Key figures on immigration

2019

EMN European Migration Network FINLAND

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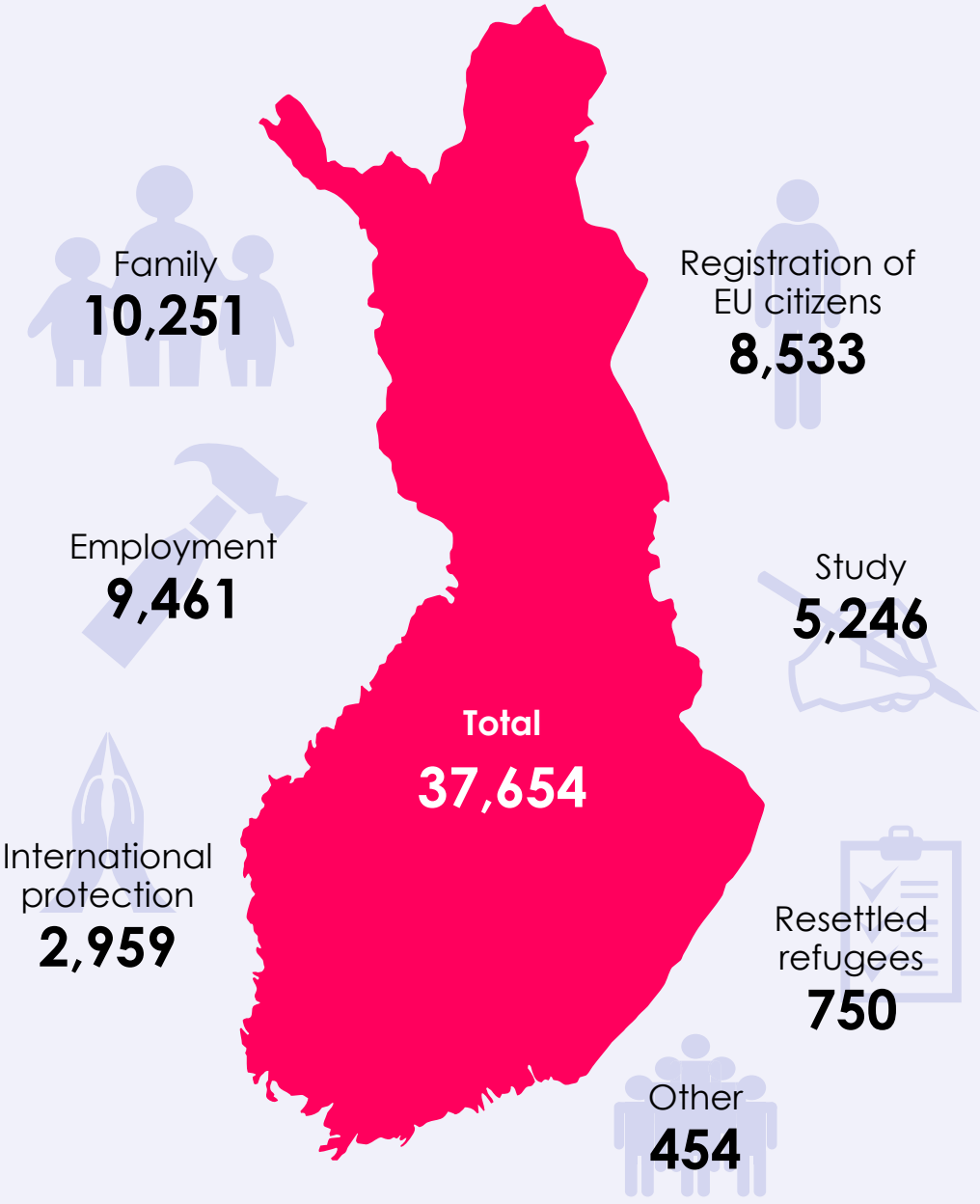
The Finnish National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN) has compiled this statistical review from the statistics of the Finnish Immigration Service, Police and Finnish Border Guard as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In addition, the EMN has produced the annual report on migration, which covers all aspects of migration and asylum in Finland in 2019. The report provides advanced information on the phenomena discussed in this statistical review in the light of figures. This statistical review is based on the Finnish Immigration Service's statistics except where other sources are mentioned.

The Finnish National Contact Point of the EMN is responsible for any potential errors and misinterpretations in this statistical review.

Overview 2019

The figure includes the first residence permits issued by the Finnish Immigration Service to third-country nationals as well as the registration of the right of residence of EU citizens and their family members. The largest group is third-country nationals who entered the country on the grounds of family ties (10,251). The second-largest group is third-country nationals who entered the country on the grounds of employment (9,461).



Sources: Finnish Immigration Service

First residence permits, Top 10 nationalities by grounds of issuance

The map indicates the Top 10 countries to whose citizens the Finnish Immigration Service issued the highest number of first residence permits in 2019. The graphs show the distribution of the grounds of issuance of residence permits per nationality.*

United States

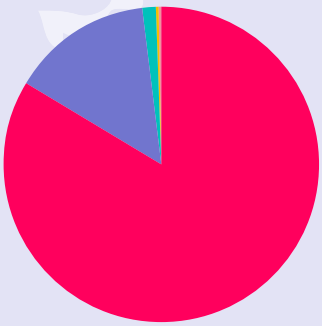
Turkey

First residence permits issued by the Finnish Immigration Service by grounds of issuance, Top 10 nationalities

- Employment
- Family
- Study
- International protection
- Other reasons

1,000 500

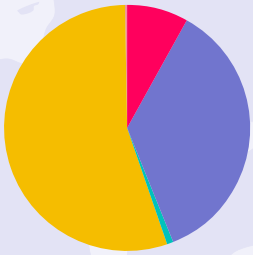
* Grounds in the graphs: employment, family, study, international protection and other. The "other" category includes the following grounds of residence permits: adoption, au pair, victim of human trafficking, other grounds, former Finnish citizen, Finnish origin.



