

ANNUAL REPORT  
ON IMMIGRATION  
2009



MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR  
Migration Department

## FALL IN IMMIGRATION IN 2009

This overview is intended to provide a general picture of immigration in Finland in 2009. Migration has occurred throughout our history; people have left their homelands for a variety of reasons – to flee wars, to look for jobs, to seek better lives. These are the same reasons why people still move to and from Finland.

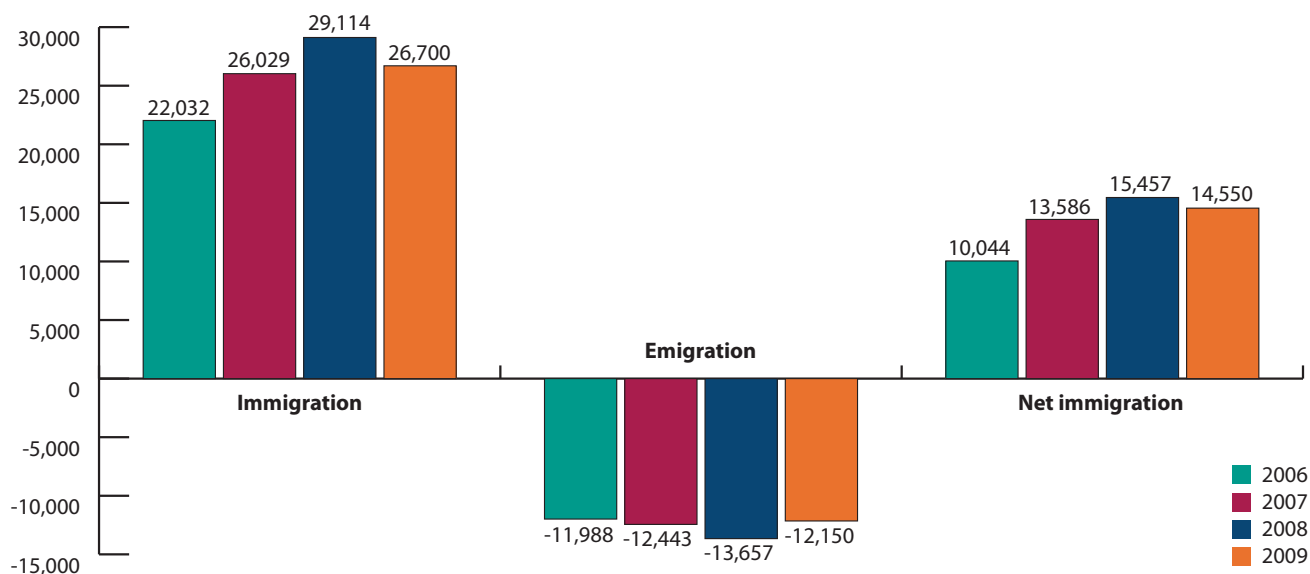
In 2009, a total of 26,700 people moved to Finland, some 2,400 fewer than in the previous year. For the first time in 12 years, there has been a decline in immigration to Finland from other EU countries. Today, people's

main motives for moving to Finland are work, study and family. Asylum was granted to 116 people and slightly over 1,200 people obtained residence permits on humanitarian or subsidiary protection grounds.

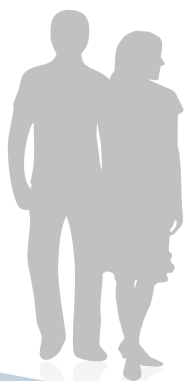
### **Immigrant is a broad concept**

The term *immigrant* includes not only refugees but also labour migrants, foreign students and those people who have moved away from Finland and have now returned. Some people from foreign backgrounds live in Finland on residence permits, others are Finnish citizens.

