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# Strategy on Expatriate Finns 2022–2026

Publications of the Ministry of the Interior 2021:44

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Ministry of the Interior Helsinki 2021

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## Strategy on Expatriate Finns 2022–2026

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### Abstract

There are approximately 300,000 Finnish citizens and, according to estimates, up to 1,6–2 million people of Finnish origin living outside Finland. In this strategy drawn up for 2022–2026, the term expatriate Finn refers to Finnish citizens living permanently outside Finland and to the descendants of Finnish citizens who personally identify themselves as Finnish.

The strategy is a continuation of three previous foreign policy programmes. It was prepared by a cross-administrative working group, with the Finland Society and the Migration Institute of Finland also involved in the process. The preparation process included extensive consultations with expatriate Finns and expatriate Finnish actors and use of the results of studies and surveys on expatriate Finns.

The strategy sets objectives and actions related to:

- coordinating the affairs of expatriate Finns in central government
- developing communication by public authorities concerning expatriate Finns
- promoting easy access to services provided by authorities for expatriate Finns
- strengthening the Finnish identity, language, culture and nationality of expatriate Finns
- making use of expatriate Finns in support of trade and industry, export promotion, research and sustainable development
- strengthening the social participation of expatriate Finns
- the attractiveness of return migration.

The implementation of the strategy will be monitored in the working group on expatriate Finns in central government and in webinars, which will be organised annually in cooperation with the Finland Society.

**Keywords** migration, expatriate Finns, strategies, citizens, immigration

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## Ulkosuomalaisstrategia 2022–2026

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### Tiivistelmä

Suomen ulkopuolella asuu noin 300 000 Suomen kansalaista ja arvioiden mukaan jopa 1,6–2 miljoonaa suomalaista syntyperää olevaa henkilöä. Tässä vuosille 2022–2026 valmistellussa ulkosuomalaisstrategiassa ulkosuomalaisilla viitataan vakituisesti Suomen ulkopuolella asuviin Suomen kansalaisiin sekä sellaisiin Suomen kansalaisen jälkeläisiin, jotka identifioivat itsensä suomalaisiksi.

Strategia on jatkoa kolmelle aiemmalle ulkosuomalaispoliittiselle ohjelmalle. Se on valmisteltu poikkihallinnollisessa työryhmässä, jonka työhön ovat osallistuneet myös Suomi-Seura ry sekä Siirtolaisuusinstituutti. Valmistelussa on kuultu laajasti ulkosuomalaisia ja ulkosuomalaistoimijoita sekä hyödynnetty ulkosuomalaistutkimustuloksia.

Strategiassa asetetaan tavoitteita ja toimia, jotka liittyvät

- ulkosuomalaisasioiden koordinoimiseen valtionhallinnossa
- ulkosuomalaisia koskevan viranomaisviestinnän kehittämiseen
- ulkosuomalaisten sujuvan viranomaisasioinnin edistämiseen
- ulkosuomalaisten suomalaisen identiteetin, kielen, kulttuurin ja kansalaisuuden vahvistamiseen
- ulkosuomalaisten hyödyntämiseen elinkeinoelämän, vienninedistämisen, tutkimuksen ja kestäväen kehityksen tukemisessa
- ulkosuomalaisten yhteiskunnallisen osallistumisen vahvistamiseen
- paluumuuton houkuttelevuuteen.

Strategian toimeenpanoa tullaan seuraamaan valtionhallinnon ulkosuomalaistyöryhmässä sekä webinaareissa, joita järjestetään vuosittain yhteistyössä Suomi-Seura ry:n kanssa.

**Asiasanat** maahanmuutto, ulkosuomalaiset, strategiat, kansalaiset, siirtolaisuus

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## Utlandsfinländarstrategi 2022–2026

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### Referat

Det bor cirka 300 000 finska medborgare och uppskattningsvis så många som 1,6–2 miljoner personer av finsk härkomst utanför Finland. I den här utlandsfinländarstrategin, som beretts för perioden 2022–2026, avses med utlandsfinländare finska medborgare som är stadigvarande bosatta utanför Finland samt ättlingar till finska medborgare som identifierar sig som finländare.

Strategin är en fortsättning på de tre tidigare utlandsfinländarpolitiska programmen. Den har beretts i en förvaltningsövergripande arbetsgrupp i vars arbete också Suomi-Seura ry och Migrationsinstitutet har deltagit. Utlandsfinländare och utlandsfinländska aktörer har hörts på bred front vid beredningen och resultaten av forskningen om utlandsfinländare har utnyttjats.

I strategin fastställs mål och åtgärder som anknyter till att

- samordna utlandsfinländarfrågor inom statsförvaltningen
- utveckla myndigheternas kommunikation om utlandsfinländare
- främja smidig skötsel av ärenden hos myndigheterna för utlandsfinländare
- stärka utlandsfinländarnas identitet, språk, kultur och känsla av nationell tillhörighet
- engagera utlandsfinländare för att stödja näringslivet, exportfrämjande, forskning och hållbar utveckling
- stärka utlandsfinländarnas delaktighet i samhället
- göra återflyttning attraktivt.

