

FINLAND'S VOLUNTARY INPUT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW FORUM OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION (GCM)

The GCM sets the standards for safe, orderly and regular migration and provides us with commonly agreed language at global level related to all aspects of migration. Finland fully supports multilateral cooperation and rules-based international order and UN's key role in it.

The GCM emphasises that an effective approach to migration management in general requires a whole-of-government approach. In terms of implementation of the GCM, this approach is utmost important since many of the actions to reach the 23 objectives and 10 guiding principles, cross-governmental cooperation and stepping-up of policy coherence is clearly needed. Also in Finland, the different objectives fall into responsibility of several Ministries.

The implementation of the GCM is also an opportunity to emphasize the value of strengthening the whole-of-society approach to migration. By engaging all actors we can make use of all the skills and capacities of various stakeholders, from employers through to service providers, from local communities to migrant workers.

The Finnish national input focuses here on some of the key objectives of the GCM.

Objective 1: Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies

Promoting evidence-based migration policies was one of the main objectives of Finland's EU Council Presidency in 2019. It is clear that our policymaking can gain from a broader information base and a higher level of situational awareness.

During our EU Council Presidency we also promoted discussion on systematic use of forecast and foresight methods, as well as on the whole-of-route approach. These concepts should be further explored and developed so that our migration policies can become even more evidence-based and forward-looking, benefiting also from our partners' knowledge and sharing ours with them. The whole-of-route approach entails looking at the different routes from a broad perspective and taking into account the patterns and profiles along the whole route from countries of origin through transit countries to the EU, contributing to a comprehensive

understanding of the dynamics of the routes, including the respective root causes of irregular migration.

Objective 2: Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin

In relation to objective 2 of the GCM, Finland emphasizes the need to adopt a holistic, whole-of-government approach to addressing the various underlying factors which cause forced displacement and irregular migration.

The aim of Finnish development policy and cooperation is to support its partner countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality. Finland sees that each of its development policy priorities – that is 1) promoting the rights and status of women and girls; 2) education; 3) sustainable economies and decent work; 4) peaceful, democratic societies; and 5) climate change, biodiversity and sustainable management and use of natural resources, – all contribute in a meaningful way to the structural inequalities and the various and intersecting drivers behind irregular and forced migration.

Finland directs its development cooperation funding directly to the countries of origin and transit as well as to the stabilization of the most fragile contexts. In the past few years, 2019-2020, the largest recipients of Finnish development funding have included countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Nepal and Syria. In 2021, Finland developed an Africa Strategy to diversify and deepen its relations with African countries, the African Union and regional organisations, with focus on political and economic relations. The Strategy also incorporates issues related to migration. As per the strategy, Finland builds dialogue and cooperation on migration as part of a broader political dialogue, especially with the African countries from which there is migration to Finland. Finland also collaborates with the African countries and directs its funding through the EU. One example of this is the EU Africa Trust Fund, through which Finland has provided significant support to address the root causes of instability, forced displacement and irregular migration and to contribute to better migration management.

Finland recognizes that addressing the drivers behind irregular and forced migration requires both long-term partnerships as well as ability to react quickly to changes. In addition to development policy and cooperation and humanitarian aid, this also requires a broad set of other instruments, including political dialogue, crises management, peace mediation as well as for instance coordinated trade, energy and climate policies. Making development funding conditional on co-operation on migration management, however, has not been found to be an effective way to influence migration policies in partner countries.

In 2015 - 2019, the Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) implemented the EU-SPS (EU Social Protection Systems Program) project, which aims to support the construction of social security systems in African and Asian countries.

Regarding employment issues, Finland is a founding member of the global occupational safety and health coalition coordinated by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The goal of the international coalition is to support the realization of the conventions, declarations and sustainable development goals of labour protection.

Finland works to promote global health safety through international organizations and network co-operation bringing together different sectors. Human rights, the status of women and girls and the promotion of gender equality are crosscutting themes in Finland's international health policy.