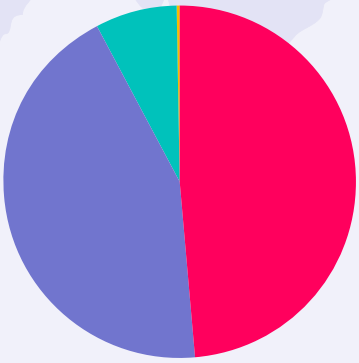
Ukraine

Russian Federation

China

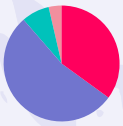


Iraq

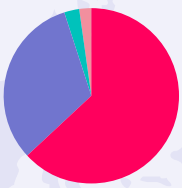


India

Vietnam



Thailand

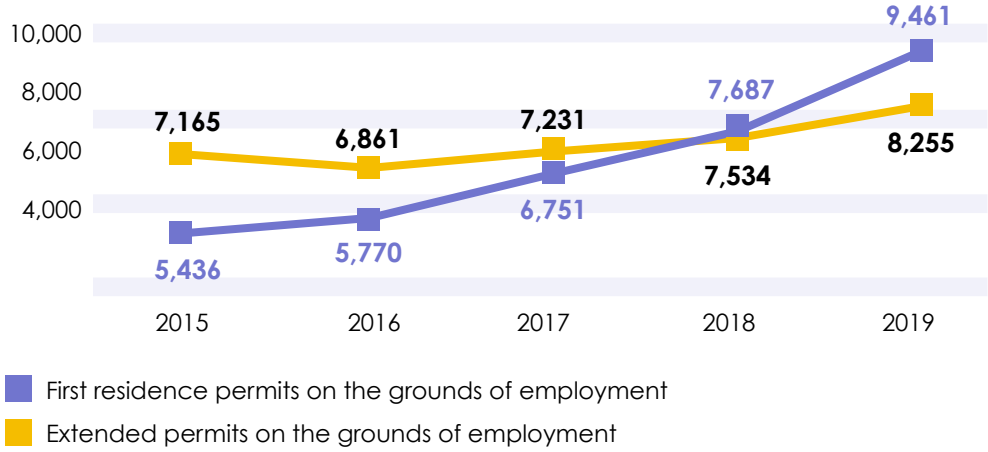


Philippines

Work in Finland

In 2019, a total of 9,461 first residence permits were issued on the grounds of employment. This number has nearly doubled from 2015, as indicated by the time series for the period 2015–2019. The number of extended permits issued on the grounds of employment has remained more stable, but that figure also increased in 2019.

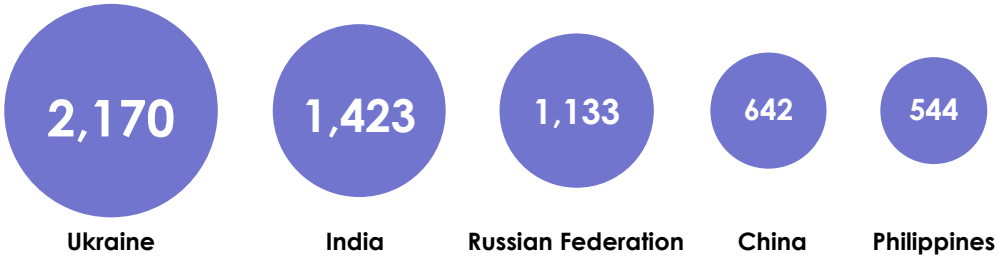
First residence permits and extended permits issued on the grounds of employment 2015–2019



First residence permits issued on the grounds of employment, all categories, 2019

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TOTAL
Specialist	1,893	10	1,903
Specialist, Blue Card	163	4	167
Internship	163	4	167
Start-up entrepreneur	54	15	69
Seasonal work	1,091	37	1,128
Other work	287	31	318
Seasonal work, preliminary decision	486	7	493
Work requiring a preliminary decision	3,827	2,608	6,435
Intra-corporate transfer	28	1	29
Scientific research	1,032	11	1,043
Sports and coaching	284	75	359
Volunteering	24	0	24
Self-employment	128	271	399
Total	9,461	3,074	12,535

First residence permits issued on the grounds of employment, Top 5 nationalities in 2019



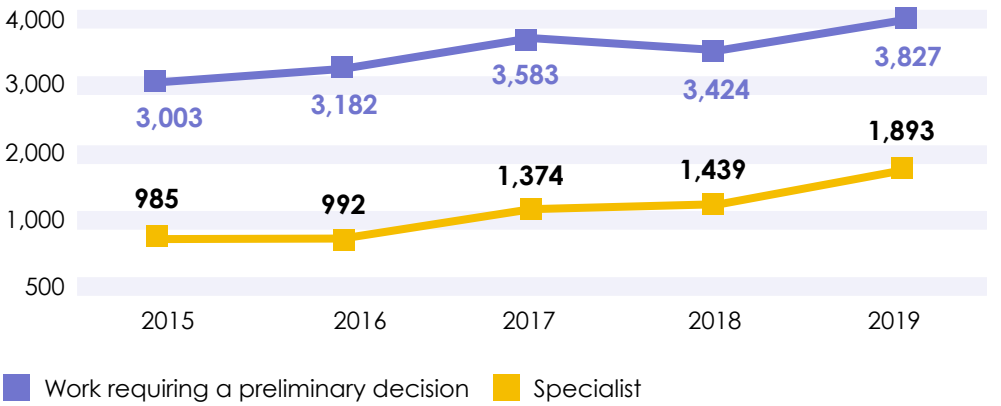
Focus on residence permits for employed persons and specialists

The residence permit for an employed person (employment requiring a preliminary decision) is a residence permit issued on the grounds of employment, which entitles the holder to work in the field stated in the permit or, alternatively, for a certain employer. The permit must be applied for when employment is not possible on the basis of another residence permit. A residence permit for an employed person is subject to two-phase consideration:

1. First, the Employment and Economic Development Office considers the employment and subsistence requirements of the permit in its preliminary decision.
2. Subsequently, the Finnish Immigration Service issues the first residence permit for an employed person, unless there are statutory reasons for not issuing the permit.