Genomförandet av strategin kommer att följas upp i statsförvaltningens arbetsgrupp för utlandsfinländare samt på webbseminarier som ordnas årligen i samarbete med Suomi-Seura ry.

**Nyckelord** migration, utlandsfinländare, strategier, medborgare, invandring

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# 1 Introduction

There are some 5.3 million Finnish citizens living in Finland, in addition to which some 300,000 Finnish citizens are living outside Finland. According to some estimates, the number of people with a Finnish descent is up to 1.6–2 million worldwide. In this strategy, the term expatriate Finn refers to Finnish citizens living permanently outside Finland and to the descendants of Finnish citizens who personally identify themselves as Finnish.

The expatriate Finns are a very diverse group of people who need and expect different kinds of services from the Finnish central government. On the other hand, they also have a lot of expertise that the Finnish society could make use of. Many expatriate Finns are very interested in influencing the development of their home country and sharing valuable experiences they have acquired abroad.

Since 2006, the management of the affairs of expatriate Finns has been steered by the Government policy programme for expatriate Finns, drawn up for five years at a time. The policy programme was now updated for the fourth time, and this time it was issued in the form of a strategy. The new Strategy on Expatriate Finns was prepared under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior in a cross-administrative working group involving the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Finland Society (Suomi-Seura ry), and the Migration Institute of Finland. The working group's work resulted in setting seven strategic objectives, aimed at both developing the services available to expatriate Finns and making use of the expertise of expatriate Finns for the needs of the central government and for strengthening the links between expatriate Finns and Finland. Concrete measures were defined under each objective for the next five-year period.

From the beginning, when drawing up the strategy in a new way, the aim was that its formulation would emphasise the strategic nature of the objectives set and the measurability of the objectives and actions. The working group also considered it important to agree on a clear monitoring procedure. In the future, the implementation of the strategy will be monitored annually by the new working group on expatriate Finns in central government.



The idea steering the preparation process of the new strategy was the will to hear the personal views of expatriate Finns: methods of service design were applied to drafting the strategy, basing its content, for example, on information collected in workshops organised for expatriate Finns. Similar methods for involving expatriate Finns will also be used in the monitoring of the strategy, arranged in the form of an annual webinar for expatriates. The aim was to build the new strategy based on knowledge. The sources used in preparing the strategy also included the results of the Migration Institute of Finland's extensive survey "Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn" and the report on the expatriate policies in reference countries prepared by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

One of the starting points of the strategy project was to take account of the diversity and changing nature of Finnish expatriation. The terminology related to Finnish expatriation was also to be examined in the drafting process. The Migration Institute of Finland formulated the second chapter of the strategy, with background information on the strategy, describing the concepts and terms related to Finnish expatriation and changes in expatriation patterns. The history of Finnish expatriation and the development of the policy on expatriate Finns have been discussed more extensively in previous policy programmes for expatriate Finns, so in this strategy the background chapter focuses specifically on the recent changes.

In the middle of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, digital tools played an emphasised role in preparing the strategy. The global development of capacities related to the use of ICT has also opened new perspectives for the work related to expatriate Finns. During drafting, it was also discovered how many kinds of services provided by authorities are already accessible from outside Finland, but information about them does not always reach the expatriates. Therefore, communication plays a very central role in this strategy. It is also in line with the principles of sustainable development that expatriate Finns can be heard and served better than before without them needing to travel to Finland.

The Strategy on Expatriate Finns builds an internationally inclusive Finland that can smoothly serve and inform its citizens, regardless of time and place; nurtures a strong Finnish identity and culture abroad; is an attractive destination for return migration; and involves expatriate Finns from different backgrounds in building a dynamic future for Finland.

## 2 Expatriate Finns and Finnish expatriation

The Finnish term *ulkosuomalainen* (expatriate Finn) refers to a Finnish citizen or a person of Finnish descent living outside Finland. There are currently around 300,000 Finnish citizens living abroad and some 250,000 of them are eligible to vote. In addition to this, there is a large number of Finns living in various countries for long periods who have their official place of residence in Finland and are thus not included in migration statistics compiled in Finland. An even more difficult task is assessing the number of descendants of Finnish immigrants. Most of the immigrants of Finnish descent live in North America and Sweden. The number of first-generation and second-generation expatriate Finns is estimated to be 770,000. The number is even bigger if we also count the 'third generation descendants' who have at least one grandparent born in Finland. In Sweden alone, the population of Finnish origin is estimated to have grown to some 700,000 people in three generations. According to some estimates, there are up to 1.6–2 million people of Finnish origin around the world. These are, however, very rough estimates, which also include a large number of people who do not identify themselves as Finnish.

Therefore, due to difficulties in definitions alone, it is impossible to give a precise estimate of how many people of Finnish descent there are. The terminology related to Finnish expatriation is diverse and its meanings flexible, and the way it is used has also changed in recent decades along with the phenomenon itself. There are also a number of parallel or related terms [e.g., *ekspatriaatti* (expatriate), *Finns abroad*, *kaksoiskansalainen* (dual national) or *suomalainen maailmalla* (global Finns)].