### Demographic changes 2006-2009



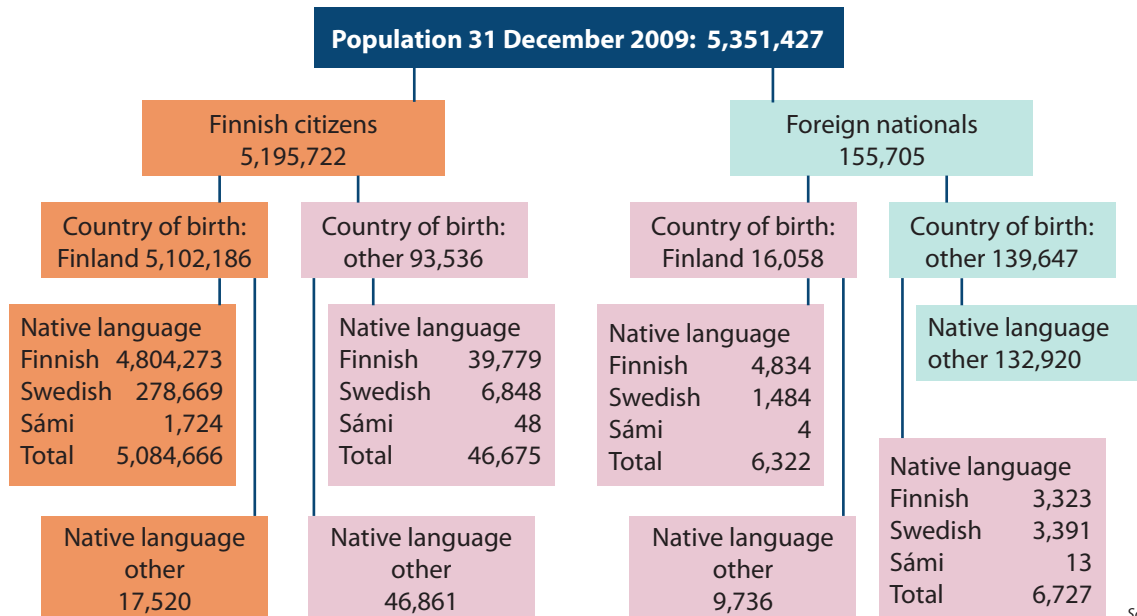
Source: Statistics Finland, stat.fi



### Did you know?

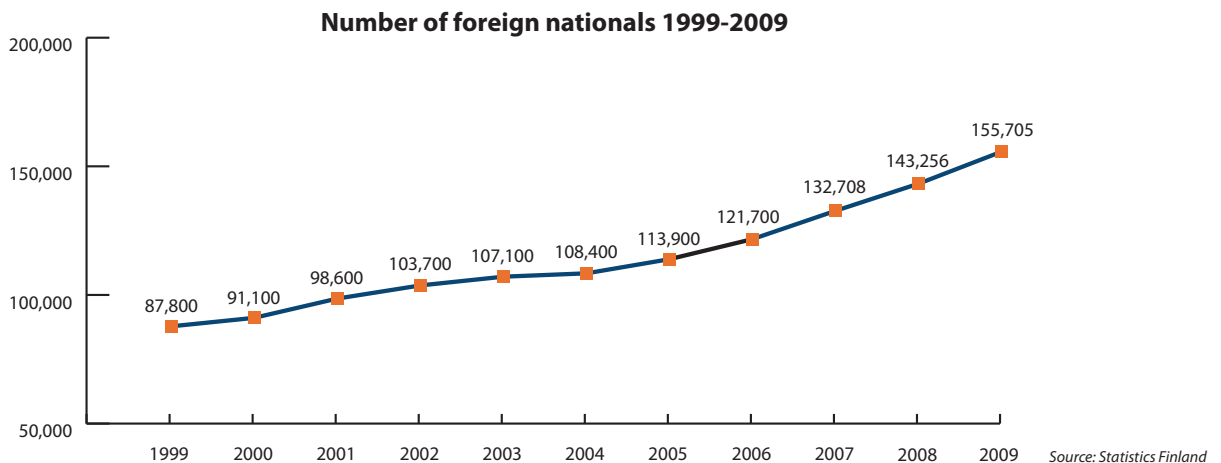
Most emigrants from Finland have gone to Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

## FINLAND'S POPULATION AND THE NUMBER OF FOREIGN NATIONALS



Source: Statistics Finland

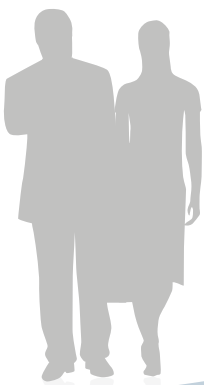
At the end of 2009, the number of Finnish citizens permanently resident in Finland was 5,195,722, of whom 93,536 had been born abroad. Foreign nationals resident in Finland numbered 155,705, or 2.9% of the population.