Objective 5: Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration

Complementary pathways

The Sanna Marin's Government Programme includes an objective that Finland will develop its system of legal migration pathways. At the initiative of the Ministry of the Interior, the Finnish Government commissioned a study examining complementary legal pathways for people in need of international protection. The study was conducted as part of the implementation of the 2021 Government Plan for Analysis, Assessment and Research. The aim was to get an overall view of the study- and employment based complementary pathways since we recognized that there was a wide need for better information-base on the subject and a comprehensive study on this topic seem to be lacking.

The complementary pathway programmes have the potential to respond to the needs of both people in need of protection and the receiving societies. They provide people in need of international protection with a safe and lawful route to a country that can meet their international protection needs. Examples of labour-based and study-based complementary pathways include recruitment channels and scholarship programmes created for people in need of protection, through which they can arrive in the receiving country as workers and students, rather than as asylum seekers or through refugee resettlement. As a rule, work-based and study-based complementary pathway programmes use ordinary visas and residence permits granted for work or study. However, they do take into account the special situation of people in need of international protection, such as difficulties in obtaining all of the documents normally required, by providing support at different stages of the application process, granting exemptions to certain criteria for entry, and waiving fees. The study revealed also that complementary pathways based on work or studies have not been clearly established globally;

for the time being, there are a variety of different programmes in place, many of which are still in the pilot phase.

The research report ¹was drawn up in English in order to facilitate wide use of the information produced. In this manner, Finland also supports joint efforts in finding new solutions to challenges related to migration and enhancing the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.

Talent Boost

The Talent Boost launched by the Government in 2017 is a cross-administrative programme implemented in cooperation with relevant stakeholders designed to boost the immigration of senior specialists, employees, students and researchers. It focuses on attracting the kind of talent who will be instrumental for the growth and internationalisation of Finnish companies, and for research, development and innovation in the leading growth sectors. It also targets sectors suffering from a labour shortage.

The Roadmap for education based and work based immigration 2035 adopted by the Government in 2021 is a package of measures that specifies certain elements of the Government's sustainability roadmap in more detail and strengthens general government finances. The measures prepared in broad cooperation included in the roadmap build and strengthen Finland as a globally attractive place for skilled and competent people and their families. An action plan for the roadmap will be updated on an annual basis.

Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work

Activities of the OSHA

The activities of the Occupational Safety and Health Authority (OSHA) in employment matters include providing advice and guidance, ensuring by means of supervision that employers comply with the law and, if necessary, providing official guidance to employers and notifying the police of any suspected occupational safety and health offences and violations. The specific objective is to identify and detect serious abuse involving breaches of minimum employment conditions. Cooperation between public authorities is particularly important in identifying serious abuses, and further efforts will be made to improve the exchange of information between public authorities. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is involved in a wide range of activities that develop multi-agency cooperation.

¹ The study can be found online [Student, Worker or Refugee? How complementary pathways for people in need of international protection work in practice \(valtioneuvosto.fi\)](#)

The OSHA monitors the obligation of employers to ensure the right of foreign employees to work in Finland, and the retention of this information at the workplace.

During OSH inspections, information about Finnish working life is provided in the employees' own language and, if necessary, an interpreter can be used. The inspections can also be used to distribute brochures and contact information of Victim Support Finland to victims of human trafficking in different languages. The OSH Administration has also held webinars to provide employers and employees with information on matters related to the employment of foreigners.

In the case of trafficking in human beings and related crimes, labour inspectors work closely with the authorities, for example with the police. They also cooperate with organisations assisting victims of trafficking. If labour inspectors detect signs of human trafficking, potential victims will be referred to the assistance system.

The OSHA has launched a project to model and develop multi-agency cooperation in combating undeclared work.