Specialists are one of the largest groups that do not need a residence permit for an employed person in order to work in Finland. Specialists include e.g. IT experts, specialists in a certain field who have a degree from an institute of higher education or other persons with a degree from an institute of higher education who are hired for a position requiring special competence.

First residence permits issued, comparison, work requiring a preliminary decision and specialist, 2015–2019



Migration to Finland on the grounds of family ties

Migration on the grounds of family ties represented the largest proportion of immigration to Finland in 2019. The Finnish Immigration Service issued first residence permits on the grounds of family ties to 10,251 applicants in total. The number increased from the previous year (2018: 9,009).

Pursuant to the Aliens Act, family members of foreign nationals living in Finland and Finnish citizens are:

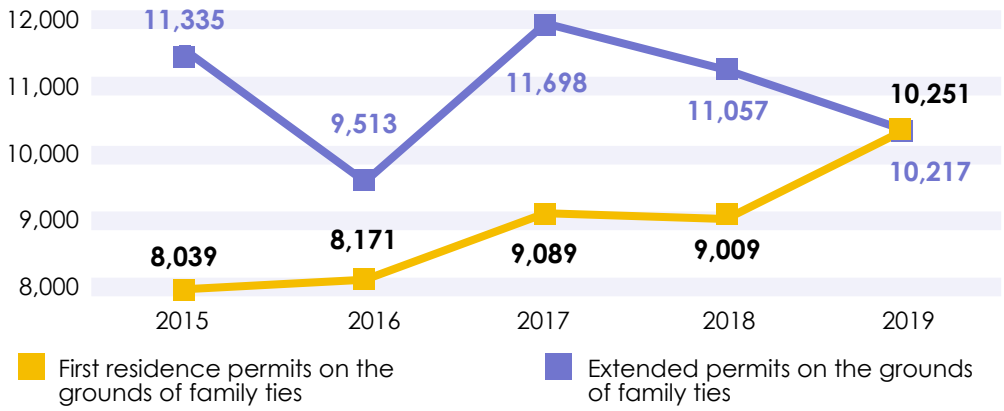
- spouse
- registered partner
- cohabitation partner (a requirement of living together for two years unless the couple has a child in joint custody)
- unmarried child under 18 years of age under the care and custody of the person living in Finland
- guardian, if the person living in Finland is under 18 years old

The statistics on residence permit applications on the grounds of family ties also include applicants outside the core family, other relatives, for example the parents and siblings of an adult.

Reasons for negative decisions on family ties include:

- the family ties cannot be corroborated / the family ties are not real
- the marriage is not real (a marriage of convenience)
- the guardianship between a child and a parent is not valid / the guardianship is not de facto
- the requirements of a foster child relationship are not met
- subsistence is not secured
- the general requirements for obtaining a residence permit are not met.

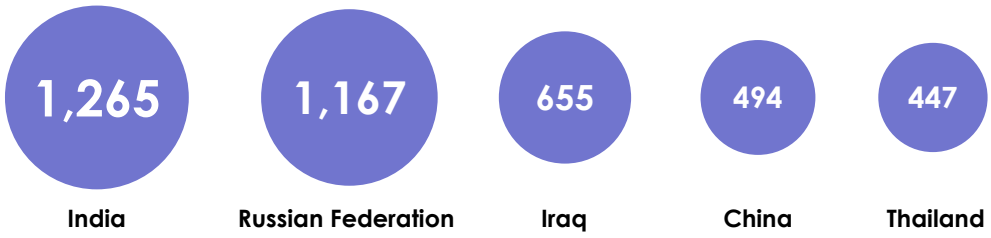
First residence permits and extended permits issued on the grounds of family ties 2015–2019



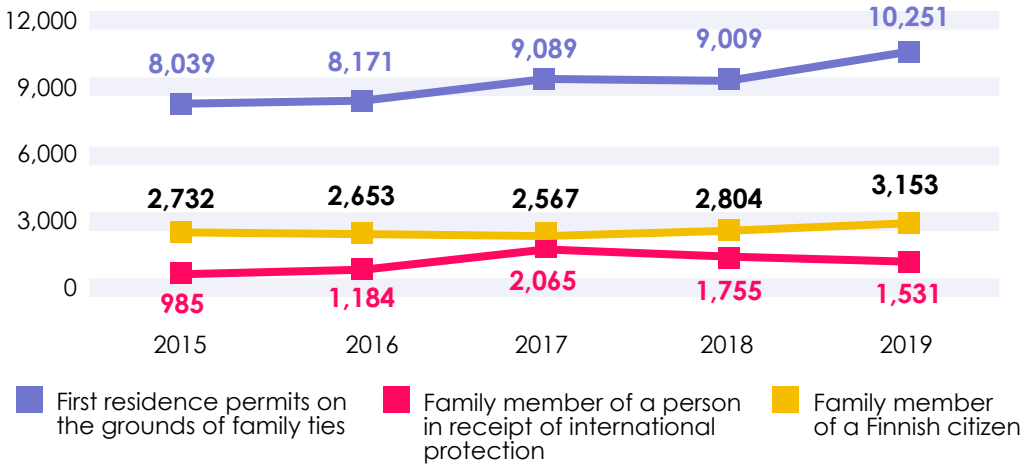
First residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties, all categories, 2019

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TOTAL
Guardian of a person in receipt of international protection	44	33	77
Child of a person in receipt of international protection	1,124	212	1,336
Other family member of a person in receipt of international protection	66	124	190
Spouse of a person in receipt of international protection	297	244	541
Guardian of a third country national	12	37	49
Child of a third country national	3,107	645	3,752
Other family member of a third country national	4	40	44
Spouse of a third country national	2,444	527	2,971
Guardian of a Finnish citizen	75	41	29
Child of a Finnish citizen	413	138	551
Other family member of a Finnish citizen	1	143	144
Spouse of a Finnish citizen	2,664	576	3,240
Total	10,251	2,760	12,924

First residence permits issued on the grounds of family ties, Top 5 nationalities in 2019



First residence permits and extended permits issued on the grounds of family ties 2015–2019