This figure covers foreign nationals who live permanently in Finland. It does not include those who have acquired Finnish citizenship or asylum seekers.

### Did you know?

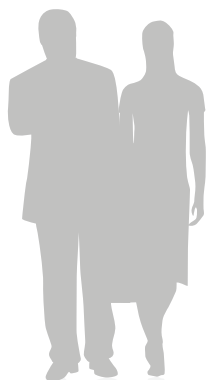
Over 40% of the people in Luxembourg are from elsewhere and have not applied for citizenship – the highest figure in any EU country. Ireland and Belgium also attract a lot of citizens from other EU member states.



## NUMBER OF FOREIGN NATIONALS BY REGION

15 municipalities with the largest number of foreign nationals	Population	Number of foreign nationals	Percentage of foreign nationals
Helsinki	583,350	41,735	7.2%
Espoo	244,330	15,304	6.3%
Tampere	211,507	7,390	3.5%
Vantaa	197,636	11,919	6.0%
Turku	176,087	8,237	4.7%
Oulu	139,133	3,101	2.2%
Jyväskylä	129,623	3,063	2.4%
Lahti	100,854	3,291	3.3%
Kuopio	92,626	1,507	1.6%
Kouvola	88,174	1,757	2.0%
Lappeenranta	71,814	2,309	3.2%
Vaasa	59,175	2,947	5.0%
Salo	54,889	2,099	3.8%
Kotka	54,775	2,390	4.4%
Porvoo	48,599	1,444	3.0%

Source: Statistics Finland



### Did you know?

The most international suburb in Finland is Varissuo in Turku. About 33% of the people there are foreign-language speakers. Unlike many other countries, there are no suburbs in Finland where 90% of the residents are from foreign backgrounds – as is the case with Rinkeby (population 9,000) in Stockholm.



## NUMBER OF PEOPLE ACQUIRING FINNISH CITIZENSHIP

Finnish citizenship can be acquired by application or by declaration. In 2009, a total of 10,311 people were granted citizenship (2,821 by application and 7,490 by declaration).

Most declarations were from Sweden, the United States, Canada and Australia. The transitional provision of the Nationality Act was in force from 1 June 2003 until 31 May 2008. During that time, people who had lost Finnish citizenship – for example, when acquiring the citizenship of another country – could have their citizenship restored by declaration. Citizenship could be granted without any need to move to Finland. During the transitional period, a total of 19,264 declarations were lodged.

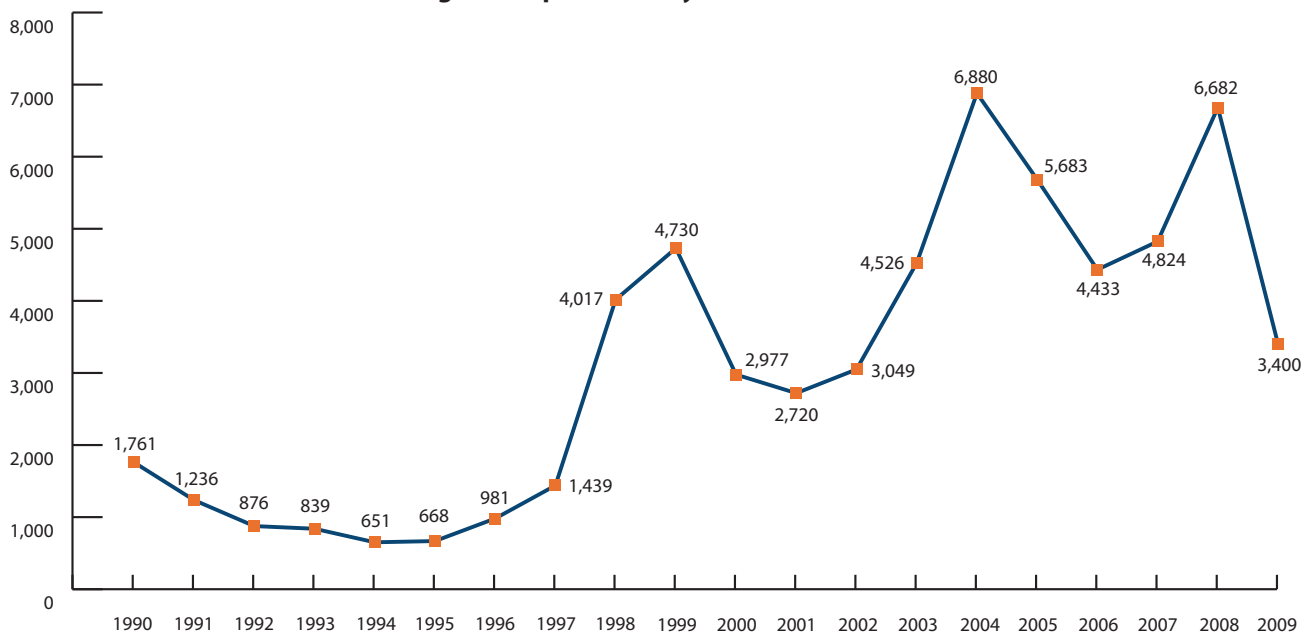
The largest groups of successful applicants by nationality were: Russians (920), Somalis (236) and Iraqis (177).



