culture. However, not all migration is viewed with equal caution. Traditionally, views towards work-related migration have been the most positive. The views expressed on migration and migrants have also varied according to the respondent's sex, age, education and place of residence, for example.<sup>4</sup>

According to a survey by the Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA), attitudes have softened somewhat since 2000, however. Even so, more than half of the Finns questioned felt that Finnish culture should be protected from the effects of internationalisation. Furthermore, even where the need for migration was justified by the ageing of the population and the change in the dependency ratio, only about one in three would be willing to make it easier for foreigners to migrate to Finland.<sup>5</sup>

Studies carried out in Finland and at the EU level, such as annual hate crime surveys, reveal that discrimination and racism are part of everyday life for migrants.<sup>6</sup> Experiences of racism and discrimination have a negative impact not only on migrants' daily lives but also more extensively on Finnish society as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

4 Maahanmuuttajat suomalaisten näkökulmasta - Asennemuutokset 1987–2007 ('Migrants as seen by Finns – Attitude changes 1987–2007'); Jaakkola; 2009.

5 Ovi raottuu – suomalaisten maahanmuuttoasenteet 2012 ('A slight opening of the door – Attitudes of Finns to immigration 2012'); EVA analysis No 22, published by the Finnish Business and Policy Forum (EVA); 2012.

6 See for example: Racism and ethnic discrimination. In: EU-MIDIS Data in Focus Report 6: Minorities as Victims of Crime; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights; 2012. Maahanmuuttajien terveys ja hyvinvointi - Tutkimus venäläis-, somalialais- ja kurditaustaisista Suomessa ('Migrant health and wellbeing : a study on persons of Russian, Somali and Kurdish origin in Finland'); National Institute for Health and Welfare; 2012.

7 See for example: Rasismi. Oppeja, asenteita, toimintaa ja seurauksia ('Racism. Doctrines, attitudes, actions and consequences'). In: Suomalainen vieraskirja. Kuinka käsitellä monikulttuurisuutta ('Finnish guest book. How to deal with multiculturalism'); Rastas, Huttunen & Löytty; 2005. Rasistinen Suomi ('Racist Finland'); Puuronen; 2011.



## FRAMEWORK FOR MIGRATION POLICY FORMULATION

The parameters within which migration policy is formulated are set by the Constitution of Finland's provisions on fundamental rights, EU legislation and the international agreements ratified by Finland.

Finland's national policy and legislation on migration are affected especially by the EU's asylum and migration policies, and Finland is an active participant in the formulation of these policies.

At national level, migration policy is linked to many other policies, particularly labour, social and health care, education and training, and language policies. The nationwide reforms under way in Finland, such as the reform in local government structures, will also have an impact on migration policy.

## 2 TOWARDS THE 2020s

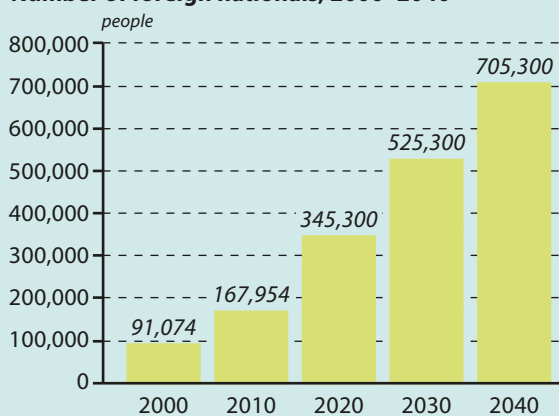
### 2.1 Greater mobility

Global mobility will continue to increase in the future. There are many reasons for this, such as work, family, studies and other new opportunities. People may also find themselves migrating due to poverty, conflicts, natural disasters and events related to climate change. Many of these will be unexpected events and are therefore hard to predict.

Mobility with Finland as a destination will increase and will gain new forms. Finland will see an increase in immigration and also emigration, including short-term migration. One estimate concludes that in 2020 Finland will have about 345,000 foreign nationals<sup>8</sup>, which is almost double the current level.