In recent decades, emigration from Finland has been a growing, diverse and changing phenomenon. Since the beginning of the 1990s, key drivers of change have included accession to the European Union, globalisation of the economy and culture, a major rise in the educational level of Finns, and easier ways of travel and communication. These have significantly changed and continue to change the emigration of Finns both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In recent years, the coronavirus pandemic and the UK withdrawal from the European Union have also dramatically changed or are about to change the lives of thousands of expatriate Finns in ways whose potential long-term effects are not yet known.

The Finnish emigration after the World War II can be roughly divided into three stages. The first stage was dominated by emigration to Sweden, which, according to some estimates, amounted to as many as 890,000 Finns in the 1960s and 1970s. Majority of the emigrants returned to Finland as the welfare gap between the countries gradually shrunk. In the second stage, from the beginning of the 1980s to the 1990s, Finland's migration balance turned positive as the number of returnees increased and of those emigrating decreased. After this, in the third stage, the number of people leaving Finland began to grow again with the Finnish accession to the EU and economic globalisation. During the period that began in the mid-1990s, moving abroad has been a clearly growing phenomenon among Finns. Between the beginning of the 21st century and 2020, an average of 9,000–10,000 Finnish citizens have moved abroad every year. With only a few exceptional years, the net migration rate has been negative, and since the beginning of the 1990s, the Finnish citizens leaving the country have caused a net migration loss of over 30,000 people. The record year was 2016, when a total of 11,710 Finnish citizens moved abroad. After this, the situation remained relatively stable until the beginning of 2020.

Recently, however, the coronavirus pandemic and the related travel restrictions, together with Brexit, have again changed the situation rapidly. The number of Finnish citizens moving abroad has decreased significantly, and in 2021 it has been at its lowest level since 1998. At the same time, the number of returnees is at its highest level since the 1980s, and the net migration rate has turned positive. It is possible that this is a new phase that may partly last a longer time, especially as regards the number of people moving away from Finland, as it has become more difficult to lead a cross-border daily life, and those planning to move abroad must take account of new uncertainties and potential restrictions. In the future, emigration rates may be affected not only by the pandemic but by, for example, increasing climate awareness and improved opportunities to work remotely. However, for the time being, it remains unclear how significant and lasting the changes seen since 2020 are.

In addition to quantitative changes, significant qualitative changes can be distinguished in the migration trends of Finnish people since the 1990s. The most notable trends include increasingly individual reasons for moving, the change in the socio-economic profile of the people moving out and the migration spreading out to a larger number of destination countries. Until the 1990s, the emphasis of Finnish migratory flows was on labourers seeking manual jobs, often requiring a relatively low level of education, with the help of networks provided by the family and own community. On the other hand, the present image of Finnish expatriation is largely characterised by the goal-oriented and individual emigration of highly educated people or those seeking education. At the same time, studying or doing traineeships abroad has become the rule rather than the exception among those in student age. University researchers also form a significant group of Finns

living abroad. As regards highly educated people, mobility is often a reaction to financial cuts in the educational and research sector.

Alongside the career and studies, lifestyle choices and retirement, other reason that become strongly highlighted among the reasons to move include family ties and especially a foreign spouse. The majority of the respondents to the recent survey *Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn* had a family, and 75% of their spouses were foreigners. In many cases, in addition to work, the foreign spouse was a key reason for moving abroad and also a factor that affected the intentions to move back and the wishes expatriates had for services.

The destinations of those moving abroad have become more diverse than before. Still in 1990, nearly 70% of the emigrants were headed for Sweden. Since then, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany and Spain have risen alongside Sweden. Today, just under a third of those emigrating move to Sweden. Most of the growth has been directed to the EU countries, but also such more remote countries as India, China and Japan have emerged among the top 20 destinations.

The factors defining present-day migrants' daily lives in the globalised world networked by communication technology include transnationalism, i.e., relations crossing national borders, and multi-locality, i.e., members of the same family living, for example, in several different places at the same time or alternating between them. Temporally, today's Finnish expatriates are often short-term migrants, linked with seasonal housing or moving every few years. The majority of Finns living abroad do so more or less temporarily, but for periods counted in years at a time. Since travel is cheaper than before, the Finns living abroad also visit their home country more regularly. For example, many pensioners spend the winters abroad.

Not all Finns living abroad identify with the term *Ulkosuomalainen* (Expatriate Finn). For example, the term can be felt as problematic when describing seasonal migrants, secondment workers or those studying abroad, whose mobility national population statistics also often fail to catch. In addition, the meaning of the term becomes obscure in the case of family members (spouses, children and others) with no Finnish citizenship or Finnish background. Some feel that the Finnish prefix *ulko-* (expatriate, literally *outside*) is dismissive or too bound to nation-bound. Furthermore, many Finnish migrants and their descendants living in Sweden, for example, are reluctant to define themselves as second-generation immigrants or migrants. They prefer to describe themselves as *Ruotsinsuomalainen* (Sweden Finns), half-Finnish or Finnish/Swedish. Many Finns living in the United States, on the other hand, prefer to call themselves *Amerikansuomalaiset* (Finnish Americans).