2009 was spent clearing the backlog of declarations. Such declarations by former Finnish citizens and their descendents swelled the numbers of those acquiring citizenship.



**Number of people acquiring Finnish citizenship – People from foreign backgrounds permanently resident in Finland**



Source: Statistics Finland

Finnish citizenship was most often granted to citizens of Russia (1,050), whether by application or declaration.

### Application periods

- In 2009, the average processing time for citizenship applications was 410 days.
- The average processing time for declarations was 332 days.

## POPULATION BY CITIZENSHIP, NATIVE LANGUAGE AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH

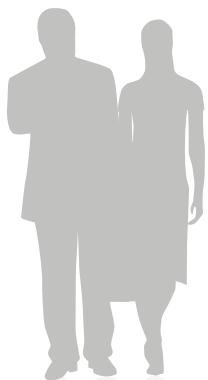
<b>Total population in 2009</b>	<b>5,351,427</b>
---------------------------------	------------------

<b>CITIZENSHIP</b>	
Finnish citizens	<b>5,195,722</b>
Foreign nationals	<b>155,705</b>

<b>LARGEST GROUPS BY CITIZENSHIP</b>	
Russian	28,210
Estonian	25,510
Swedish	8,506
Somali	5,570
Chinese	5,180
Thai	4,497
Iraqi	3,978
Turk	3,809
German	3,628
UK	3,333
Indian	3,168
Iranian	2,495
US	2,378

<b>NATIVE LANGUAGE</b>	
Finnish	4,852,209
Swedish	290,392
Sámi	1,789
<b>Largest groups by foreign language</b>	
Russian	51,683
Estonian	25,096
English	12,063
Somali	11,681
Arabic	9,682
Kurdish	7,135
Chinese	7,078
Albanian	6,736
Other languages	207,037

<b>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</b>	
Finland	5,118,244
Other	233,183
<b>Largest groups</b>	
Former Soviet Union	47,307
Sweden	30,966
Estonia	21,761
Russia	7,339
Somalia	7,110
China	6,591
Iraq	6,180
Thailand	6,108
Former Yugoslavia	6,074
Germany	5,770



### Did you know?

Finns are the largest immigrant group in Sweden. There are now three generations of Finns living there. People of Finnish background total 674,932, of whom 74,058 held Finnish citizenship at the end of 2009.

