



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

Irregular migration and regular pathways, including decent work, labour mobility, recognition of skills and qualifications and other relevant measures, 12-13 October 2017, Geneva

Statement by Ambassador Riitta Resch

Finland aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union.

Legal pathways in the form of e.g. employment and education are the best ways to curb illegal migration and prevent people from embarking on dangerous journeys.

The Finnish Government has re-examined and reviewed its immigrant integration and employment measures. The Government first approved its action plan on asylum policy on 8 December 2015 and the subsequent action plan on integration, entitled 'Immigrants into municipalities, education and employment' on 3 May 2016. On 22 June 2016, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment established a working group on the Faster Education Paths and Flexible Transitions for Immigrants. The objective was to speed up education paths and enable flexible transitions for immigrants in accordance with the action plan. The final report of the working group proposes measures for, for example, ensuring that information on the competencies and language skills of immigrants that has been collected at different stages is transferred from one actor to another, thus facilitating entry into further education or the labor market. Immigrants should also be provided with appropriate education paths in different types of education and training in a way that also allows language skills to be developed alongside other studies, thus speeding up the transition into the labor market.

It is in the interest of the whole society to employ migrants and to benefit from their expertise. In the next few years large age groups will be leaving the labor force. Therefore the younger age structure of the migrants and their skills become more important in the functioning of the labor market, the growth of national economy and businesses and the regional development.

Finland's integration policies emphasize partnerships both with NGOs as well as private companies. A new form of partnership between public and private has been introduced in Finland. It is a Social Impact Bond –based integration training and employment. The project tries new models for employment and training which will accelerate the employment of immigrants as well as enable combining training and work in a flexible manner. The experiment is conducted by impact investing. This means channeling private capital towards projects with a social impact. The public sector pays for the project's results – for example with a share of the savings that were gained with the achievement of the wellbeing objectives. The goal is to train and employ 2,500 immigrants during the experiment.

Non-discrimination and cooperation are a prerequisite for successful integration of immigrants

It is important that the needs of the immigrant population are considered in the organization of public services and that immigrants are offered activities and services helping them to integrate into society.

Integration is a continuous two-way process in which society is changing as the population is becoming more diverse and immigrants acquire knowledge and skills that they need in society and working life. This requires commitment on the part of the immigrants and the country receiving them. Efforts are needed to support migrants in their integration but also the capacity of local communities to receive migrants, open local institutions and start activities against racism and hate speech need to be developed.



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In addition to the official measures, integration can be promoted in everyday situations and local communities, such as daycare centres, schools, leisure activities and workplaces.

Good ethnic relations help immigrant integration and strengthen social cohesion. Integration can only succeed if everybody is committed to non-discrimination and immigrants are accepted as members of society.

Integration involves broad-based cooperation

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is responsible for the integration of immigrants, integration legislation and promotion of employment among immigrants. Also many civil society actors have activities to support early social inclusion.

Under the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, which entered into force in 2011, authorities must develop multi-sectoral cooperation as part of the integration process. Promoting integration is a multisectoral effort between immigrant and non-governmental organizations, business life and labour market organizations, religious communities, educational institutes and other actors. The objective is to encourage members of all population groups to participate and to make everyone feel they are an important part of our society thus supporting an open and inclusive society.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment has established the Centre of Expertise in Integration of Immigrants. Its task is to support the work helping immigrants to integrate into Finnish society.

Centre of Expertise in Integration of Immigrants

- compiles and distributes research, statistical and indicator data as the basis for the planning and implementation of integration and promotes the assessment of effectiveness of the activities,
- disseminates good practices and organises events for professionals meeting immigrants as part of their work in which they can strengthen their expertise,
- develops useful work processes and cooperation networks.

There is also a website providing up-to-date information about integration and the reception of refugees. The website is only available in Finnish and Swedish which limits its usability.

Thank you.