Mobility will bring both opportunities and challenges. The opportunities are closely related to the change in the dependency ratio and to a more diverse society. However, preparations must also be made for dealing with social change caused by the increasing mobility. The success of Finland's migration policy will depend not only on the country's citizens but also on developments elsewhere in the world and especially in Europe.

**Number of foreign nationals, 2000–2040**



Source: Statistics Finland / P. Myrskylä



### 2.2 Dependency ratio changing

The age groups retiring from the labour market in the coming years will be considerably larger than the age groups entering working life. The situation will be most critical in the social and health care sector. There will be more and more citizens requiring these services at the same time as the age groups of young people are shrinking. Although the same trend is evident throughout Europe, Finland will be facing these changes sooner than other Western European countries.

Migration will help to answer to the dependency ratio problem. At the same time there will be an increase in competition between countries for skilled and innovative workers. Competition for workers will increase globally as countries compete to attract value-adding activities. To succeed in this competition, Finland must be able to attract skilled labour effectively. The need for this will be particularly acute in sectors with the greatest labour shortage. In addition, it will be important that migrants arriving in Finland for non-work reasons succeed in finding employment more quickly and efficiently than at present.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Finland / P. Myrskylä.

## Dependency ratio 1900–2050



## 2.3 Greater diversity in society

Migration will turn Finland into a more diverse society. Migration issues will gradually become part of everyday life. There will also be an increase in the number of people of migrant background who actively participate in public debate in Finland and in political decision-making.

Growing diversity will be a valuable resource. Respect for people's differences and openness to new ideas will be the key to positive interaction. Migrants' skills, competence and innovative ideas will make an important contribution to Finland's development and international competitiveness.

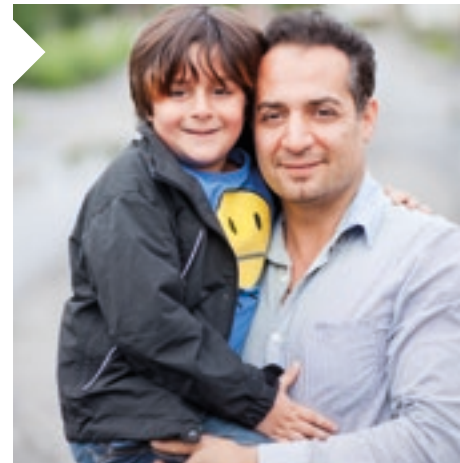
However, an increase in diversity will also bring the risk of a growth in inequality in society, and there are already examples of this elsewhere in Europe. Possible conflicts between different cultures, religions and values could weaken the internal cohesiveness of society and exacerbate inequality in society. The risk of growing inequality will be considerably reduced if migrants and their children can find a role for themselves in Finnish society and feel that they are significant members of society.

Interaction between migrants and the majority population will make society more open to differences. The front runners in this change will be today's children and young people, who are growing up in a more internationally oriented Finland. They will ensure that in the 2020s, diversity will not be a separate issue but part of everyday life.

## PRINCIPLES

This Strategy is a response to the opportunities and challenges presented above. The Strategy is based on the following principles.

- 1. Finland is an open and safe country**
- 2. Everyone can find a role to play**
- 3. Diversity is part of everyday life**



## 3 MIGRATION POLICY PRINCIPLES

### PRINCIPLE 1

#### Finland is an open and safe country

- To succeed in a changing world, Finland needs to attract work-related migration of a kind that is active, systematic and targeted.
- Growing mobility requires that Finland is open and actively manages migration.
- Finland is committed to providing international protection to those in need of it.
- Clear legislation, well-functioning practices and transparent action by public authorities will secure the rights of migrants and ensure that migration policy is approved.

#### Mobility is an opportunity for Finland

Living and working in different countries broadens people's experiences and skills. Migrants to Finland bring with them innovative ideas and new ways of doing things. Mobility creates international networks that can be utilised in many different ways.