Source: Statistics Finland

## EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

### Rise in unemployment in Finland

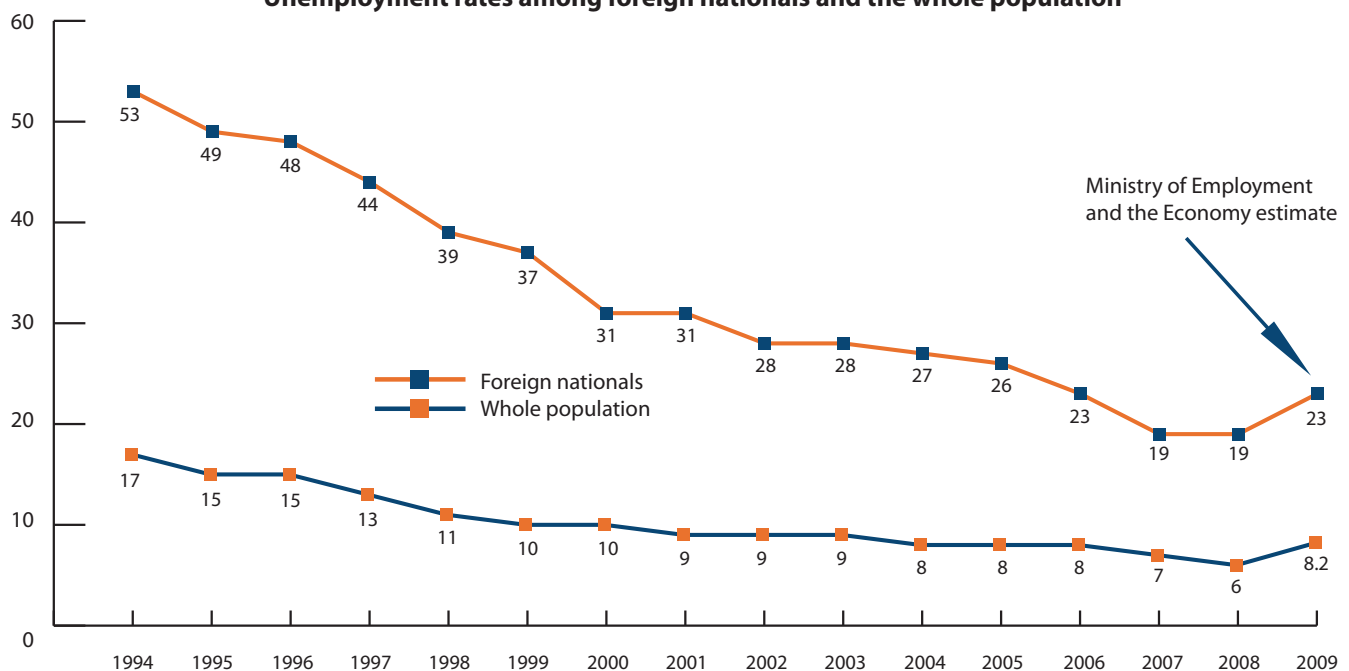
In 2009, the unemployment rate was 8.2% – back up to the same level as in 2005. There were 265,800 unemployed job-seekers in Finland, of whom 6.1% were foreign nationals.

The number of unemployed immigrants constantly changes, and the figures do not show the numbers re-entering employment. It is common for immigrants to experience short periods of unemployment between jobs.

### Employment rate falls to 2005 level

The employment rate – which had been rising for the four previous years – started to fall in 2009. The employment rate fell to its 2005 level to stand at 68.3%. According to Statistics Finland's latest figures, the employment rate among foreign nationals is 52.4%. (Most recent available data – 2008)

Unemployment rates among foreign nationals and the whole population



Source: Statistics Finland, Ministry of Employment and the Economy

Statistics Finland will publish employment rate figures for 2009 in 2011.

## ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

**An asylum seeker** is a person who applies for protection and the right of residence in a foreign country. Asylum seekers may be granted residence permits on three different grounds: 1) as refugees, 2) as persons in need of subsidiary protection if they are under the threat of torture or other inhuman treatment in their home countries, and 3) as persons in need of humanitarian protection if they cannot return to their country of residence as a result of an environmental catastrophe or a poor security situation.

**A quota refugee** is a person whose refugee status has been recognised by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and who is resettled in Finland. Quota refugees are selected abroad – at refugee camps and elsewhere. The Finnish Parliament sets an annual refugee quota. In recent years, this quota has been 750.