The term *paluumuuttaja* (returnee) also has several parallel usages. In the Finnish context, since the early 1990s it has often been used particularly in reference to the Ingrian returnees from the former Soviet Union. On the other hand, the term has also been used in the aftermaths of the migratory flows to North America and Sweden. Thirdly, we can also talk about returnees as a phenomenon related to global mobility since the 1990s. Furthermore, persons returning to their parents' home country may be considered returnees. However, these second-generation Finns living abroad are seldom taken into account in research, public discussion or immigration policy, although many of them have a Finnish citizenship and often a high level of education.

When talking about expatriate Finns and returnees, it is essential to take into account the diversity of the groups and the conceptual ambiguity inevitably deriving from this. In the light of recent research data, expatriate Finns are a highly heterogeneous group in terms of their socio-economic status, mother tongue, culture, citizenship, political views, religious belief, sexual orientation and attitudes towards Finland. 13 per cent of the respondents to the *Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn* survey had a mother tongue other than Finnish or Swedish, and more than one in ten were bilingual or multilingual. Slightly under one fifth of the respondents felt that they belonged to a minority group based on their linguistic or ethnic background, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or some other reason. In addition, the cultural diversity was linked with a significant number of dual citizenships: one quarter of the respondents had another citizenship in addition to the Finnish one.

Rather than trying to define the category of expatriate Finns precisely, it is important to understand how extensive and diverse the phenomenon is, how widespread cross-border mobility and transnational relationships are, and the numerous societal issues, challenges and opportunities that this creates.

### 3 Preparation of the strategy

The Strategy on Expatriate Finns, now completed, was preceded by three Government policy programmes for expatriate Finns. As the name suggests, this time we wanted to create a strategic document that would record objectives with a broader scope than before and agreed actions that are easy to monitor and measure. A key starting point for preparing the strategy was consulting the expatriate Finns and basing the objectives and actions to be set on the needs of expatriate Finns and the knowledge and skills they have that we can put better into use in the central government.

The strategy was prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior. Other ministries invited to the working group of the project included the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Based on the consultations held in spring, the Ministry of Finance was also invited to participate. In addition, the Finland Society and the Migration Institute of Finland were also involved in the working group.

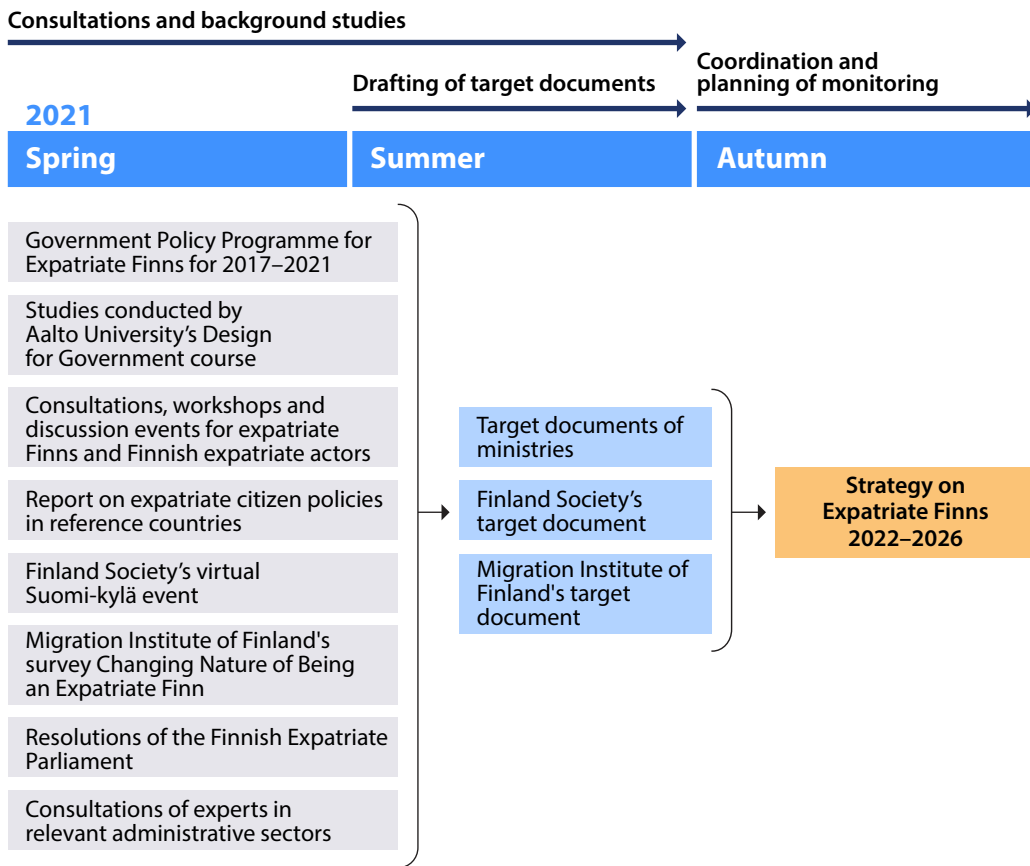
The drafting process was divided into three phases: the consultation and background study phase; drafting and coordinating the target documentation; and planning the monitoring measures. In the consultation and background study phase in spring and early summer, a number of events were organised to consult expatriate Finns from different groups, on different themes and from around the world. In spring, workshops were held for representatives of Finnish Women Worldwide, Finnish expatriate researchers, senior expatriate Finns, Finnish expatriate families and young people, and consultations were held for Finnish-Swedish expatriate Finns and the Speaker's Council of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament of Finland Society. In connection with the Finland Society's virtual Suomi-kylä event in June, the following were arranged: an open panel discussion based on the workshops held earlier; a consultation related to developing the provision of information on social security of expatriate Finns; a consultation with returnees; and a discussion event on political participation of expatriate Finns. It was also part of the background study phase that the strategy on expatriate Finns project was included as one of the topics on the Aalto University's Design for Government service design course. The students heard several expatriate Finns and, based on the consultations, produced reports for the working group in support of the drafting process. During the process, the members of the working group also held discussions with experts from their own administrative branch, thus hearing the views of authorities responsible for the affairs of expatriate Finns.