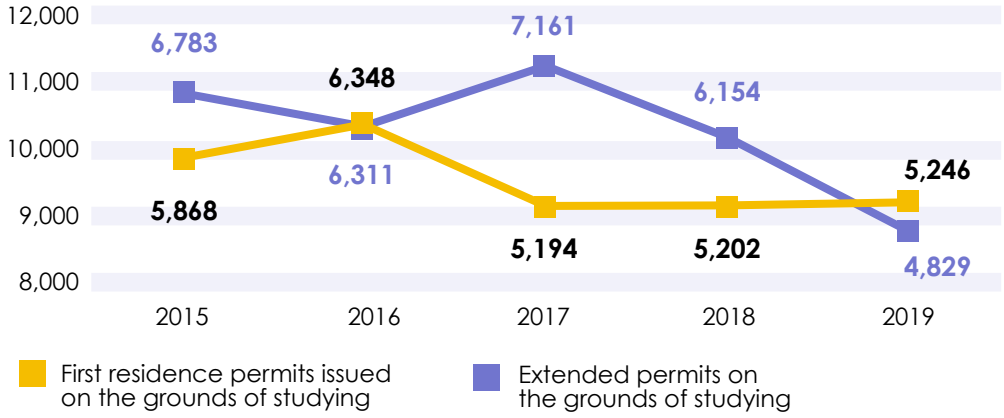


Migration to Finland on the grounds of studying

Residence permits for studies were issued to 5,246 third country nationals in 2019. The number was largely unchanged from 2018 (5,202). A total of 825 applicants (14%) received a negative decision on their application for a residence permit for studies. A negative decision usually results from irregularities concerning subsistence.

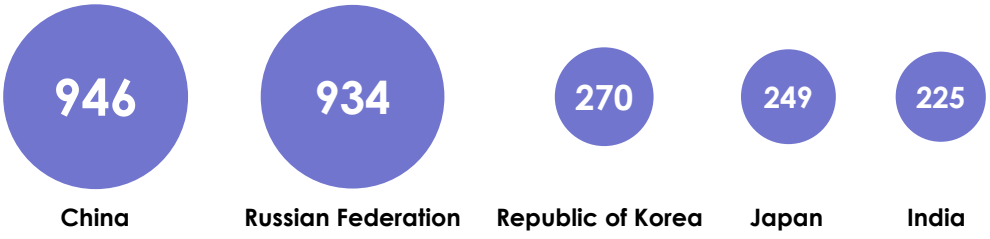
The top nationalities for residence permits issued on the grounds of studying were Chinese (946), Russian (934) and Vietnamese (437).

First residence permits and extended permits issued on the grounds of studying 2015–2019



First residence permits issued on the grounds of studying 2019

First residence permits issued on the grounds of studying, Top 5 nationalities in 2019



Other grounds

A total of 454 Finnish residence permits were issued on other grounds in 2019. This category includes the following grounds: adoption, au pair, former Finnish citizen, Finnish origin, victim of human trafficking, other grounds and established relationship.

First residence permits and extended permits issued on the grounds of studying 2015–2019

First residence permits issued on other grounds, all categories, 2019

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TOTAL
Adoption	30	0	30
Au pair	28	46	74
Former Finnish citizen, Finnish origin	49	1	50
Residence permit for a victim of human trafficking	9	9	18
Other grounds	328	127	455
Returnee	3	0	3
Established relationship	7	3	10
Total	454	186	640

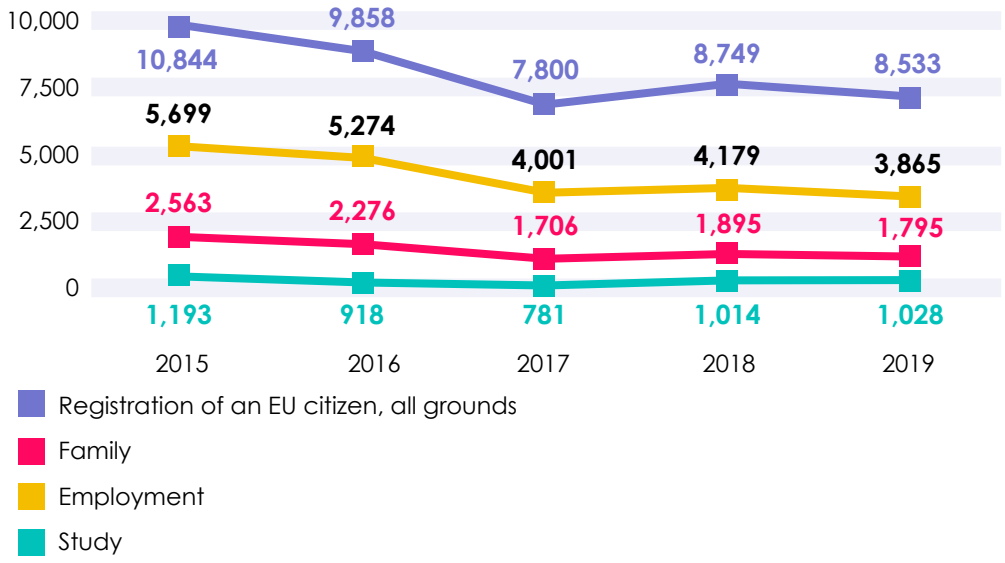
First residence permits issued on other grounds, Top 5 nationalities in 2019

106	81	40	29	23
China	United States	Russian Federation	Thailand	Philippines

Registration of the right of residence of an EU citizen and family members

The Finnish Immigration Service registers the right of residence of EU citizens and issues residence cards to the family members of EU citizens. A residence card is issued to an EU citizen's family member who is not an EU citizen. The number of registrations of rights of residence of EU citizens declined by nearly 500 in 2019 compared to the previous year. The largest group for whom registrations were performed in 2019 continued to be Estonians (1,649). The number of registrations by citizens of the United Kingdom nearly doubled compared to 2018 due to Brexit, as citizens of the United Kingdom were urged to register their residence.