Aliens Act

According to the amendment 554/2021 to the Aliens Act (301/2004) an alien may be granted the right to work without professional restriction if his employer has failed to fulfill his obligations or otherwise exploited him. In addition, he or she is entitled to a new temporary residence permit to apply for a new job. Secondly, the competent authority may decide that worker's residence permits shall temporarily not be issued to an employer who has provided incorrect or misleading information to the authority.

Seasonal Work

The Seasonal Workers Act (907/2017), based on Directive 2014/36/EU, has been amended in 2021 (294/2021). A seasonal worker may change the employer stated in the seasonal work permit, and a seasonal worker returning to the same employer will not be required to present a report on the conditions for employment. Sanctions against reprehensible employers have been specified by also targeting natural persons responsible.

Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration

Resettlement

Finland emphasizes the role of resettlement as a safe and dignified way of offering protection to the most vulnerable refugees and highlights the needs to increase resettlement within the EU and worldwide. Under the refugee quota, Finland admits persons recognised as refugees by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and other foreign nationals in need of international

protection. Finland has been admitting quota refugees since the 1970s. The Finnish refugee quota was increased from 750 to 850 persons in 2020 and further to 1,050 in 2021.

Furthermore, as a response to the dire situation in Afghanistan, Finland increased the quota to 1,500 persons for 2022. As a part of the annual resettlement quotas, Finland prioritizes the needs for resettlement of persons with serious protection concerns, such as women and girls at risk as well as children and adolescents at risk. About ten per cent of the annual quota has been reserved for refugees resettled on an emergency or urgent basis.

Temporary protection

The EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive for the first time to help people fleeing Ukraine. The Directive is designed to address events of mass influx of third-country nationals to the EU when war, violence or human rights violations prevent them from returning to their home country. The mechanism was created after the conflict in the former Yugoslavia as an exceptional arrangement so that the EU could immediately offer protection to masses of people forced to flee their home regions in similar situation.

The Council decision was prepared and its contents adopted in the EU exceptionally quickly and with an extensive political consensus. The directive offers the Member States a unified and functional tool to rapidly help people fleeing the war without the people having to undergo individual asylum procedures.

In all Member States, the decision applies to the following categories of people:

- Ukrainian citizens and their family members
- Beneficiaries of international protection in Ukraine and their family members
- Other permanent residents of Ukraine who cannot return to their country of origin

For the last group, the Member States may choose between temporary protection and a corresponding national permit category. Finland decided to apply temporary protection.

The requirement for all of the groups is that the person must have been resident in Ukraine and fled when Russia's invasion began, i.e. on 24 February or thereafter.

The Council decision left a certain amount of discretion for Member States to decide the exact category of people to be granted protection. Finland decided to apply protection more extensively than what was defined in the EU-wide decision.

Finland decided to also grant temporary protection to the following persons:

- Ukrainian citizens and their family members who fled Ukraine not long before 24 February and cannot return home as a result of the conflict. The Commission has urged the Member States to be flexible with regard to these persons.
- Other Ukrainian citizens and their family members who are already living or have arrived in Finland and cannot return home as a result of the conflict.

- Third-country nationals who have resided legally (also on a short-term basis) in Ukraine and cannot return to their home countries. This group is mentioned as an optional group for Member States in the EU decision.

Objective 10: Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration

OSH inspections

OHS inspections provide information about Finnish working life in the employees' own language and, if necessary, an interpreter can be used during inspections and in customer situations. The inspections can also be used to distribute brochures and contact information of Victim Support Finland to victims of human trafficking in different languages. The OSH Administration has also held webinars to provide employers and employees with information on matters related to the employment of foreigners.

In the case of trafficking in human beings and related crimes, labour inspectors work closely with the authorities, for example with the police. They also cooperate with organisations assisting victims of trafficking. If labour inspectors detect signs of human trafficking, potential victims will be referred to the assistance system.

Multi-authority cooperation is important to fight trafficking in human beings: The OSHA's online training material on trafficking in human beings is suitable for use by all authorities.