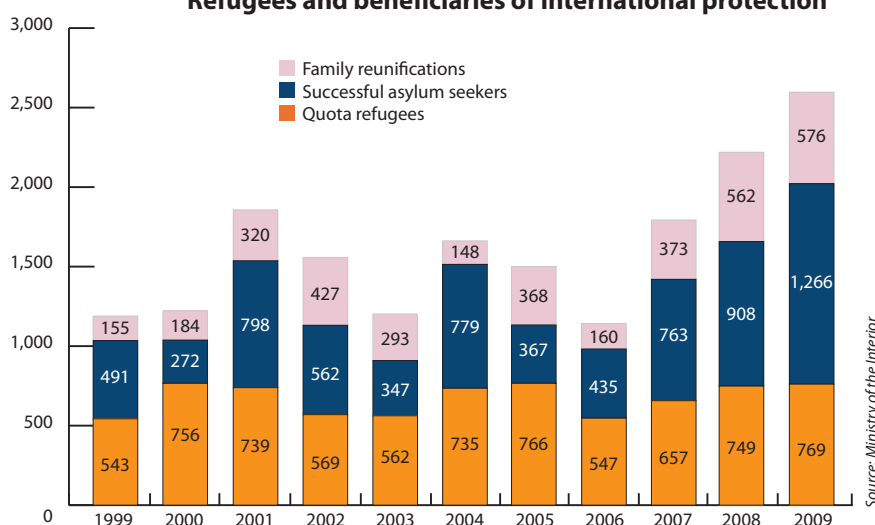
### Processing times for applications:

As a general rule, the Finnish Immigration Service interviews asylum seekers within a year of submitting their applications.

### In 2009

- 5,988 asylum applications  
- asylum decisions: asylum was granted and refugee status accorded to 116 people. Residence permits were granted to slightly over 1,200 people on humanitarian or subsidiary protection grounds. These asylum decisions were not all made in respect of applications made in that same year.

### Refugees and beneficiaries of international protection



*These statistics include those who have been granted residence permits and are waiting to be resettled in municipalities.*

### Asylum seekers by country

Country	2009	2008	Major changes
Iraq	1,195	1,255	
Somalia	1,180	1,181	
Bulgaria	739	82	+ 657
Russian Federation	602	209	+ 393
Afghanistan	461	254	+ 207
Kosovo	284	67	+ 217
Iran	162	144	
Turkey	140	65	
Nigeria	131	77	
Sri Lanka	102	36	
Belarus	95	68	

Roma from Bulgaria arrived in the country and applied for asylum. As EU citizens their applications were processed in the accelerated asylum procedure and none of them were granted asylum.

Last year Russian asylum seekers were the fourth largest group of applicants. Most Russian applicants come from Chechnya and its neighbouring republics.

The increase in the number of Kosovan applicants can partly be explained by the fact that Kosovans have started to use their own national passports more and more, having earlier been counted as Serbs.

### Did you know?

Asylum seekers leave their homes for many reasons, and come from all economic and educational backgrounds. Some are accommodated in reception centres, while others take care of their accommodation, children's schooling and so on independently in their new country.



## RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES

### Reception of refugees by region 2005-2009

(Refugees who are waiting in reception centres to be resettled in municipalities are not included in the figures by employment and economic development centre.)

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTRE	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	TOTAL
Uusimaa	350	310	510	669	498	<b>2,337</b>
Southwest	85	56	134	185	114	<b>574</b>
Satakunta	3	2	17	5	26	<b>53</b>
Häme	49	50	32	79	73	<b>283</b>
Pirkanmaa	137	108	127	159	126	<b>657</b>
Southeast Finland	137	98	94	176	206	<b>711</b>
South Savo	68	92	71	67	74	<b>372</b>
North Savo	39	14	51	37	33	<b>174</b>
North Karelia	58	27	61	104	180	<b>430</b>
Central Finland	63	47	54	57	88	<b>309</b>
South Ostrobothnia	1	32	4	1	23	<b>61</b>
Ostrobothnia	164	110	223	152	196	<b>845</b>
North Ostrobothnia	129	62	135	132	189	<b>647</b>
Kainuu	112	41	142	152	102	<b>549</b>
Lapland	106	93	138	195	239	<b>771</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>1,142</b>	<b>1,793</b>	<b>2,170</b>	<b>2,167</b>	<b>8,773</b>

Source: Ministry of the Interior

There are 17 reception centres for asylum seekers in Finland and 6 additional units operating under them. There are 23 units for minors seeking asylum (group homes, support housing units) most of which operate under reception centres.