Finland's trump cards are its clean environment, safe society, equality in working life, high-quality education system and well-functioning services. A good reputation also enhances Finland's competitiveness. Those who have visited or lived here will spread the word about Finland to the world. So far, little attention has been given to this image of Finland from a migration perspective.

- *Finland's openness and its strengths and attractiveness must be communicated more effectively.*

Finland needs young migrants who will stay in the country for the longer term and will enter the labour market. Foreign workers are needed in order to supplement the Finnish labour force. The most challenging situation will be in the social and health care sector, where the labour shortfall by 2025 is estimated to be at least 20,000 people. Meeting the labour shortage will require ethically sustainable recruitment both from within and outside the EU.

Finland will require highly qualified and other skilled workers, experts and entrepreneurs in different fields if it is to ensure the functioning of the labour market and to maintain the country's competitiveness. We will need active, systematic and targeted work-related migration. Gaining foreign investment will also require that Finland offers the prospect of flexible mobility for employees and key personnel of companies.

- *Short-term and longer term migration of skilled labour into Finland must be promoted, particularly by developing forecasts of labour needs and the resources for targeted recruitment abroad. During the current Government term, Finland will use a system of determining the availability of labour on the domestic labour market, as set out in the Government Programme. The success of determining the availability of labour will be monitored.*
- *In the social and health care sector – the largest in terms of its proportion of the labour force – international recruitment and the cooperation required for this must be developed and modelled.*

When a skilled worker considers moving to Finland or staying here, a key factor is often whether or not the opportunity exists to bring the family. The ease with which family members can obtain a residence permit based on family ties could thus affect Finland's attractiveness as a country to work in. The income level set as a permit requirement could prevent entry to the country especially for family members of migrants who are in lower paid jobs. The income requirement is proportionate to the cost of living, which is often higher in Finland than in the country of origin. The preliminary assessment of each family's income and outgoings in connection with the permit process is difficult, and there are, for example, significant differences in housing costs from one part of Finland to another. Emphasis is

already being given to examining cases on an individual basis, and flexibility is shown in regard to the income limits in the case of workers with large families. Reducing the income requirement on a case-by-case basis for workers' family members is one way of facilitating labour migration to Finland.

- *In seeking to increase labour migration into Finland, attention will be given to the significance of the worker's family, and flexibility can be shown on a case-by-case basis in regard to the income limits of the residence permit for the worker's family members. When making residence permit decisions, greater attention will be given to the individual circumstances of each family.*

The number of foreign students coming to Finland has grown substantially since 2000, as has the proportion of these students in relation to the total number of students, and this growth is expected to continue in the future. Once they graduate, international degree students represent an important resource for the Finnish labour market. Sufficient skills in Finnish and/or Swedish will be a key requirement for success in the labour market.

- *The potential for foreign students to remain in Finland after they graduate must be increased, especially through the provision of teaching in Finnish and/or Swedish at different levels for foreign students during their studies and by extending the duration of residence permits granted after graduation, and through opportunities for practical training.*

### Better able to deal with the challenges brought by mobility

The increasing level of mobility is evident in the amount of cross-border traffic. Considerable growth will occur in the number of crossings via the crossing points on Finland's eastern border in particular. Among the EU Member States, Finland will most readily feel the effects of any visa-free movement permitted between the EU and Russia.

The visa system ensures in advance that the requirements for entry are fulfilled when a visa is required. Abandoning the visa requirement will not reduce border checks, as it would be specifically these crossing points on the EU's external border where the right of arrivals to cross into the EU, via Finland, would be checked for the first time.

- *The smooth flow and safety of the growing cross-border traffic must be guaranteed by developing cooperation between the authorities, improving the throughput of the border crossing points, and making use of the latest technology.*

Illegal immigration into the Schengen Area is becoming ever more global and organised. However, illegal immigration into Finland is only minor by European standards. Most cases (> 90%) of illegal immigration into Finland are currently via the other parts of the Schengen Area. The authorities are not able to use border checks to intervene in entry made via the internal borders of the Schengen Area, which therefore increases the importance of monitoring by the authorities within national borders. The right to international protection must always be considered when combating illegal entry.