In addition, the results of the Migration Institute of Finland's survey Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn were utilised in preparing the strategy. They provided extensive information on who the expatriate Finns are and how being an expatriate Finn has changed in recent years. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs prepared a report on expatriate citizen policies in reference countries, which provided valuable information on the practices used by other countries. The resolutions of the Finland Society's Finnish Expatriate Parliament, which had also served as the basis for the earlier policy programmes, were made available to the working group after the virtual session held in June. They were also taken into account in the preparatory work. Furthermore, during preparation, the current situation was naturally mirrored against the policies and actions of the previous policy programme.

After extensive collection of data, the ministries' representatives in the working group compiled separate documents on their respective administrative sectors, listing the needs that had emerged in the consultations and background studies. In these documents, they also recorded ways by which these needs could be responded as well as potential objectives and actions derived from them for the forthcoming strategy. These 'target documents' served as an intermediate stage in the preparation of the strategy. They provided support for setting cross-administrative objectives and helped to conceptualise the whole scope of affairs related to expatriate Finns. The target documents were also submitted to the Finland Society, and they served as responses to several resolutions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

The Finland Society drew up its own target document, in which it summarised its own views on the needs of expatriate Finns that had arisen based on the surveys and studies of expatriate Finns, resolutions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, consultations with expatriate Finns and background studies. By mirroring the objectives set by the ministries against this document, it was easy to ensure that the key needs of expatriate Finns were taken into account. The purpose of the strategy was also to examine the terms related to Finnish expatriation and the change in expatriation, so, in its target document, the Migration Institute of Finland compiled information on these matters as a basis for the strategy and presented its view on how research on Finnish expatriation should be taken into account in the strategy.

In the final phase, the target documents were coordinated into a comprehensive strategy on expatriate Finns. The working group also agreed on how the implementation of the strategy would be monitored. The responsibility for the actions was allocated in such a manner that each ministry belonging to the working group on expatriate Finns in central government is responsible for promoting the actions concerning their own administrative sector. The actions may also be linked with other ministries' fields of activity and actors outside the central government, and they will be promoted in cooperation with the necessary stakeholders.





## 4 Strategic objectives and actions

### ***OBJECTIVE 1: The issues related to expatriate Finns are effectively coordinated, and expatriate Finns are taken into account in governmental decision-making.***

The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for coordinating the affairs of expatriate Finns, but the matters concerning expatriate Finns cover a wide range of the areas of life. Therefore, cross-sectoral commitment to promoting the measures and monitoring them is required. The establishment of the new working group on expatriate Finns in central government makes it possible to ensure a smoother flow of information and closer communication between the administrative branches. It is also particularly important to further develop the cooperation between the central government and various Finnish expatriate actors. One of the key partners is the expert and service organisation of expatriate Finns operating in Finland, the Finland Society, including its Finnish Expatriate Parliament. Cooperation can also be developed between government officials and the wide range of Finnish expatriate communities operating abroad. Expatriate Finns have diverse local, regional and country-specific communities around the world as well as global networks. Finnish congregations operating abroad also have their own special role to play. In addition to developing cooperation, it is important that the expatriate Finns be taken into account as a specific group in national and international governmental projects that affect them.