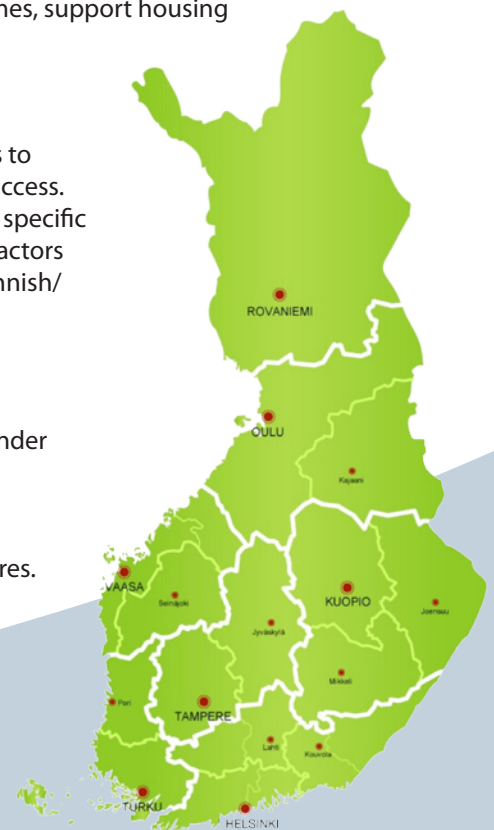
### Monitoring integration

The Ministry of the Interior has launched a project for looking at ways to improve the monitoring of integration activities and evaluate their success. As part of this project, an immigration barometer was piloted among specific target groups in 2009. This survey revealed that the most important factors promoting integration are work, safety/security and knowledge of Finnish/Swedish or courses in those languages.

### Immigration and integration at regional level

At regional level, duties relating to immigration and integration fall under Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. There are seven such centres in Finland, and they are responsible for coordinating immigration activities. The Ministry of the Interior provides operational guidance to the immigration units in these centres. The duties of the centres include promoting the integration and employment of immigrants, ensuring the resettlement of refugees in municipalities and promoting labour migration.

*At regional level, the seven Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment coordinate immigration activities.*



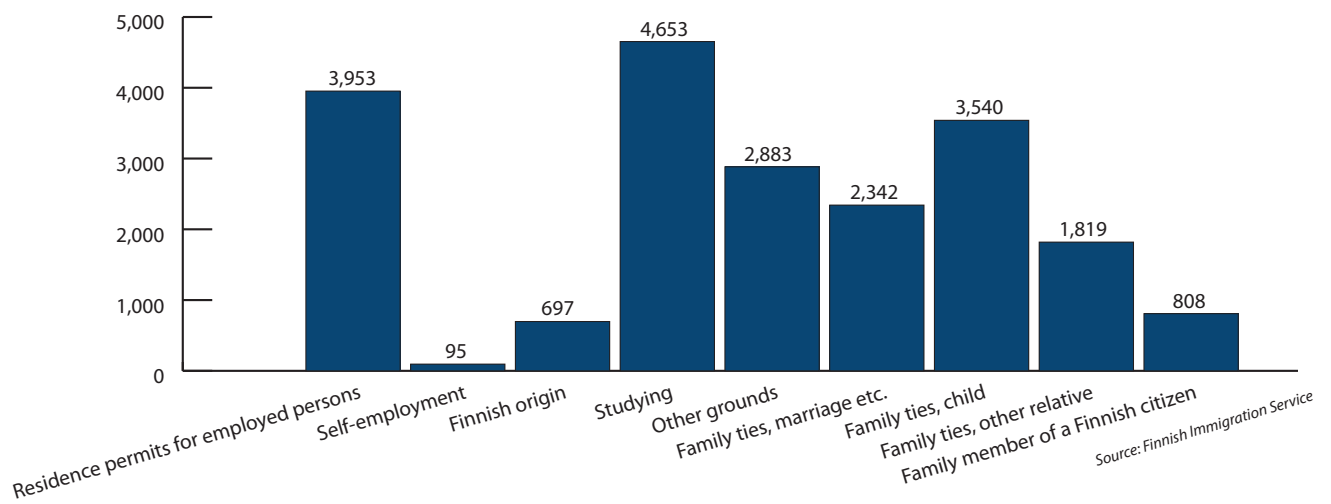
## RESIDENCE PERMITS

Residence permits are either fixed-term or permanent. If the length of stay is to exceed three months, a residence permit is required when entering the country. The first permit is usually granted for a year. Citizens of other Nordic countries are an exception to this rule as they do not need a residence permit in other Nordic countries. Likewise, other EU citizens do not need a residence permit, but they must register their right of residence.