Migration can also be connected with human trafficking. Identifying the victims of human trafficking is difficult for various reasons. The ability to help and protect the victims of human trafficking must be secured in all cases.

- *Illegal immigration and human trafficking must be prevented and tackled through collaboration with the authorities in the source countries, in Finland's neighbouring regions, at the EU's external border and within Finland, and by developing the border security system at national and EU level, taking into account the requirements for respecting fundamental rights and for data protection.*
- *The activities of liaison officers at Finland's diplomatic missions in countries of origin must be further developed while respecting the legal protection of applicants.*

## PRINCIPLE 1

- *Monitoring of internal mobility within the Schengen Area must be enhanced to combat illegal entry and human trafficking.*
- *Through action by the appropriate authorities, the identification of victims of human trafficking, the provision of help for them and the exercise of their rights must all be conducted more effectively.*

Internationalisation of the labour market can give rise to negative consequences, such as discrimination against foreign workers, illegal working and work performed in the shadow economy. The proper functioning of the labour market requires that such aspects are dealt with more effectively. In this regard, there are already measures being taken under the Government's intensified Action Plan to Reduce Economic Crime and the Shadow Economy for the years 2012–2015.

- *Working in the shadow economy must be reduced and prevented, and the observance of employment terms must be overseen through systematic collaboration among the different authorities.*
- *Persons coming to work in Finland must be given information about Finland's employment legislation and employment terms before they leave their country of origin.*

Some foreigners will wish to remain completely outside the official systems, for instance to avoid having to leave Finland. Such persons are at very high risk of social exclusion and exploitation. Fundamental and human rights apply equally to such persons, even where their presence in Finland is unlawful under the Aliens Act. Foreigners granted a temporary residence permit (B permit) under section 51 of the Aliens Act will remain clients of the reception centres, and the necessary health care services for them will be covered by state funding through the reception system. Access to health care by others with a B permit and by anyone without a residence permit will be examined. Issues concerning health care service provision for persons unlawfully present in Finland are currently being examined, including alternatives for arranging health care.

- *Under international agreements, the human rights of persons unlawfully present in Finland or present in Finland without a residence permit must be guaranteed, and the observance of these rights must be examined and monitored.*

### Finland as a responsible member of the international community

Conflicts and insecurity are factors contributing to international mobility. The majority of people who leave their home to seek protection in another country go to regions neighbouring on their home country. Some also seek protection further away. Finland has an international commitment to protect those who have to leave their home region due to persecution, serious human rights violations or armed conflict. This commitment is exercised through a fair and effective asylum procedure. Nobody seeking international protection may be transferred from Finland on the basis of the Dublin II Regulation to a country where the asylum process or reception conditions have shortcomings that would lead to inhuman or degrading treatment. Furthermore, the rights of such persons to be joined by their family are safeguarded under international obligations.

- *Finland will continue to provide a high standard of protection that safeguards equal rights and benefits for all those in need of protection.*

To avoid protracted refugee problems, those fleeing must be found sustainable solutions as early as possible and close to their home region. In cooperation between various countries, the EU and international organisations, comprehensive solutions must be found that could include support for returning to the home country, strengthening of the local protection system, development cooperation projects and refugee resettlement in different countries via refugee quotas.

- *The quota refugee policy will continue to be a key part of Finland's policy on international protection.*

Migration policy is linked to foreign and development policy. Connections between migration and development are well known nationally and internationally, but this is not yet adequately reflected in practical actions. It is important to expand our knowledge of the positive and negative mutual influences of migration movements and development. This will enable ethically sustainable actions and prevent negative effects of migration.

- *Finland's migration policy must support the long-term achievement of development goals. Development policy and development cooperation must be used to support an improvement in conditions in developing countries so that international migration decisions are made through choice and not necessity.*

To support development in poor countries of origin, cooperation is needed at international level not only between authorities but also involving civil society, researchers and the private sector. Migrant communities often also have the desire and expertise to participate in development work in their country of origin.

