



IOM International Organization for Migration
IOM Kansainvälinen siirtolaisuusjärjestö
IOM Internationella migrationsorganisationen

Working Group on the Future of Migration 2020
Ministry of the Interior
Vuorikatu 20 A
Helsinki
PO Box 26
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Helsinki, 15 March 2013

Re: IOM's comments on the proposition for a government strategy entitled "The Future of Migration 2020"

To the Working Group,

On behalf of the office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Helsinki I would like to thank the Working groups for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposition for a government strategy for the "The Future of Migration 2020". IOM has been privileged to comment also on the previous government immigration policy programme in 2005, and we are pleased to note that a number of issues raised at that time have now been incorporated into the new policy proposal.

Please find below the comments on the Future of Migration 2020 in details.

1. IOM welcomes the Working Group's efforts to formulate an ambitious and comprehensive strategy to meet the challenges and to harness the opportunities related to migration.
2. IOM welcomes the strategy's overarching notion that migration can benefit both migrants and the Finnish society.
3. IOM appreciates that the strategy explains Finland's gradual development into an increasingly multicultural society where immigration is a welcomed phenomenon also in the future.
4. While the strategy briefly explains the term "migration" and "mobility" used in the text, IOM would like to call the Working groups also to give a clear definition also for the term "migrant". Unless defined this term may lead to different and perhaps misleading interpretations, for example, regarding migrants' children born in Finland or to Finnish citizens with immigrant background.
5. IOM broadly agrees with the Working Group's vision for the Future of Migration 2020. The vision presents Finland as an international, multicultural society where anti-discrimination and equality belong to everyone, also to the newcomers in the society. The vision emphasises that immigration enhances the wellbeing of the society and strengthens Finland's competitiveness. Furthermore, the vision recognises the value of migrants and their skills and their contribution to the building of the society. In this vision migration is predictable and well managed.
6. The proposed strategy for the Future of Migration 2020 includes three themes entitled (please note that the translations are ours): I) An open and safe Finland; II) Everyone finds his/her place in society; and III) Multicultural everyday.

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7. In general, in agreement with the chosen themes, IOM observes that the strategy would benefit from stronger focus on concrete actions on how the objectives/visions will be reached, what are the short term and longer term priorities, and when the progress will be reviewed. IOM encourages the Working groups not to hesitate to propose a strong and innovative way towards the socioeconomically and culturally more diverse future of Finland.

I. An open and safe Finland (“Suomi on turvallisesti avoin”)

8. IOM appreciates the attempt of the strategy to address both the opportunities of migration (with a specific focus on labour migration) and the challenges related to migration (such as trafficking in human beings), not forgetting the obligations of Finland to provide asylum and international protection for persons in need.

Mobility is an opportunity for Finland

9. While IOM supports the view that labour migration should be managed in a targeted and ethically sustainable way, IOM would also like to note that migrants’ inclusion into the working life should not focus only on professional areas facing short-term labour shortage, but rather cover working life at large.
10. In connection with this, IOM is pleased to observe the strategy’s recognition that the needs of migrants’ family members should also be taken into consideration in order to attract and sustain labour migration. However, IOM notes that fulfilment of this approach would require more and concrete actions beyond provision of residence permits.

Enhanced preparedness to meet challenges related to international mobility

11. With regard to irregular migration, IOM strongly supports the strategy’s approach that such a complex crime as trafficking in human beings needs to be addressed in a wide cooperation at national, regional and international levels with countries of origin, transit and destination. Moreover, the role of non-governmental and international organisations, such as IOM¹, in this work would provide important resources and knowledge to complement the work of the government.
12. Further to this, IOM believes that identification of and assistance to victims of trafficking would benefit from strengthened regional Nordic-Baltic cooperation also at the policy and at the operational levels. In this regard, IOM would like to suggest launching a regional dialogue on counter-trafficking and would be happy to discuss the matter further with the Finnish government.

Finland has responsibilities as a member of the international community

13. IOM welcomes the strategy’s reiteration of Finland’s responsibilities for providing international protection and for refugee resettlement, and emphasises that refugees should not only be seen as beneficiaries receiving help, but also as active and contributing members of the Finnish society.
14. Further to the above, IOM would like to note that refugees as well as receiving communities would benefit from early support for integration, for example through provision of pre-arrival cultural orientation in cooperation with the receiving municipalities. Consequently, IOM strongly recommends that Finland considers a systematic provision of cultural orientation training for quota refugees, as well as for family members following to join them.²
15. IOM promotes the recognition of the connection between migration and development and the important role that migrant diasporas can have in the development of their countries of origin. Related to this, IOM recommends continued and widened support for capacity building programmes that

¹ IOM has been working on counter-trafficking since 1991. In this time, it has implemented more than 800 projects in over 100 countries, and has provided assistance to approximately 20,000 trafficked persons. www.iom.int/trafficking. In cooperation with the Office of the Ombudsman for Minorities, IOM Helsinki has implemented two widely published campaigns on counter-trafficking: “Work that nobody wants to do” in 2011 and “Trafficking is not a fairy tale” in 2012.

