

Asylum interview at the Finnish Immigration Service

You have been invited to an asylum interview by the Finnish Immigration Service. Carefully read these instructions on your rights and obligations during the interview. If you have any questions about these instructions, you can ask them at the start of your interview from an employee of the Finnish Immigration Service.

What is the purpose of the interview?

- You have applied for asylum in Finland. The reasons for why you seek asylum in Finland and why you cannot return to your home country will be discussed at the interview.
- It is important that you explain all the criteria for your application in this interview. If you have new criteria after the interview or you wish to provide new information relating to your earlier criteria, please inform the Finnish Immigration Service or the court processing your appeal about the matter immediately.
- Only your asylum application will be discussed during the interview. If you wish to apply for a residence permit on some other grounds, you must submit a separate application, for which you must pay a fee. Grounds for a residence permit include family ties, for example.

Your rights during the interview

- You have the right to bring legal counsel with you to your interview. The legal counsel will participate in the interview at their own discretion.
- You must find the counsel yourself. If you do not bring a counsel to the interview, the interview can go ahead without a counsel.
- An interpreter will attend the interview. The interpreter is to objectively interpret everything that is said during the interview. The interpreter will either be present in the interview room or will interpret by telephone or through a video link.
- The interviewer, interpreter and legal counsel are bound by confidentiality, meaning that they must not disclose anything they hear during the interview to outsiders. However, matters you tell us about in the interview may have an impact on the processing of your family member's application. In these cases, we will take these matters into account in your family member's case. However, we can keep information secret from your family member if giving the information to them would put you or your loved one at risk or harm you. You can tell us what you think about this in the interview.
- As a rule, all documents concerning you are confidential.

Your obligations during the interview

- You have the obligation to discuss and provide information about your reasons for seeking asylum. It is in your interest to tell us truthfully about all factors affecting your case at the interview.
- It is also in your best interest to discuss difficult issues. They may be crucial to your application.
- If you cannot remember, or if you do not know something, do not try to invent an answer. Providing false information will make your story less credible.
- Provide your correct personal information at the interview. If you do not have any documents to confirm your identity, you must try your best to get these documents and give them to the Finnish Immigration Service. Examples of such documents are identity documents or a travel document. However, the Finnish Immigration Service cannot make you do anything that would put your safety, or the safety of your loved ones, at risk to get the documents. You will need a reliable identification document issued by an authority in order to later change the personal information you have provided.
- The Finnish Immigration Service saves your personal information and the grounds for your application in the case management system for immigration matters, which is an official register. Giving false information for an official register is a punishable offence.
- Providing false personal information to an authority is a criminal offence punishable by law.
- Please note that providing false personal or other information or concealing information may lead to the cancellation of a permit that has already been issued and complicate any other cases you may have.

How to prepare for your interview

- Read all the instructions and brochures you have received from the authorities before your interview. It is important that you also read our brochures about the Dublin procedure. If you do not have these brochures, you can find them on the website of the Finnish Immigration Service at migi.fi/en/brochures-and-publications, under the headline 'Asylum and Dublin procedure'.
- If you have a justified reason to ask that the interpreter or interviewer is a woman or a man, tell an employee of the reception centre about this well before the interview. The reception centre will send your request to the Finnish Immigration Service. The Finnish Immigration Service will assess if the reason is justified.
- If your physical or mental health may affect the interview, please notify a reception centre employee. With your consent, the reception centre may contact the Finnish Immigration Service concerning the matter before the interview.
- Bring something to eat or money for lunch with you.
- Bring any medication you need during the day with you.
- Bring all documents and evidence related to your application with you.
- Do not bring children with you, unless they have been invited to the interview. If you need someone to look after your child during the interview, please let the reception centre know well in advance.
- Arrive on time. Reserve enough time for travel to the interview. Your reception centre will provide instructions on how to get to the Finnish Immigration Service office.

