Resettlement and humanitarian admission - Finland

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

Finland is bound by the Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework Regulation (URF).

National legislation

30 April 2024: Finnish Aliens Act, Sections 90, 91, 92, 106 and 116(2).

Competent authority and stakeholders

Authorities responsible for establishing resettlement and humanitarian admission policy	Finnish Parliament at the proposal of the Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.
Identification and referral of refugees for a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

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Selection of refugees for a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	• Finnish Immigration Service | Maahanmuuttovirasto • Finnish Security Intelligence Service (SUPO) | Suojelupoliisi Skyddspolisen • Municipalities and administrative districts (integration experts)
Pre-departure assistance a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	• Finnish Immigration Service | Maahanmuuttovirasto • International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Travel arrangements a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	• Finnish Immigration Service | Maahanmuuttovirasto • Finnish missions abroad, Ministry for Foreign Affairs | Ulkoministeriö Utrikesministeriet • International Organization for Migration (IOM) • United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) • Luona Oy

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Arrival and reception a) resettlement programmes b) humanitarian admission programmes c) community sponsorship programmes	• Finnish Border Guard (RAJA) | Rajavartiolaitos • Luona Oy • Municipalities and local government Additionally, • Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment | Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö (TEM): National coordination and guidance regarding municipal places. • Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY) | Elinkeino-, liikenne- ja ympäristökeskus: Regional coordination and guidance regarding municipal places.

Programmes currently in place

Resettlement programme is based on an annual quota within the framework of the European Resettlement Programme.

National quotas on resettlement and humanitarian admission

National commitments for resettlement, humanitarian admission and emergency quota

2-year Union Plan	National commitment for resettlement	National commitment for humanitarian admissions	Emergency quota
Period 2024-2025	1,050 in 2024 500 in 2025	0	50 in 2025 Usually, 10% of the annual quota

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2-year Union Plan	National commitment for resettlement	National commitment for humanitarian admissions	Emergency quota
Period 2026-2027	Not yet available	Not yet available	Not yet available
Period 2028-2029	Not yet available	Not yet available	Not yet available

Procedural and practical arrangements

The admission procedure

Identification and referral

The procedure is initiated based on the refugee documentation submitted by UNHCR (Resettlement Registration Forms plus supplementary documentation: medical history, information on the identities of the submitted refugees and their family members, information on the needs of international protection and resettlement and any other detail that may help for their integration in Finland). It is submitted at least 1 month before the selection mission.

The Finnish Immigration Service receives the documentation and sends a copy of it to the security authorities and the integration experts involved in that particular resettlement selection mission. The delegation reviews the documents carefully before each mission, but the final decision is made later after the selection mission is completed and the post-mission administrative work is done.

Selection

Selection missions are carried out by the Finnish Immigration Service. Integration experts from municipalities and administrative districts and security officials are normally involved in the interviews and the selection process.

After the interviews, the members of the selection committee draft a tentative list of those who will probably be admitted to Finland. The list is provided to UNHCR.

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The Finnish Immigration Service makes a decision on issuing a residence permit to the pre-selected refugees within 2 months after the selection mission. The corresponding Finnish Embassies and UNHCR field office are informed of the decisions that may not be appealed.

Dossier selection: as an exception to the normal procedure of selection, there are some refugees who are selected without a personal interview. Selection in these cases is based on written documentation submitted by UNHCR and it is considered only for emergency and urgent cases. For medical emergencies, Finnish medical authorities are consulted to establish an assessment on the possible treatment in Finland. Decisions on emergency cases are normally done within 5 working days and the urgent ones as soon as possible.

The key criteria are provided under Section 92 of the Aliens Act which mentions that the grounds for issuing a residence permit under the refugee quota are the following:

1. The foreigner is in need of international protection with regard to his/her home country.
2. The foreigner is in need of resettlement from the first country of asylum.
3. The requirements for admitting and integrating the foreigner into Finland have been assessed.
4. There are no obstacles under Section 36 to issue a residence permit (reasons related to public order, security or health, or Finland's international relations).

All criteria must be met when the refugees are selected within the resettlement programme to Finland. The potential for successful reception and integration into Finnish society is also assessed before the admission of the person.

Exclusion criteria: If the person is thought to pose a threat to public order and security, public health or Finland's international relations, authorities may refuse admission into the country.

Special categories: There is no separate refugee quota for special categories of refugees. Unaccompanied minors and women in need of protection are included in the general quota. Children are normally resettled with other relatives.

Finland has information provision activities also during the selection phase. Information is directly provided by the Finnish authorities during the face-to-face sessions. When on selection missions, the interview teams hand out information

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leaflets to the refugees.

If the selection is conducted remotely (video interviews) or on a dossier basis, UNHCR (or the IOM depending on the location of the interviews) print and distribute the information leaflets (e.g. on family reunification and processing personal data) to the refugees on their interview day.

Finland launched a website www.movingtofinland.fi which is available in nine languages (for example in Arabic, Kurdish and English). The website is aimed at refugees who have been accepted to resettle in Finland. The website contains information on Finnish society, daily life, employment possibilities, social and educational matters, health services, basic vocabulary and exercises in the Finnish language, useful videos and links, etc. Finnish authorities have also prepared a self-study workbook in Arabic, English and French, also available at www.movingtofinland.fi. Youtube videos in several languages provide useful information Please see the playlist here.