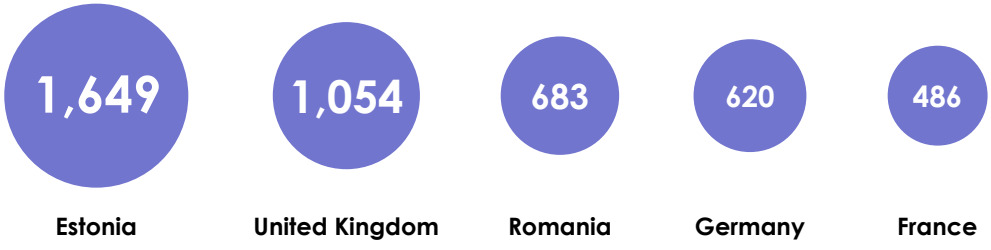
Registration of EU citizens, positive decisions 2015–2019



Registration of an EU citizen, grounds, 2019

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TOTAL
Family	1,795	159	1,954
Employment	3,865	381	4,246
Study	1,028	52	1,080
Other	1,113	103	1,216
Family member's residence card	732	91	823
Total	8,533	786	9,319

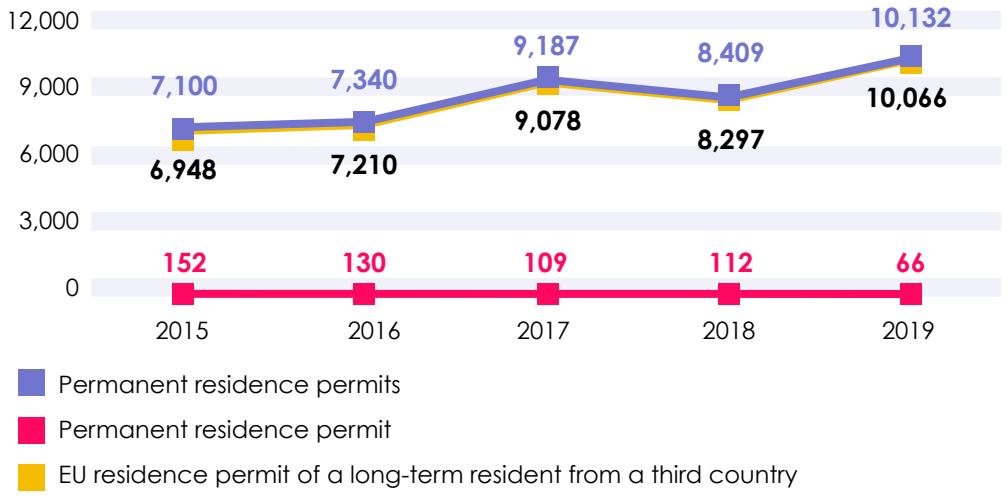
First residence permits issued on the grounds of studying, Top 5 nationalities in 2019



Permanent residence permit

A permanent residence permit is valid until further notice. In other words, its validity is not limited. A permanent residence permit may be issued when the person has resided in Finland continuously for four years on a continuous residence permit and the conditions for issuing a continuous residence permit are still met. The EU residence permit of a long-term resident from a third country is also considered a permanent residence permit. This requires five years of continuous residence in Finland and it also entitles the holder to stay in another Schengen country for at most 90 days.

Permanent residence permits issued, 2015–2019



Permanent residence permits issued, grounds, 2019

	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	TOTAL
Family	2,015	44	2,059
Employment	774	36	810
Self-employment	44	10	54
International protection	3,257	245	3,502
Other grounds	204	18	222
Applications for a permanent residence permit	3,772	413	4,185
EU residence permit of a long-term resident from a third country	66	26	92
Total	10,132	792	10,924

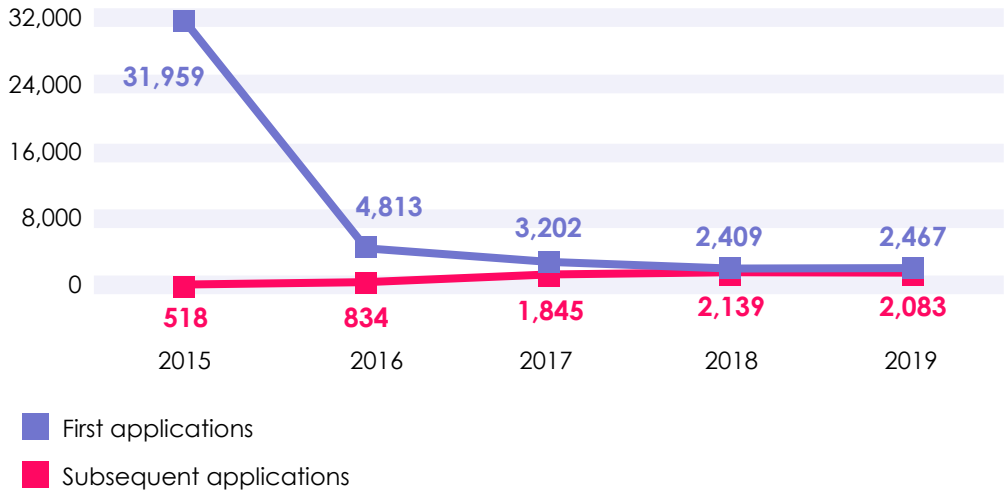
Permanent residence permits issued, Top 5 nationalities in 2019

2,695	1,155	721	466	389
Iraq	Russian Federation	Somalia	China	Syria

How many people sought asylum in Finland?

A total of 4,550 persons applied for international protection in Finland in 2019. Of these, 98 were unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. Of the asylum applications, 46% (2,083) were subsequent applications. A subsequent application is an application for international protection filed by a foreign national after receiving a final decision on a previously submitted application. The proportion of subsequent applications of all asylum applications has increased substantially during the past few years, and this trend continued in 2019.

First applications and subsequent applications 2015–2019:

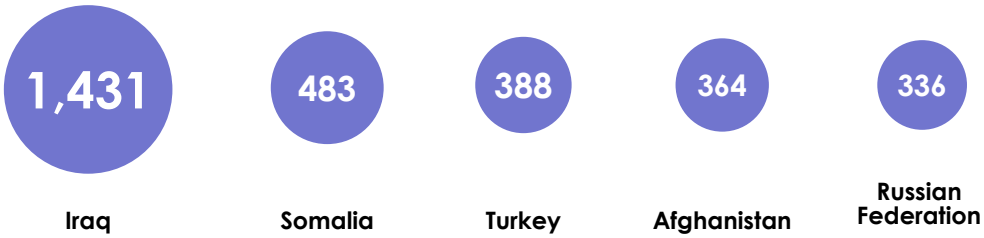


child

Where did the asylum seekers come from?