- *The expertise and desire of migrant communities to improve conditions in their countries of origin must be linked more closely with Finland's development policy.*

### Greater flexibility in migration administration and more effective procedures

Migration issues form part of the work of various administrative branches and different authorities. The divisions of responsibility must be clear and appropriate, but the administration must also function well as a whole. Besides inter-ministerial collaboration, greater cooperation will also be needed between other entities, particularly between local and central government.

- *The division of tasks and responsibilities in the migration administration must be clarified and there must be more effective collaboration across the administrative branches.*

To be able to formulate migration policy and to have a migration administration that functions well requires accurate information on international mobility. Existing information must be gathered together to give a reliable overall picture of migration. More statistical and research data on international migration movements will also be needed, and should be used more effectively by the authorities.

- *The availability and use of migration statistics and research data must be further developed.*

Migrants are increasingly users of various public services, and so the expertise to take into account migrants and their needs must be further developed. For example, development of e-services





## PRINCIPLE 1

and citizen services must take into account the fact that migrants often require more guidance. Furthermore, it is essential that the language used by the authorities is clear and comprehensible, and that information is provided about services and guidance given in other languages too, besides Finnish and/or Swedish. Greater use must be made of plain language that is easy to understand. In service development it is also important to make use of information on the experiences of migrants.

- *In service development the circumstances and service needs of migrant customers must also be taken into consideration.*
- *Customers who are in a vulnerable position must be recognised and their special needs met.*

It is in the interests of the migration administration's customers and the authorities handling their matters that the procedures work well and are transparent and efficient. The requirements for obtaining a permit must be predictable and widely known, to ensure that they are understood and accepted.

Processing of applications must be free of delay. If the authorities investigate the grounds for a permit as carefully as possible at the very start of the process, later errors can be avoided. Where there are several different authorities involved in processing a matter, it will be important that cooperation proceeds smoothly.

- *The migration administration and its permit procedures must be flexible and clear. All permit applications must be processed without delay and within a reasonable period. Regarding Schengen visas, Finland will press for a streamlining of the permit procedures laid down in European Union legislation. Further development of the residence permit process will be examined, looking at, for example, the scope for using alternative ways of submitting residence permit applications.*
- *The residence permit system must be brought more closely into line with the need to promote labour migration into Finland and to enhance the appeal of moving to Finland.*
- *A study will look at the possibility of not tying the residence permit for a worker from outside the EU/ETA area to a single employer in the sector, and at the scope for monitoring by the labour protection authorities. The necessary decisions will be made on the basis of these studies.*
- *Seamless cooperation between the authorities, from initiating the permit process to reaching a decision, must be ensured.*

The migration administration must at all times produce correct and well-justified decisions. Customers who are in a vulnerable position must be recognised and their special needs met.

- *The standard of decisions must be monitored, and decision-making must take into account people's individual needs.*
- *It is essential that the information available on countries of origin is up to date and correct.*

The procedure for removal from the country must be prompt and effective and must respect human dignity. Decision-making concerning removal from Finland will be based on individual consideration and procedures that guarantee legal safeguards. The legislation must be further refined to ensure that removal from Finland is not carried out before a court of law has resolved an application to prevent the decision being enforced. Voluntary return must be considered the primary option, but where necessary, removal from the country must be ensured through official enforcement. Anyone who loses their right to residence on the basis of committing a crime will, as a rule, be removed from the country by the authorities.

- *Clear legal provisions and a well-functioning return system are essential to ensure that there will not be a group of people in Finland who have no right to be in the country. Voluntary return must be considered the primary option.*



## PRINCIPLE 2

### Everyone can find a role to play

- Migrant integration in Finland occurs through work, education and training, children's daycare, free-time activities, civil society and everyday interaction.
- The opportunity for family reunification is often essential for the successful integration of migrants.
- Skills in Finnish and/or Swedish are of great importance for participation in society.
- Efficient and appropriate services will support effective integration.