During the implementation of the strategy, it is important to monitor the change in Finnish expatriation and to examine the service needs of expatriate Finns and the possibilities of making better use of the expertise expatriates have. It would be useful to collect research data through a follow-up study to the Migration Institute of Finland's survey Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn before preparing a new strategy. More research data will also be provided by the International Talent Finland research project by E2 Research. In the project, expatriate Finns have been taken into account as a group which has resources and capabilities that could promote Finland's success.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY (collaboratively)
The progress of the measures included in the Strategy on Expatriate Finns is monitored annually by the new governmental working group on expatriate Finns.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
The authorities responsible for the issues related to expatriate Finns develop cooperation with Finnish expatriate communities.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Expatriate Finns are taken into account as a specific group in the preparation of government projects that affect them.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Research will be done to investigate the changing nature of being an expatriate Finn, the service needs of expatriate Finns and the use of the expertise of expatriate Finns.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health)

***OBJECTIVE 2: Communication by public authorities concerning expatriate Finns is clear and targeted to them, reaches expatriate Finns and raises awareness of matters concerning them.***

The purpose of targeted communication measures is, firstly, to ensure that expatriate Finns are aware of the services available to them and thus able to use them, and secondly, to reach those expatriate Finns who are interested in sharing their expertise. Expatriate Finns are a very diverse group, which poses its own challenges for the targeting of communications. Therefore, the authorities are required to use versatile communication channels and cooperate with each other and with organisational actors. Finland's foreign missions abroad play a key role in reaching out to expatriate Finns in terms of communication. Expatriate Finns have their own role to play as ambassadors of Finland's reputation abroad, and this can be utilised in promoting Finland's country image.

When preparing the strategy, it was detected that communication and information targeted to expatriate Finns needs to be developed particularly as regards online services related to education and culture, and matters related to social security, taxation, applying for and retaining the Finnish citizenship, elections and return migration. The survey also showed that it was necessary to map which communication channels expatriate Finns follow. Within the limits of its resources and in collaboration with the Migration Institute of Finland, the Finland Society intends to carry out such a study and involve other actors of expatriate Finns in carrying it out. Governmental actors can support the mapping process and utilise its results when developing official communication targeted to expatriate Finns.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY (collaboratively)
Information on how the implementation of the Strategy on Expatriate Finns progresses is provided on the Ministry of the Interior's website on expatriate Finns.	Ministry of the Interior
The expatriate Finns are taken into account as a target group of their own when developing the communication of Finnish missions abroad, especially in the operating areas where the relative number of expatriate Finns is higher.	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Participating in the mapping of communication channels used by expatriate Finns. The results of the study will be used for developing communications targeted to expatriate Finns.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Developing the content of the promotion work of Finland's country image and sharing the results, taking expatriate Finns into account as one of the target and user groups. Finnish missions develop cooperation to involve expatriate Finns interested in the matter in the promotion of Finland's country image in their countries of residence.	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Informing expatriate Finns on online services related to education and culture available to them and developing the content of the services in accordance with the needs of expatriate Finns.	Ministry of Education and Culture
The awareness of social security issues among expatriate Finns is increased by developing communication channels and by taking expatriate Finns into account as one target group in communication related to the social security reform.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Checking that the tax counselling targeted to expatriate Finns is up to date.	Ministry of Finance
Developing communication targeted to expatriate Finns on how to apply for and retain the Finnish citizenship.	Ministry of the Interior
Electoral communication take account of the needs of expatriate Finns and pay attention to developing multilingual communication.	Ministry of Justice
Continuous marketing communication to promote return migration will be launched as part of the programme to promote return migration.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

### **OBJECTIVE 3: Expatriate Finns can easily access services provided by public authorities regardless of time and place.**

The development of digital services creates new opportunities for making it easier for expatriate Finns to access services provided by public authorities, regardless of time and place. Access to services by expatriate Finns can be streamlined especially by means of a mobile identification application to be created in the digital identity development project of the Ministry of Finance by mid-2023. As part of the general improvement of electronic services, the access to official documents needed by expatriate Finns can also be improved.

For Finnish citizens living abroad, applying for a Finnish passport is one of the most important moments in using services provided by public authorities, and it is therefore important to examine how to streamline these services. Other aspects related to the overall improvement of electronic services include the development of services closely linked to the digital identity mentioned above, and issues related to the period of validity of the passport and the outsourcing of the passport application process.

Another central theme regarding access to services is social security. The development needs associated with this will also be reviewed. The Finnish authorities provide service in the official languages of Finland.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY (collaboratively)</b>
Electronic identification will be enabled for expatriate Finns through a mobile application as part of the digital identity development project.	Ministry of Finance
The availability of documents needed by expatriate Finns will be improved as part of the development of electronic services.	Ministry of Finance
The possibility to develop an electronic service for applying for a Finnish passport from abroad will be examined.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs
The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs will have mutual discussions aimed at extending the validity of the Finnish passport and on issues related to outsourcing the passport application process.	Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs
The needs and possibilities for developing access to services for expatriate Finns in matters related to social security will be examined.	Ministry of Social Affairs and Health

***OBJECTIVE 4: The central government will actively support the preservation and strengthening of the Finnish identity, language, culture and citizenship of expatriate Finns.***

The aim to preserve and strengthen the Finnish identity is present in all central government activities concerning expatriate Finns. In this respect, cultural and educational activities are of particular importance. The Finnish schools abroad and Finnish Schools ('Suomi-koulu') play a key role in supporting the Finnish identity, language and culture. Developing the activities of the Finnish Schools requires both an analysis of the current state of the affairs and a future plan. In particular, it is necessary to explore the opportunities that wider use of ICT could provide. Expatriate Finns need diverse opportunities to maintain and strengthen their mother tongue.