Action Plan against Trafficking

Regarding objective 10, as per the Finnish governmental program, a cross-sectoral working group has been appointed which task is to draft legislative amendments concerning assistance for victims of human trafficking. One of the objectives of the working group is to weaken the link between assistance and criminal proceedings.

On 6 May 2021, the action plan against trafficking in human beings (2021 – 2023) was accepted as a government decision of principle. The preparation process was led by the Government Anti-trafficking Coordinator, who was situated in the Ministry of Justice in the beginning of 2020. The action plan is based on five strategic objectives and 55 actions, the implementation of which is the responsibility of different authorities. The implementation of the action plan has gone as expected during the first year (2021). As a result of implementing the action plan, it can be expected that:

- Reaching and identification of victims of human trafficking as well as detection of human trafficking will be improved
- Assistance and support provided for victims of human trafficking will be improved;

- Establishment of criminal liability in human trafficking offences will be strengthened, more trafficking cases will be exposed
- Awareness of human trafficking issues will be extended to new areas and new actors will be engaged in the work against trafficking. Human trafficking will be taken into account in a wider range of different contexts
- Research-based information about trafficking-related questions will be increased and data-gathering and statistics will be developed

Objective 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants

Finland is currently preparing legislative amendments that would enhance undocumented migrants' right to health care and social services. The amendments would extend the right of undocumented migrants in Finland to receive also necessary health care services. Currently, the right is limited only to emergency care. Moreover, a government-funded report on the social rights of undocumented migrant is being prepared, after which the need for legislative changes and updated guidelines will be assessed in order to guarantee access to basic services, particularly in social care.

Finland is also in the process of reforming the organization of health and social services. The aim of the reform is, among other things, to reduce inequalities in well-being and health, and to ensure equal and high-quality social and health services for the population. Basic social and health services will also be developed and improved as part of the reform. For example, co-operation between maternity clinics and social services can enhance the implementation of early support also for migrant families.

Moreover, the PALOMA Center of Expertise, coordinated by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, provides support and information to professionals and organizations working in the field of mental health with people with refugee backgrounds and other similar backgrounds who have moved to Finland. The purpose of the Center of Excellence is to coordinate information, training and cooperation networks in order to spread knowledge and support nationwide.

With regard to COVID 19 –pandemic, the Government, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland published communication materials in multiple languages, including plain language, sign language, and the most commonly spoken languages in Finland. The website of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare contains instructions related to COVID-19 in 20 different languages. Furthermore, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare published multilingual and multichannel Covid-19 communications in eight most commonly spoken languages in Finland that were developed through extensive collaboration, community outreach, and in co-creation with migrant origin communities. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare is currently conducting impact assessment of Covid-19 communications (analysis

of social media marketing and interviews of communications producers, distributors, and target group). Additionally, MigCOVID Survey data has been linked with register data to examine the association sociodemographic characteristics with access to Covid-19 information, adherence to preventive measures, and vaccine uptake among migrant origin populations.

In order to protect public health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has recommended that municipalities provide COVID-19 vaccines to also to persons residing in Finland who do not have a municipality of residence or other right to preventive public health care services in Finland. These people may include students from outside the European Union, seconded employees and diplomats, adult asylum seekers and undocumented persons. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has also recommended that municipalities do not charge non-residents for COVID-19 testing, the cost of emergency health care in relation to COVID-19 disease, or health care certificates for COVID-19.

Objective 16: Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion

The Government Report on integration submitted to Parliament in 2021 sets out guidelines for the development of integration. The aim of the proposals is, among other things, to promote the social inclusion of the growing immigrant population and to improve the participation of immigrant women outside the labour force in training that promotes integration. The Integration Act (1386/2010) will be reformed on the basis of the report.

An inclusive integration project carried out in several municipalities and supported by the European Union will create a systematic model for involving, in particular, refugees received in the UNHCR resettlement programme in the planning and development of services that concern them. The expertise of experts who speak their own language will be utilised in the development and provision of services.