### Migrants participating in society

Having become integrated, migrants should be able to feel that they are part of society across its various domains, such as politics, the economy, the media and social and cultural life. The possibility of being joined by their family is often also an important factor for successful integration. Becoming a resident in a municipality and being able to exercise various democratic rights will ensure that migrants are able to influence and participate in decision-making. Voting turnout by migrants in local elections has so far been low, however, and the number of local councillors with a migrant background is small.

- *Opportunities for migrants to participate must be supported through special measures, and information on these must be provided more actively and through more channels.*

Daily dialogue between different population groups will help migrants find a role to play in Finnish society. By taking part in civil society, migrants can create networks and accumulate skills that will help in becoming more involved as members of society. Civil society can also play a significant role in complementing the services provided by public authorities, and as partners in the planning and provision of services that support migrants. Religious communities also have an important role in maintaining dialogue.

- *There must be an increase in interaction between different population groups and an increase in migrant participation in civil society. The ability of civil society to support the participation and integration of migrants must be strengthened.*

### Migrants can make use of their skills

It is important to create the right conditions for arrivals in Finland to be able to make use of their skills in various ways and to participate in the further development of Finnish society. Skills in Finnish and/or Swedish and personal networks of contacts are of great importance for participation in society.

Migrants often have difficulty finding employment that matches their education and training. Sufficient study of Finnish and/or Swedish is of great importance in supporting entry to the labour market. Recognition and accreditation of skills acquired elsewhere by migrants and well-functioning, flexible education and training opportunities will facilitate employment and help migrants find a role to play in society.

- *Migrant employment must be supported through cooperation with the labour market organisations, especially by developing diversity management and improving general attitudes in working life.*
- *There should be an increase in the teaching of Finnish and/or Swedish and other education and training organised as part of labour policy, and in the effectiveness of this education and training. The opportunities to study Finnish and/or Swedish while in employment must also be developed further. Employers should be encouraged to support Finnish or Swedish studies for migrant workers during their employment.*
- *There should be further development of the recognition of migrants' skills and supplementation of these skills, and of language training that meets the needs of working life.*

- *Vocational competence acquired by migrants in their country of origin or in other ways must be recognised and accredited. The process of obtaining employment must be facilitated through the provision of language training that meets the needs of working life.*

Migrant employment will be facilitated by well-functioning, publically provided employment and business services and by working life of a good standard that supports diversity. General attitudes in working life will also be important. Diversity must be included among the issues involved in developing working life and examining the quality of working life.

- *There must be a readiness to welcome migrants into working life in Finland. Self-employment among migrants must also be actively supported.*

Young people of migrant background who have completed their education in Finland often find it hard to obtain employment that corresponds to their qualifications. This is often due to inadequate information and contacts in working life. Decisions made at the early stages of schooling to be exempted from studying Finnish or Swedish can have a negative impact on further studies or on the prospects for a career as a public official.

- *Support must be given for the smooth transfer of young people of migrant background from education to working life, especially by devoting greater attention to the teaching of Finnish and/or Swedish during their studies, and to other support services. The opportunities for young people of migrant background to engage in free-time activities must also be promoted.*

## Services support integration

Migrants are all individuals and have different needs. Many will be familiar with the services provided in Finland and will learn Finnish or Swedish without needing any special integration arrangements.

It is important that migrants can also make use of their skills in arenas other than the workplace. The integration process for migrants who are refugees from difficult circumstances or are elderly, poorly educated or have a serious illness or disability, for instance, can be different, and finding employment may take time. The aim may also be to find a role and participate in society in some other way.

- *Attention should be given to ensuring that public services are appropriate for migrants. The aim must be that migrants will use the same standard and specialised services that are used by everyone else. However, particularly at the initial stage of the migration process, attention must be given to meeting the special needs of migrants, with individualised services where necessary.*

Focusing on the initial stage of migration can mean that employment can be found more quickly and can reduce the chances of failing to complete a programme of studies. Problems associated with possible social exclusion will also be avoided, along with the costs related to this in the future.