In 2019, the largest group of applicants was again Iraqi nationals by a large margin (1,431, of which 1,134 were subsequent applications), followed by Somali nationals (483, of which 340 were subsequent applications). The countries of origin that accounted for the largest number of new asylum seekers were Turkey (388, of which 364 were new) and Russia (336, of which 292 were new).

Asylum seekers 1 January–31 December 2019

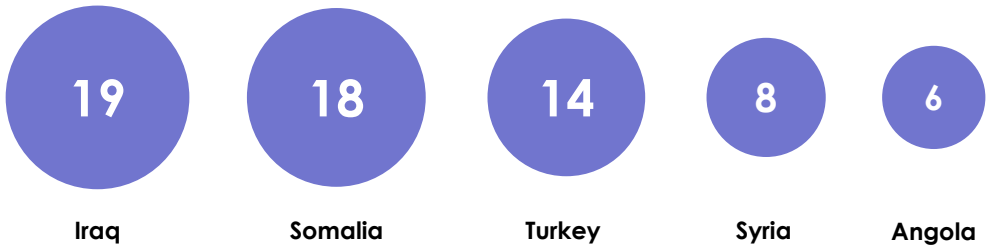


Who were the unaccompanied minor asylum seekers?

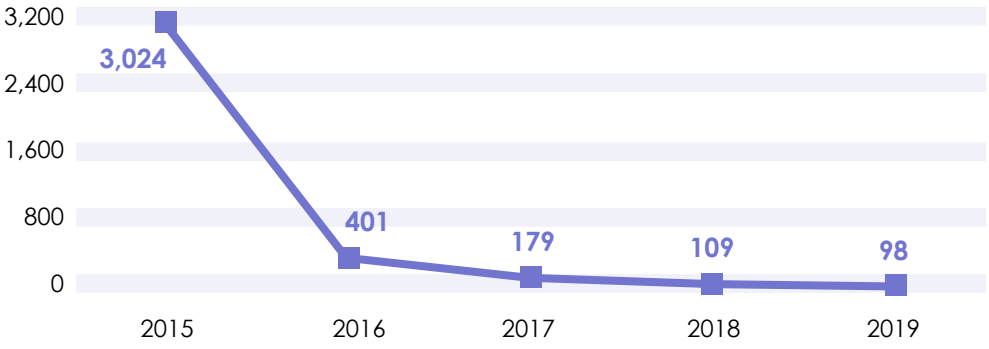
The term "unaccompanied minor asylum seeker" refers to a person who states that he/she is under 18 years of age and who enters the country either completely alone or with a person who is not his/her parent or guardian (or sufficient evidence of guardianship of the said person is not provided) in order to seek asylum.

A total of 98 unaccompanied minor asylum seekers entered Finland in 2019. This represents a decrease from 2018, when the corresponding figure was 109. This meant that the declining trend seen since 2015 continued. The countries of origin with the most unaccompanied minor asylum seekers entering Finland were Iraq (19), Somalia (18) and Afghanistan (14).

Unaccompanied minors, 1 January–31 December 2019



Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers 2015–2019



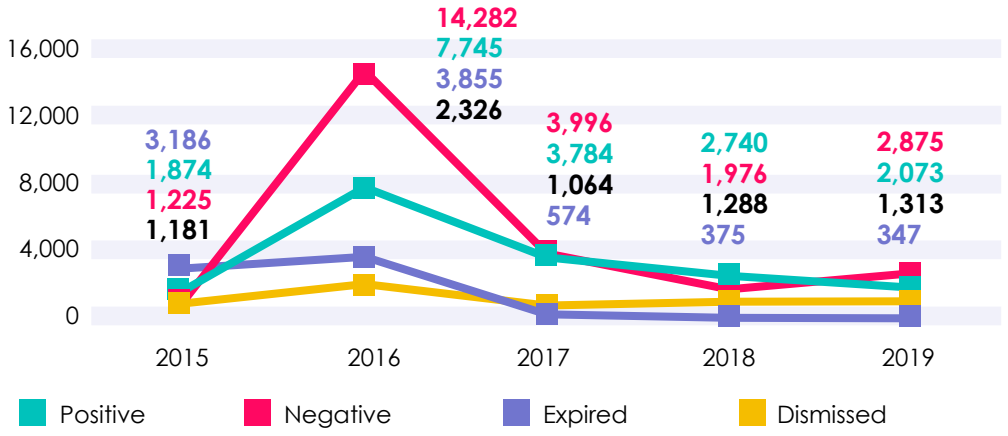
Decisions made in the asylum process

The Finnish Immigration Service made 7,494 asylum decisions in 2019. Positive asylum decisions accounted for 39% of all decisions in the asylum process. The share of negative decisions of all decisions was 38%. The number of decisions to dismiss the application was 1,313 (17.5%), including Dublin decisions. The number of expired applications was 347 (approx. 5% of all decisions).