What to do on the day of your interview at the Finnish Immigration Service office

- You cannot change the date of the interview without a good reason. If you are sick on the day of the interview, tell your reception centre about it at once. You must send a report given by the nurse or doctor at the reception centre to the Finnish Immigration Service at the latest one week after the date of the interview. If you fail to come to the asylum interview without a justified reason, a decision can be made without interviewing you.
- When you enter the premises of the Finnish Immigration Service, you may have to go through a security inspection.
- Show the customer card given to you by the reception centre to the security guard at the Finnish Immigration Service.
- Only people invited to an interview and other people approved in advance by the Finnish Immigration Service are permitted to enter the waiting area.
- If you would like to bring a support person, you or your support person must ask the Finnish Immigration Service about this in writing before the interview. Otherwise, the interviewer will decide at the start of the interview whether your support person is

allowed to attend the interview. Your support person is not your legal counsel and will not participate in the investigation of the case.

- Your interview will be conducted by an employee of the Finnish Immigration Service. This employee will either be there in person or interview you via a video link.
- The interview will be recorded. In addition, the room is equipped with a CCTV camera.
- The interview may last all day. There will be a lunch break and other breaks, if necessary. You may ask for a break any time you wish.
- If necessary, the interview will be continued another day. In such case, you will receive a new invitation to an interview after some time.

What happens during the interview?

- First, the interviewer will tell you what happens during the interview and make sure that you have understood your rights and obligations. If you do not understand something, please ask. If you do not understand the interpreter, please let the interviewer know.
- If your detailed personal information has not been previously collected, the interviewer will first ask for this information. The interviewer will ask who your family consists of, where you have lived, and what route you travelled to Finland. The interviewer will also ask you about information that affects the decision about examining your application in Finland, or not processing it.
- You will then be interviewed about why you had to flee your home country and why you cannot return there. Speak honestly and in as much detail as possible about everything that has happened to you.
- The interviewer will ask you follow-up questions about events you have discussed. Answer honestly. Let the interviewer know if you do not know or cannot remember something.
- Certain general questions will be asked from all asylum seekers. The interviewer will also ask you questions such as how you would feel about being removed from the country and being prohibited to enter.
- In the interview, you can give the Finnish Immigration Service information that may affect the decision in your case. For example, if you are suspected of an offence in Finland, or if you have been convicted of an offence in this country, this may affect the processing of your case at the Finnish Immigration Service. If necessary, the Finnish Immigration Service will give you an opportunity to give your opinion about the matter during the interview.
- At the end of the interview, the interpreter will read you the protocol that the interviewer has written down. If you notice any mistakes in the protocol, you must notify the interviewer. You can also make additions to the protocol. The protocol will then be signed, and you will receive a copy of it.

How will the Finnish Immigration Service make the decision?

- Based on your application, you may be granted international protection or a residence permit due to a personal humanitarian reason or because you have been a victim of human trafficking.
- The Finnish Immigration Service will make a decision in your case based on the information you have provided in your asylum interview as well as other evidence presented in your case. The Finnish Immigration Service may also use public sources to look for information that supports its decision.
- If necessary, the Finnish Immigration Service may contact your home country to verify the validity of your documents. Authorities will not know about this and the verification process will not cause danger to you or your family.
- If you wish to provide additional information at a later date, please do so in writing. We will not discuss your case over the telephone, because we cannot ascertain the identity of callers.
- If your application is rejected, you may be deported and prohibited from entering Finland and other countries that are party to the Schengen Agreement.
- If your application is rejected or you withdraw it, you have the right to apply for support for voluntary return. This support is provided on certain conditions, which will be checked when you apply for it. Ask for more information at your reception centre, or see the contact information of assistance for voluntary return on the Finnish Immigration Service's website at <https://migri.fi/en/return>.
- If you have new criteria to apply for asylum after the Finnish Immigration Service's decision concerning your present application has become legally valid, submit a new application promptly. You should have a reason for not telling about the new criteria earlier. The reason should be something that you were unable to affect yourself. The Finnish Immigration Service will then assess whether it will investigate your new application.