### Finland aims to attract highly skilled workers

In 2009, the Government made a decision to encourage foreign nationals who have studied in Finland and completed a higher education degree here to remain in Finland to work. The Nationality Act will be amended so that half of the time spent in Finland studying will be taken into account in determining the period of residence required for eligibility for citizenship.

Residence permit applications submitted in 2009 by grounds



### A total of 20,790 applications

A total of 18,260 decisions were made on applications for residence permits, and 15,208 people were granted residence permits. *Other grounds* in the table mainly covers labour migration. These are people who do not need residence permit for an employed person and can work in Finland on an ordinary residence permit.



## WHO'S WHO? ACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR MIGRATION

MIGRATION ACTIVITIES IN FINLAND	
Activity	Responsibility
Migration policy guidelines, priorities	Migration policy is guided by the Minister of Migration and European Affairs in accordance with the Government guidelines
Migration administration and policy	Ministry of the Interior
Development of migration legislation	Ministry of the Interior
Performance guidance for the Finnish Immigration Service	Ministry of the Interior
Visa applications abroad	Finnish diplomatic and consular missions
Residence permits for family members of Finnish citizens	Police
Residence permits for family members of foreign nationals living in Finland	Finnish Immigration Service
Registering of EU citizens' right of residence	Police
Residence permits for employed persons	Consideration of workforce needs: Employment and Economic Development Offices Other conditions: Finnish Immigration Service
Asylum, residence permits on humanitarian or subsidiary protection grounds	Establishment of identity and travel route to Finland, notification of decisions: Police Interviews and decisions: Finnish Immigration Service
Reception of asylum seekers	The Finnish Immigration Service guides the reception centre activities.
Extension of residence permits	Police, in special cases Finnish Immigration Service
Refusal of entry	Decision: Finnish Border Guard or Finnish Immigration Service Implementation: Police, Finnish Border Guard
Deportation	Proposal: Police, Finnish Border Guard Decision: Finnish Immigration Service Implementation: Police
Citizenship applications and declarations	Finnish Immigration Service
Appeals	Administrative courts (asylum issues: Administrative Court of Helsinki) Supreme Administrative Court
Integration	The Ministry of the Interior guides integration activities. Measures to promote integration are also taken by educational and employment services which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment are the regional authorities acting under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior in association with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Municipalities and Employment and Economic Development Offices carry out actions at local level.
Integration programmes	Municipalities
Immigrants have an individual integration plan made specially for them.	Employment and Economic Development Offices (training and employment of adult immigrants) and municipalities (basic education, early childhood education, social and health care services)

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

**Finnish Immigration Service** [www.migri.fi](http://www.migri.fi)

*Statistics on residence permits*  
*Statistics on asylum and refugees*  
*Statistics on citizenship*  
*Statistics on deportation*

•

**Population Register Centre**

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

•

**Statistics Finland**

Population changes, data by language and descent [www.stat.fi](http://www.stat.fi)

•

**Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities**

Statistics on the population structure in municipalities [www.kunnat.net](http://www.kunnat.net)

•

**Finnish National Board of Education**

Statistics on immigrant education [www.oph.fi](http://www.oph.fi)

•

**Social Insurance Institution of Finland, Kela**

Statistics on special assistance for immigrants [www.kela.fi](http://www.kela.fi)

•

**Institute of Migration**

Emigrant register databases [www.migrationinstitute.fi](http://www.migrationinstitute.fi)

•

**Eurostat**

Statistics on EU member states <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

•

**Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment** [www.ely-keskus.fi](http://www.ely-keskus.fi)

•

**Monitori web journal** [www.monitori-lehti.fi](http://www.monitori-lehti.fi)

•

**Info Bank** [www.infopankki.fi](http://www.infopankki.fi)

•

**Finnish diplomatic and consular missions** [www.formin.fi](http://www.formin.fi)

•

**The UN Refugee Agency** [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

•

**Information and material on equality**

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

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR  
Migration Department

PO Box 26, FI-00023 Government, FINLAND

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