- *Integration must be supported through high-quality guidance and advice at the initial stage, and by ensuring participation in services that support integration immediately following entry to the country.*

Family is of great importance for successful integration. Integration should focus on good interaction with the whole family and on creating a safe and harmonious environment for the family's children to grow up in. Key services for families with children will be the maternity and child health clinics, early childhood education, basic education and student welfare services.

Living with two cultures, children of migrant families will be subject to special pressures. Where parents and children are integrating at a different pace this can drive a wedge between them, as schooling leads children and youths to bond with Finnish society more quickly than their parents.

- *Support through services aimed at families must be given to migrant parents in bringing up their children and as the creators of a safe environment for their children to grow up in.*

Women arriving as spouses and caring for children at home find themselves outside the integration arrangements more often than men do, which also makes it difficult to provide support for the family in bringing up their children as participating members of society. In addition, the unemployment rate among women migrants is higher than among their male counterparts.

- *Migrants who are outside the domain of working life, such as parents caring for children at home and elderly migrants, must be secured the opportunity of studying Finnish and/or Swedish and of participating in other integration measures and in society in general.*
- *Special attention must be given to establishing pathways to working life for women migrants who are from cultures where gainful employment for women outside the home is unusual.*

Young people of migrant background are significantly more likely not to continue studying after completion of their basic education than their counterparts in the majority population. The integration of children and young people, especially support for language skills and other skills needed for studying, must be sufficient and sustained. Special attention must be given particularly to those who arrived in Finland at lower secondary school age or exceeded the compulsory schooling age and who lack a general education.

- *There must be an increase in the participation of children of migrant background in various early childhood education services and in pre-primary education, as this will improve their language and other skills for starting school.*
- *For migrants who exceed the compulsory schooling age on arrival in Finland, the opportunity to attend comprehensive school studies must be improved. Support must be given for the smooth transfer to further studies.*

As migration increases, the structure of the resources for integration will need to be reviewed. Where there are insufficient resources, these are currently supplemented on a project-by-project basis, which can have a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of the measures and on establishing the relevant expertise. The standard and availability of services for migrants and the skills of the staff involved are the keys to successful progress in integrating migrants. A core task of the new Centre of Expertise in Migrant Integration, which is to be set up in 2014, is to support the skills of local bodies engaged in integration work while networking very strongly with all existing entities.

- *The priority in integration funding must be switched from project-driven funding to more permanent solutions, which will also create more lasting expertise in integration. In the period covered by the Strategy, the effectiveness and functioning of integration measures will be enhanced through activities based on the robust networking cooperation of the Centre of Expertise in Migrant Integration.*

An essential foundation for integration is that migrants should become residents of one of Finland's municipalities. In the case of beneficiaries of international protection, there have been delays in placing such persons in municipalities in recent years, with too few municipal places being available.

The state compensates municipalities for the costs that arise in accepting beneficiaries of international protection and in their use of the municipality's basic public services. The current compensation system is complex and generates a lot of work for the various public authorities.

- *Ways of accelerating the municipal placement of beneficiaries of international protection must be investigated and the system for compensating municipalities must be simplified. The system of municipal placement and any need to amend the legislation will be assessed in 2016.*

### PRINCIPLE 3

#### Diversity is part of everyday life

- The fundamental values of Finnish society, especially the inviolability of human dignity, serve as a foundation for the acceptance of diversity
- Everyone has a responsibility to engage in positive interaction and to eliminate prejudice in everyday life.

#### Equal rights for all

At the heart of the Finnish legal system are the principles of the inviolability of human dignity, the freedom and rights of the individual and the promotion of justice in society, as set out in the Constitution of Finland. These principles emphasise the right of individuals to self-determination and respect for fundamental and human rights.

Fundamental and human rights apply equally to everyone. The responsibility for putting these rights into effect rests with the government authorities. Even though these rights specifically define the relationship between government and the individual, they also create obligations regarding the relationships between individuals.