In the reform of the national core curriculum for integration training in 2021, special attention has been paid to the personalisation of education. In addition, e.g. so-called Further Educated with Companies (F.E.C.) training and development training are organised in cooperation with companies for highly educated immigrants.

Objective 17: Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration

On 28 October 2021 the Government Action Plan for Combating Racism and Promoting Good Relations between Population Groups was adopted as a government resolution. The Action Plan was drafted in a working group with representatives from all ministries and the Prime Minister's Office, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, the Sámi Parliament, the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, the

Swedish Assembly of Finland, the Human Rights Centre and the Non-Discrimination Ombudsman. The working group will continue its operations until the end of 2023, guiding and directing the implementation and evaluation of the Action Plan.

The Action Plan is based on a situation assessment, and it includes eight key objectives and 52 measures to be carried out in different branches of government in 2021–2023. The measures are based on research information collected at the evaluation stage, important stakeholder observations in hearings, and recommendations for measures received from international human rights treaty bodies. The Action Plan aims to dismantle structural inequalities in society, promote non-discrimination in the Finnish working life, strengthen the authorities' equality competence, raise awareness of racism and its various forms, and develop research and data collection related to racism. The implementation of the Action Plan has begun in 2021.

Objective 18: Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences

Learners with a migrant background are not a homogeneous group. Some children and young people progress smoothly in their studies along with the native population after learning Finnish or Swedish, while others need more support.

According to the Education Policy Report of the Finnish Government (2021), the needs for and delivery of targeted measures at different levels of education are associated with the age at which the learner arrived in Finland, in particular. School success is directly linked to success in further studies, which is why basic education that imparts adequate basic skills (literacy, numeracy) and abilities is essential from the perspective of integration.

The reforms decided in the government programme to improve equality will improve the learning of pupils/students with a migrant background (a child, pupil or student whose mother tongue or home language is other than Finnish, Swedish or Sámi). Such reforms include, in particular, the extension of compulsory education, the development of study guidance and the identification of competences within the whole of continuous learning, and measures for under-represented groups.

In the Right to Learn –development programme attention is paid on ensuring learning conditions for pupils with a migrant background, in particular linguistic and other learning skills of newly arrived pupils. The Ministry of Education and Culture has launched an Action Programme for 2022-2026 together with the Finnish National Agency for Education to support the learning and schooling readiness of pupils with a migrant background in basic education. The Action Programme aims to strengthen education preparing for basic education, mother tongue instruction and Finnish/Swedish as a second language and develop measures specifically aimed at pupils with a migrant background in grades 7-9 in basic education. Measures include,

among other things, strengthening the language skills, readiness for schools, as well as basic skills, and ensuring smooth transitions, from preparatory education to general education.

In connection with the legislative reform, financing for positive discrimination will be put on a permanent footing. These actions will improve the education system's prerequisites for evening out the impacts of social inequalities and support the learning and equitable learning paths of learners with migrant background, also giving young migrants the opportunity to grow to their full potential in the school system.

It is more common for students with a migrant background than for native Finnish students to drop out of upper secondary education. Adequate teaching, guidance and support are particularly important for these students. To secure this support, the personalisation of vocational education and training will be developed further, making it possible to introduce a model of positive special treatment compatible with the nature of vocational education and training. For students with a migrant background, an educational institution that offers positive experiences of togetherness, communality and inclusion is a vital resource. Such experiences should be secured for all students in general upper secondary education and vocational education and training.

Students with a migrant background are currently underrepresented in higher education. Access to higher education will be supported by integrating service activities related to identifying migrants' competence and providing them with guidance into the higher education system and by adding provisions on preparatory education for immigrants to the Universities Act. Higher education institutions' accessibility plans, which concern all underrepresented groups, will also support students with a migrant background in accessing and completing higher education. The entry of students will be streamlined and the opportunities for graduates to stay in Finland will be improved.