Asylum decisions, Top 5 nationalities in 2019

	POSITIVE				NEGATIVE			
	ASYLUM	SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION	OTHER RESIDENCE PERMITS	TOTAL		EXPIRED	DISMISSED	TOTAL
Iraq	682	149	160	991	1,215	103	522	2,831
Afghanistan	232	154	156	542	290	23	131	986
Russian Federation	168	0	4	172	475	32	24	703
Somalia	155	45	12	212	153	7	237	609
Turkey	411	0	3	414	44	11	19	488
Top 5 total	1,648	348	335	2,331	2,177	176	933	5,617
Total	2,073	452	434	2,959	2,875	347	1,313	7,494

Asylum decisions 2015–2019



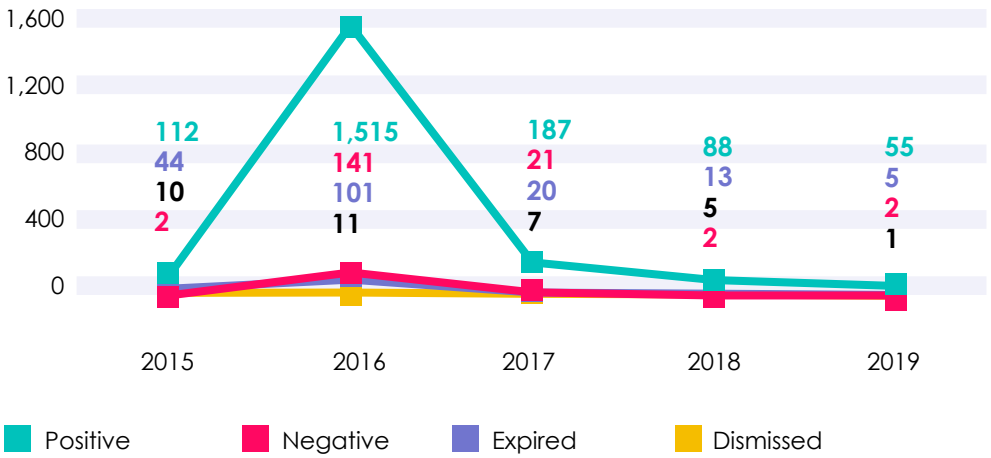
During the 2015–2019 period, a clear uptick can be seen in all decision categories in 2016, followed by a declining trend in the number of applicants. The same trend is evident in the number of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

Unaccompanied minors, Top 5 nationalities in 2019

	POSITIVE				NEGATIVE			
2019	ASYLUM	SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION	OTHER RESIDENCE PERMITS	TOTAL		EXPIRED	DISMISSED	TOTAL
Iraq	0	9	1	10	1	0	0	11
Somalia	5	5	1	11	0	0	0	11
Afghanistan	2	4	1	7	0	0	1	8
Angola	2	1	2	5	0	0	0	5
Syria	4	0	1	5	0	0	0	5
Top 5 total	16	19	6	38	1	0	1	40
Total	25	22	8	55	2	5	1	63

In 2019, a total of 63 decisions were made in the asylum process concerning unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, and 87% of the decisions were positive.
* Includes first asylum decisions concerning unaccompanied minors relocated to Finland under the EU agreement.

Unaccompanied minors – asylum decisions 2015–2019



* More information on the Dublin procedure: https://migri.fi/en/when-is-an-application-not-processed-in-finland-

Quota (resettled) refugees

Under the refugee quota, Finland accepts persons whom the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has designated as refugees or other foreign nationals who are in need of international protection. Since 2001, the number of quota refugees accepted in Finland has been 750 persons per year. In 2014 and 2015, an additional quota of 300 people was agreed on due to the crisis in Syria. The quota for 2016, 2017 and 2018 was again set at 750 persons and the quota was filled completely in 2019.

Allocation of the refugee quota in 2019

Syria

Evacuated from Libya to Niger under the ETM evacuation mechanism (various nationalities)

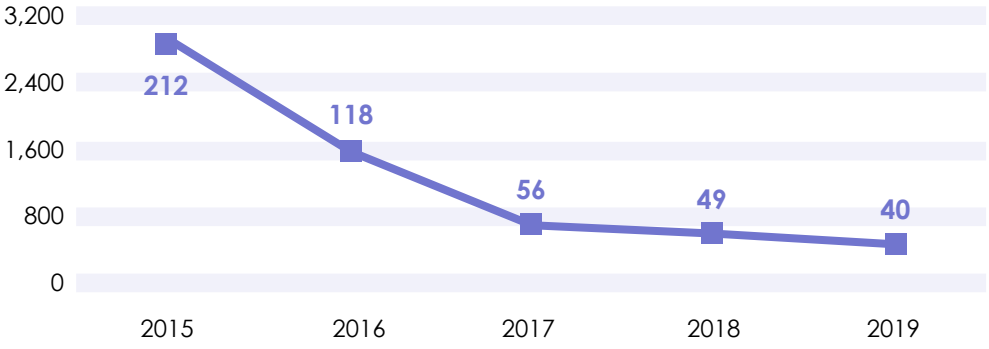
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Emergencies (various nationalities)

Reception of asylum seekers

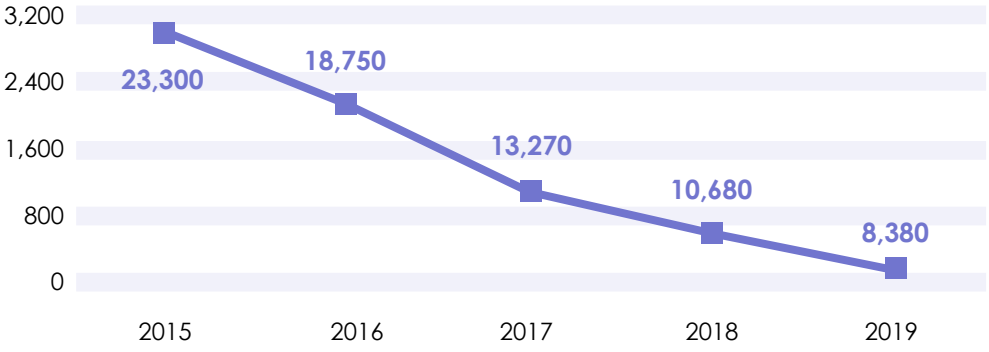
On 31 December 2019, approximately 8,400 persons were registered in the reception system in a total of 40 reception facilities (35 for adults and families, 5 for unaccompanied minors). On 31 December 2018, there were approximately 10,700 persons in 49 reception facilities (43 for adults and families, 6 for unaccompanied minors). The asylum applicants of 2015 are still visible in the number of clients in the reception system, although the reception capacity has been continuously adjusted and the number of reception facilities has been reduced year by year compared to the situation at the end of 2015.