Finland has prepared PDO videos for the refugees in the resettlement programme to Finland. For example in Arabic: مقاطع فيديو للاجئين الذين سينتقلون للعيش في فنلندا ضمن (arabia) برنامج إعادة التوطين - YouTube; In English: Videos for the refugees moving to Finland in the resettlement program - YouTube ; In Kurdish: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DiJzy1orAg and other languages are available on Youtube.

For additional information, there is a workbook for refugees within Finland's resettlement programme:

- the workbook for the refugees in English. Moving-to-Finland-manual-english.pdf (mof.fi),
- in Arabic: Moving-to-Finland-manual-arabic.pdf (mof.fi)
- in Kurdish: http://www.movingtofinland.fi/exercises/files/ku/Moving-to-Finland-manual-kurmanji.pdf

Assessment: Usually interviews are held by Finnish authorities with refugees who were presented by UNHCR before making a selection. Refugees in need of urgent resettlement are always selected without interviews, based on documents presented by UNHCR, due to urgency.

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Besides the need for international protection which is the most important criterion for resettlement, the assessment concerns the conditions for reception and integration in Finland. Also, the authorities take into account whether there are obstacles to the selection of a person, namely related to public order and security, public health or Finland's international relations.

The most vulnerable groups, such as families with children and women in difficult positions (widows, single parents and single women), are primary beneficiaries of these programmes. At least 10% of the annual quota is reserved for refugees resettled on an emergency or urgent basis.

Type of protection granted and residence permit issued after the admission procedure

Resettled persons are granted refugee status and a residence permit pursuant to Section 106(1)(2) of the Aliens Act before arriving in Finland.

Pre-departure assistance

There is an agreement between the Finnish Immigration Service and the IOM to arrange travel to Finland. The IOM carries out the health assessment of the selected refugees to ensure that travel is possible without impediments and without a risk to other passengers. The costs of the assessments are borne by the Finnish Immigration Service.

When a refugee is informed of a positive decision, they are encouraged to study cultural orientation information on the website www.movingtofinland.fi. They are also invited to participate in a 3-day face-to-face (or fully remote) cultural orientation training, provided by the Finnish Immigration Service, in coordination with the IOM. The training team consists of professional integration teachers, interpreters, social care specialist and a course coordinator. Upon arrival in Finland the orientation training continues in the municipalities.

The aim of the orientation training on Finland is:

- to give quota refugees realistic, fact-based information and converse about their new living environment, country, its society, the travel itself and changes in their lives when moving to the resettlement country;
- to support and facilitate the integration of refugees from an early stage;

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- to provide practical basic information about Finland, its society and the realities of Finnish everyday life;
- to highlight the importance of the Finnish language and learn basic vocabulary, letters, numbers, words, phrases and speech sounds; and
- to learn basic information about municipalities services, how to get a study place, how to complete previous studies, how to enter working life in Finland and how to prepare on a practical and psychological level during the waiting period.

Monitoring these information activities is regularly done through studies on PDO-programmes. A full report is also done after each PDO training and feedback is collected from each refugee.

Refugees are provided with material for self-study in their own language through the e-service www.movingtofinland.fi. Information on the website is available in nine different languages. A workbook including information from the website and the one provided during the information session is also available. There are various exercises to find out more about Finland.

Travel arrangements

Practical travel arrangements for selected refugees, including flights, escorts and purchasing of clothes when needed, are organised by the Finnish Immigration Service in coordination with the IOM.

Finland carries out fully remote information sessions on anything related to the travel phase through an implemented partner (UNHCR/IOM) in collaboration with whom information material is developed.

Arrival and reception

In practice, refugees are received at the airport by the co-operation partner of the Finnish Immigration Service, called Luona Oy. They provide assistance with border formalities after which the refugees are accompanied to connecting domestic transportation to their places of resettlement.

At a local level, municipalities, in collaboration with voluntary organisations, are responsible for the reception and integration of quota refugees. Upon arrival, authorities will interview the refugee and draft a personal integration plan, taking

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into account their personal situation and individual or family needs. The plan includes language courses, education and vocational training, and employment support.

Housing: Refugees are normally settled directly in rented apartments assigned to them.

Health: Refugees can use regular healthcare services.

Once in the country, resettled refugees will receive face-to-face information sessions directly organised by the Finnish authorities.

Integration support to resettled and admitted refugees

Resettled refugees are entitled to an integration plan during which they acquire knowledge and skills needed in Finnish society. The duration is individual and at the most 2 years.

Resettlement programmes

The resettlement programme is based on an annual quota within the framework of the European Resettlement Programme.

The Finnish Immigration Service publishes data, including on resettled refugees, on its Statistics page

The Ministry of the Interior provides information on the resettlement programmes and quota refugees here and here.

Humanitarian admission programmes

Finland does not have any humanitarian admission schemes in place.

Complementary pathways

Community sponsorship schemes related to state-led resettlement programmes

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In 2021, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Employment and Economy published a feasibility study assessing community sponsorship and its potential in enhancing the integration of resettled refugees in Finland. The study found that a community sponsorship programme would make it easier for refugees to settle in early, find social networks and plan their future realistically. Support for language learning and improved employment opportunities were also considered important.

Consequently, a pilot project in 15 municipalities lead by the Finnish Red Cross was launched in January 2023. The pilot project is considered a community sponsorship scheme related to state-led resettlement programmes. The community-sponsored integration pilot project is set to run until the end of 2025.

Community sponsorship schemes linked to civil society-led humanitarian admission programmes

Finland does not have any community sponsorship schemes linked to civil society-led humanitarian programmes.

Community sponsorship schemes linked to other complementary pathways

Finland does not have any community sponsorship scheme linked to other complementary pathways currently in place.

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