- *Attention must be given to ensuring that fundamental and human rights are enjoyed equally in Finnish society, and more information than at present must be provided about these, both to migrants and to the majority population.*

Equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination are the key elements of fundamental and human rights. However, the experiences of migrants in Finland indicate that discrimination and racism are often part of everyday life. Migrants may experience multiple discrimination if, for instance, they have a disability or are elderly.

Discrimination occurring in different areas of life must be monitored systematically, and different forms of discrimination better recognised. In working life, for example, foreign workers may suffer discrimination on various grounds during the recruitment process, in the workplace and at the end of the employment period. Discrimination must be tackled effectively, for instance by implementing the discrimination monitoring system and raising awareness of anti-discrimination legislation.



- *Discrimination of all kinds must be prevented and combated through more effective intervention and by drawing attention to discrimination and experiences of discrimination.*

A major challenge for society is the disparity between how frequently discrimination is experienced and how often it is reported. Some people may encounter inappropriate treatment so frequently that they see no point in reporting it. Furthermore, insufficient information is available on access to justice.

- *Advice and support for victims of discrimination must be easy to access.*

### Elimination of prejudice

Interaction between different population groups is one of the hallmarks of a democratic and open society. Daily interaction in schools, workplaces and free-time activities has a positive impact on attitudes, creating a feeling of safety and security and promoting good relations between different groups. Other important forums for interaction are the arts and culture, and social participation.

- *In order to reduce prejudice, positive interaction must be promoted between migrant communities and the majority population and among migrant communities.*

Residential areas act as everyday meeting places. Halting the trend towards segregation in housing and developing residential areas are key objectives in promoting acceptance of diversity. Finland is in a great position to prevent the emergence of internal inequalities in towns and cities and the confrontations that may ensue.

- *The trend towards segregation in housing must be reduced by ensuring a balanced distribution of homes at affordable rents across the country's towns, cities and rural municipalities.*

There must be wide-ranging and appropriate discussion of migration, and views critical of migration policy must be welcomed. Different views should be embraced and those of migrants themselves must be sought. The media have a key role to play in this. Research data on migration should also be given a higher profile in the public debate than at present.

- *Responsible public debate about migration must be encouraged and broadened, and the debate should be supported with accurate information.*

The tone of the migration debate affects the general climate of opinion. Opinion formers, politicians and public authorities in particular have a responsibility to provide accurate information. They must be aware of the fact that they influence people's impressions of migration. They are also in critical positions when it comes to commenting on, condemning and preventing hate speech and hate crimes.

A positive attitude towards migrants will make it easier for new arrivals to settle in Finland. It affects children's schooling, young people's motivation to study and employment opportunities for adult migrants. Whether or not skilled workers stay in Finland will ultimately depend not only on their own opinions but also on whether their families are happy to stay. Negative attitudes can make it difficult for Finland to find new migrant workers and lead to the departure of those already here.

- *Active measures must be taken to create a positive climate of opinion.*

## 4 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

This Strategy sets out the goals and direction of development for Finland's migration policy. Its successful implementation will require extensive commitment from the parties involved. The goals set out in the Strategy must also be evident more extensively in national policy formulation, and through appropriate and active policies within the EU and in other international forums.

The measures required under the Strategy will be implemented in the different administrative branches. Many of the subject areas of the Strategy are also covered in other forums, such as the Government Integration Programme and the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland. It is essential that the financial resources are sufficient so that migration policy can be put in place effectively. The financial resources for migration and for services for migrants are determined annually in the budget planning and budget processes.

Monitoring and reporting of the Strategy's implementation will be coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior. The working group that prepared the strategy proposal will also be involved in the monitoring. An action programme will be prepared in support of the Strategy. The programme will set out the measures required to meet the goals set, the parties with primary responsibility for their implementation, and the timetable for implementing the measures.





PO Box 26  
FI-00023 Government  
Finland

[www.intermin.fi](http://www.intermin.fi)