By opening liberal adult education and open university courses for expatriates, it would be possible to provide also older generations with expanded opportunities for self-development and continuous learning. This way, young Finnish expatriates could also be offered an opportunity to get acquainted with Finnish higher education studies.

The Finnish missions abroad play an important role in bringing Finnish expatriate communities together and providing services to them. In addition, the Finnish cultural and academic institutes, the Finnish Seamen's Missions, the Finnish schools abroad and the Finnish Schools are important meeting places for expatriate Finns that help to strengthen the identity of expatriate Finns through their activities. The Finland Society promotes different activities for expatriate Finns worldwide. The provision of support for these activities will continue. With a view to preserving and strengthening the Finnish identity, central role is also played by different Finnish expatriate communities, Finnish expatriate media and Finnish congregations operating abroad.

A Finnish citizenship is naturally an important part of the Finnish identity, and retaining it is therefore important. Finnish citizens residing abroad automatically lose their Finnish citizenship under the law when they reach the age of 22 if they have no sufficient connection with Finland and they retain the citizenship of a foreign State. The project for improving the legal provisions of the Nationality Act, currently under preparation, will update the provisions on the reciprocal obligation of the authorities to notify each other to ensure that the information on retaining Finnish citizenship is passed between the authorities in any situations and that an entry on the retention of citizenship is recorded in the Population Information System as soon as possible. The retention of citizenship will also be taken into account when developing the communication of the Finnish Immigration Service.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY (collaboratively)
The Finnish Schools will draw up a strategy for developing their activities. In addition, the opportunities for wider use of ICT in the activities of the Finnish schools will be explored as a way to supplement traditional teaching.	Ministry of Education and Culture
Support will be provided for furthering the administrative and pedagogic competence of the educational services personnel in the Finnish Schools and the Finnish schools abroad, taking also advantage of opportunities provided by information technology.	Ministry of Education and Culture
The possibilities of opening liberal adult education and open university courses arranged in Finland for expatriate Finns will be examined.	Ministry of Education and Culture
The role of Finnish foreign missions as an actor bringing expatriate Finns together and providing services to them will be maintained.	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
The provision of support for the activities of the Finnish cultural and academic institutes and the Finnish Seamen's Missions will continue.	Ministry of Education and Culture
The project for improving the legal provisions of the Nationality Act will complement section 40(3) of the act on the reciprocal obligation of the authorities to notify each other.	Ministry of the Interior

***OBJECTIVE 5: Expatriate Finns contribute to Finnish trade and industry, export promotion, research and sustainable development in their places of residence abroad.***

Expatriate Finns form a global network whose high competence and expertise in different fields could be put to better use in Finnish trade and industry and in Finland's export promotion efforts. The international expertise of expatriate Finns should also be used more systematically in the development of higher education, RDI activities and business operations. Expatriate Finns contribute to trade and industry and export promotion through Finnish missions, and this work could be developed further. Team Finland Knowledge specialists working in Finnish missions abroad play a key role in matters related to higher education and research. They are tasked especially with supporting the networking of Finnish expatriate researchers. In addition to the existing work, it is important to examine potential new ways to involve expatriate Finns: the International Talent Finland research project by E2 Research will offer ideas for promoting participation.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has launched a pilot project to conceptualise the cross-administrative Virtual Finland service entity (VF). If implemented, the VF service platform would connect digital services provided by public authorities and the private sector in a user-friendly manner, aiming to attract experts, companies and investments, and to promote the exports and internationalisation of Finnish companies, i.e., to create capacity for carrying out digital transactions with Finland. If implemented, the platform would also meet the service needs of expatriate Finns related to such activities.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY (collaboratively)
Finland's foreign missions will further develop opportunities for the participation of Finnish expatriate stakeholders of central importance for the Finnish trade and industry and export promotion.	Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment)
Team Finland Knowledge specialists in higher education and research working in Finnish missions abroad support the networking of Finnish expatriate researchers in their countries and regions of residence.	Ministry of Education and Culture (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment)
New operating methods and models will be examined to involve expatriate Finns more closely in the development of trade and industry, support for sustainable growth and export promotion.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Ministry for Foreign Affairs)



***OBJECTIVE 6: Expatriate Finns can participate and have influence in the societal matters concerning them.***

With a view to the functioning of the representative democracy, it is important that Finnish citizens living abroad can also influence matters concerning them through elections. The postal voting introduced for the first time in the 2019 parliamentary elections significantly improved the voting opportunities of expatriate Finns. Monitoring and developing the functionality of the system is very important for promoting the social participation opportunities of expatriate Finns. Other means should also be used to improve the traditionally low voter turnout among expatriate Finns.

The latest place of residence in Finland of a Finnish citizen residing permanently abroad determines which place is recorded as his or her municipality of residence in the Population Information System, and thus also as his or her electoral district in parliamentary elections. However, it is not necessarily the municipality or region with which the expatriate Finn personally identifies him- or herself, which may, in turn, affect his or her willingness to vote. Therefore, it would be necessary to review on which grounds the municipality recorded as place of residence in the Population Information System could be changed.