² IOM Helsinki has implemented in 2004-2007 a Comprehensive Cultural Orientation Programme for Finland-bound Refugees (funded by the Finnish Ministry of Labour) and has provided ad-hoc cultural orientation programmes before and beyond these years.

involve the diaspora. An example of such programme is the IOM "Migration for Development in Africa" (MIDA) capacity-building programmes that mobilises skills of African nationals for the benefit of Africa's development.³

Increasingly flexible immigration administration and functional procedures

16. As for migration administration, IOM agrees that it is in the interest of both migrants and the authorities to ensure predictable, transparent and functioning procedures as well as smooth inter-ministerial cooperation. Furthermore, IOM would like to emphasise the importance of ensuring efficient communication of immigration requirements and procedures also to the migrants concerned throughout the process.
17. IOM appreciates the recognition of the assisted voluntary return as the first and best option for ensuring the return of those individuals who no longer have the right or do not wish to remain in the country. In this connection, IOM would like to note that voluntary return is most sustainable when combined with reintegration support.
18. While agreeing that efficient migration management and functioning return arrangements can prevent the creation of larger group(s) of irregular migrants in Finland, IOM would like to express its concern regarding the rights (including access to health care) of migrants who find themselves in an irregular situation. The Working Group is encouraged to consider measures to safeguard the rights also of irregular migrants, and to provide them with the opportunity to return voluntarily if they choose to come forward and cooperate with the Finnish authorities.

II. Everyone finds his/her place in society ("Jokainen löytää paikkansa")

19. IOM welcomes the strategy's broad view on integration that happens through work, education, child care, free time activities, participation in activities of non-governmental organisations and in every day contacts with the host society. Learning local languages is a key to participation in society.

Immigrant participation in the society

20. IOM supports the strategy's view on active participation on immigrants in Finnish society and the roles of non-governmental organisations in this work. IOM believes that migrant organisations and migrants' participation in the third sector activities facilitate social interaction and creation of social networks benefitting the integration.

Immigrants can utilise their skills

21. IOM appreciates the strategy's focus on removing obstacles from migrants' entry into the work life. At the same time, IOM would like to support the view that migrants bring with them foreign language skills, experience and international networks, representing a great potential to contribute to the Finnish society, working life and economic growth.
22. IOM strongly supports the focus on migrant youth. However, IOM believes that the approach to migrant youth should be more comprehensive and go beyond ensuring the smooth transition from school to work. The positive development and engagement of migrant youth can be encouraged by helping youth to build a positive identity that encompasses person's roots that may lay in different countries and cultures, developing practical skills and competencies to succeed in life, and challenging racism and discrimination and social justice issues in schools, communities, and public institutions. Furthermore, IOM would like to suggest that participation of migrant youth in non-governmental organisations and political life should be encouraged.⁴

³ IOM Helsinki is currently implementing a second phase of the MIDA project entitled "Institutionalizing Health Care Improvement through Temporary Returns of Somali Health Professionals from Finland with funding from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁴ IOM Helsinki implemented the project entitled: "Models for Integration and Prevention of Exclusion: Empowering Migrant Youth (iYouth)" in 2011 -2013.

Services supporting integration

23. IOM appreciates the strategy's view that successful integration can mean different things depending on the migrant and his/her situation (refugees, elderly, under educated, disabled etc.), the aim being that each person will find his/her place in society.
24. In addition, IOM welcomes the strategy's family perspective to integration acknowledging the challenges and needs for support for immigrant families.

III. Multicultural every day ("Moninaisuus on arkea")

Equal rights for all

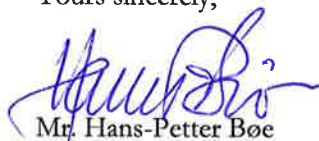
25. IOM believes that positive development and engagement of migrants can be encouraged by combating discrimination and racism, and thus supports the strategy's emphasis on ensuring human and fundamental rights for migrants as well as combating discrimination in all its forms.

Breaking the prejudices

26. IOM welcomes the Working Group's aim to enhance dialogue between native population and migrants. In this regard, IOM would like to encourage the Working group to consider how to bring also critical voices into dialogue while taking a clear stand against xenophobic and racist expressions against migrants in Finland.

I hope that IOM's contribution will be of assistance in formulating the final the Future of Migration 2020 strategy that is of mutual benefit of Finland and migrants alike. IOM stands ready to assist the Finnish government in implementing this important strategy.

Yours sincerely,



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Representative/Chief of Mission
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