The government added EUR 5 million to the government fiscal plan for 2022-2025 for the education of literacy and other integration education in the Finnish / Swedish languages in liberal adult education, The funding for such education was separated from the funding system for liberal adult education. The amendment 912/2021 enabling this change was adopted on 5 November 2021. The law entered into force on 1 January 2022. As a result of the reform, a total of EUR 11.83 million has been set aside in the budget for this particular education.

(There is an established system for recognition of foreign qualifications in Finland. Responsibility for recognition of qualifications rests with the Finnish National Agency for Education EDUFI, a field-specific authority, an employer, a higher education institution or some other educational institution, depending on the purpose for which recognition is applied. Furthermore, EDUFI issues advisory statements on foreign vocational qualifications for which it is not possible to issue a decision. A statement can be drawn up on a completed qualification

that falls within the official system of education in the country in which the qualification was completed.

There are also some rules for identification and recognition of competence that can be taken into account when designing individual study paths in vocational education and training in Finland.)

Objective 20: Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants

Regulation regarding payment services, including money remittance, has been harmonized at the EU-level (particularly by the second payment services directive (EU) 2015/2366 and the payment accounts directive 2014/92/EU). In addition, the provision of payment services has to be in line with the EU-legislation on money laundering and terrorist financing. Refugees and immigrants have been observed in the Finnish legislation regarding the provision of basic banking services (including payment services) in accordance with the above-mentioned payment accounts directive.

The financial inclusion of migrants is part of Finland's National Strategy for Financial Literacy. The mission of the strategy is to make people understand the importance of financial literacy in their own lives and to act in their own finances in an ethical and sustainable way. Improving the financial literacy of people will generate wellbeing for the whole national economy, for all sectors. The strategy identifies as a specific target group financially vulnerable groups, such as immigrants and their families. The financial inclusion of migrants will be strengthened as part of integration services and will subsequently be linked to financial literacy services for all.

Objective 21: Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration

Developing and implementing bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation frameworks and agreements, including readmission agreements, ensuring that return and readmission of migrants to their own country is safe, dignified and in full compliance with international human rights law, is a key objective.

The EU and Member States have in recent years developed and expanded their instruments and frameworks for migration cooperation with external partners. This should advance building balanced, sustained and mutually beneficial partnerships. Partnerships are pivotal when aiming in preventing irregular migration and forced displacement and enhancing the cooperation on return and readmission.

The EU should continue to advance global responsibility-sharing and develop partnerships at bilateral, regional and global level. Cooperation with the African Union and the United Nations have brought good results and should be further promoted.

Voluntary return should always be the preferred means of return, as it is the most sustainable alternative in view of the reintegration of migrants. Finland actively cooperates with IOM, when returning migrants voluntarily from Finland to their countries of origin.

Objective 22: Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits

The Finnish universal social security system is divided into residence-based and employment-based social security. The aim is to provide people with an adequate livelihood and care in all life situations. Social security consists of services and financial benefits that secure a livelihood. Persons who come to Finland to work are entitled to residence-based benefits, even if they do not live in Finland. If a person moves to Finland for a reason other than work, the right to social security is determined based on residence in Finland.

Earnings-related pensions are paid without restriction to all countries under national law, as well as pensions under accidents at work and occupational disease legislation. All insured work accrues pension, regardless of the length of employment. An earnings-related pension earned in Finland is paid to a person regardless of their country of residence or citizenship.

The portability of earned benefits can also be achieved through social security agreements. Finland has concluded bilateral social security agreements with Australia, Chile, South Korea, India, Israel, Japan, Canada, China and the United States. Additionally, there is a separate agreement with the Canadian province of Quebec. Bilateral social security agreements apply specifically to earnings-related pensions, but some agreements also cover other social security benefits. Bilateral social security agreements are intended to ensure that persons moving between the Contracting Parties are covered by the Contracting Party's social security, to pay cross-border benefits and to prevent double insurance.