Expatriate Finns are a very diverse group, and it is important to recognise this diversity. Comprehensive consultations with representatives of expatriate Finns would give an opportunity to collect valuable information with a view to developing different areas of Finnish society. In the future, the implementation of the Strategy on Expatriate Finns will be monitored through an annual webinar for expatriate Finns, which will be open to all expatriate Finns. The webinar will be organised in cooperation with the Finland Society.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY (collaboratively)
Expatriate Finns are encouraged to exercise their right to vote, for example, by developing election-related communications.	Ministry of Justice
The functioning of postal voting will be monitored, and the development of postal voting will be examined as part of the work for improving the resilience of elections.	Ministry of Justice
The grounds on which the municipality recorded as an expatriate Finn's place of residence in the Population Information System could be changed will be reviewed.	Ministry of Finance
Representatives of different groups of expatriate Finns will be consulted and involved in the annual seminar for expatriate Finns organised in collaboration with the Finland Society. The purpose of the seminar is to monitor the implementation of the Strategy on Expatriate Finns.	Ministry of the Interior

**OBJECTIVE 7: Returning to Finland is an attractive option for expatriate Finns and settling in goes smoothly.**

Returnees are one of the target groups for the promotion of employment- and education-based migration. Measures related to promoting employment- and education-based migration have been compiled in the Talent Boost programme and the Roadmap for Education-based and Work-based Immigration 2035. Special issues related to returnees should be better observed both in entrepreneur and employment services and the promotion of integration.

To make returning to Finland attractive and easy, it is also important to examine the potential challenges related to residence permits of Finnish citizens' family members. These matters should be examined as part of a more comprehensive improvement of the residence permit system.

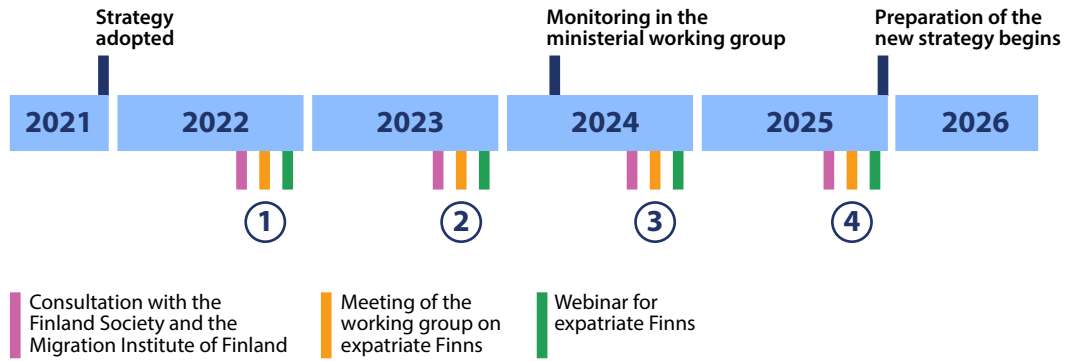
ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY (collaboratively)
The possibilities of drawing up and launching a return migration programme targeted to expatriate Finns will be examined.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Ministry for Foreign Affairs)
Finnish expatriate employees, students and researchers are taken into account when implementing the Roadmap for Education-based and Work-based Immigration.	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Ministry of Education and Culture
Measures are taken to ensure that Finnish returnees receive the complementary training and qualifications they need for the Finnish labour market.	Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment
The need to streamline the application process of residence permits for family members of Finnish citizens will be examined as part of the wider development of the system of residence permits.	Ministry of the Interior

## 5 Implementation and monitoring of the Strategy

The new Strategy on Expatriate Finns is set for 2022–2026. The seven ministries that participated in preparing the affairs of expatriate Finns will keep in contact and continue to monitor the implementation of the strategy in the new working group on expatriate Finns in central government. The working group will meet annually under the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior and review how the measures have progressed using a table of annual monitoring measures. The monitoring process involves consulting the Finland Society and the Migration Institute of Finland.

After the meeting, based on how the objectives and actions have progressed and on the consultations with the Finland Society and the Migration Institute of Finland, the working group will select a theme to be used as a basis for planning a webinar for expatriate Finns, coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior, at the end of each year. The content of the webinar will be planned in accordance with the theme and needs, but its main purpose is to involve the expatriate Finns themselves in monitoring the implementation of the strategy and to hear their views on matters that affect them. The webinar will be organised in collaboration with the Finland Society and possibly with other Finnish expatriate actors. The information collected in the webinar will be used for promoting the implementation of the strategy.

In the middle of the strategy period, during the first half of 2024, the question how the implementation of the Strategy on Expatriate Finns has been progressing will be introduced for discussion in the ministerial group. It would be useful to carry out the follow-up study to the Migration Institute of Finland's survey Changing Nature of Being an Expatriate Finn so that its results could be used as a basis for preparing the next Strategy on Expatriate Finns. The Finland Society strives to take into account the scheduling of the Strategy on Expatriate Finns when developing the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. The preparation of the new strategy will begin at the end of 2025.





Ministry of the Interior  
Finland

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