Reception facilities 2015–2019*



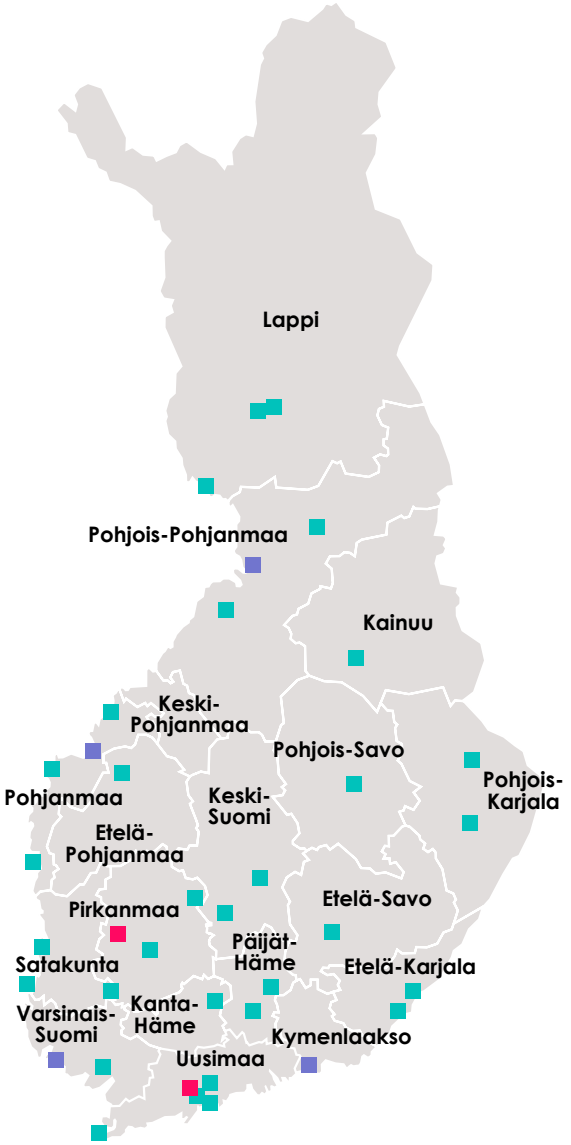
*at the end of each year, incl. reception units for minors

Clients 2015–2019*



*at the end of each year, incl. units for minors

Reception centres for asylum seekers, 31 December 2019



Reception centre (adults and families)

Special unit for minors

Reception centre and special unit for minors

Etelä-Karjala
Imatra
Joutseno

Etelä-Pohjanmaa
Kauhava

Etelä-Savo
Mikkeli

Kainuu
Kajaani

Kanta-Häme
Lammi

Keski-Suomi
Jyväskylä
Jämsä

Kymenlaakso
Kotka

Lappi
Kemi
Rovaniemi

Pirkanmaa
Hämeenkyrö
Mänttä-Vilppula
Punkalaidun
Tampere

Pohjanmaa
Kristiinankaupunki
Oravainen
Pietarsaari
Vaasa

Pohjois-Karjala
Kontiolahti
Lieksa

Pohjois-Pohjanmaa
Oulu
Pudasjärvi
Ruukki

Pohjois-Savo
Siilinjärvi

Päijät-Häme
Heinola
Lahti

Satakunta
Pori
Rauma

Uusimaa
Espoo
Hanko
Helsinki
Vantaa

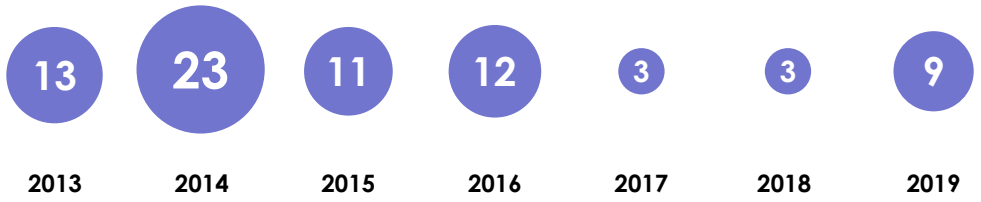
Varsinais-Suomi
Salo
Turku

Trafficking in human beings

A first residence permit for a victim of human trafficking was issued to 9 persons in 2019 (2018: 3), while a fixed-term residence permit (extended permit) on the same grounds was issued to 3 persons (2018: 5).

The number of cases involving indications of human trafficking is substantially higher. Some of them have been granted international protection or a residence permit on other grounds, or the conditions for a residence permit have not been met. There are no reliable statistics available on cases involving suspected human trafficking, as it does not constitute the primary grounds for the residence permit.

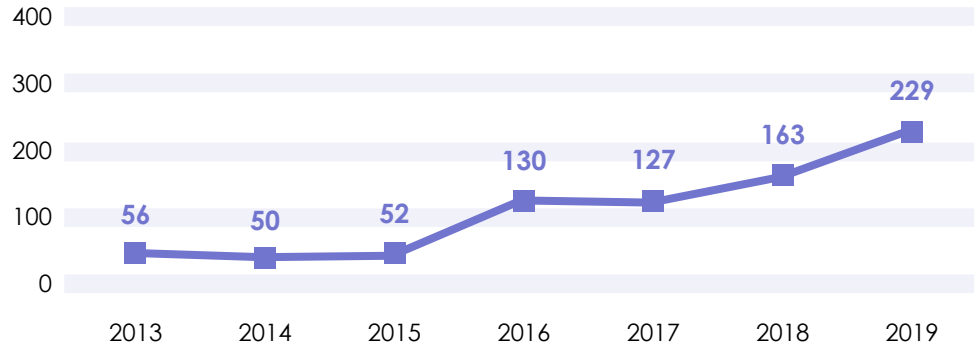
First residence permits issued, victims of human trafficking



National Assistance System for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings

The National Assistance System for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings operates as part of the Joutseno reception centre. The Assistance System maintains statistics on persons who have sought inclusion in the system and who have been admitted to the system. At the end of 2019, the National Assistance System for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings included 676 people. The number of new clients admitted to the Assistance System in 2019 was 229, which represents a substantial increase compared to 2018 (163).

New clients in the Assistance System



*at the end of each year, incl. units for minors

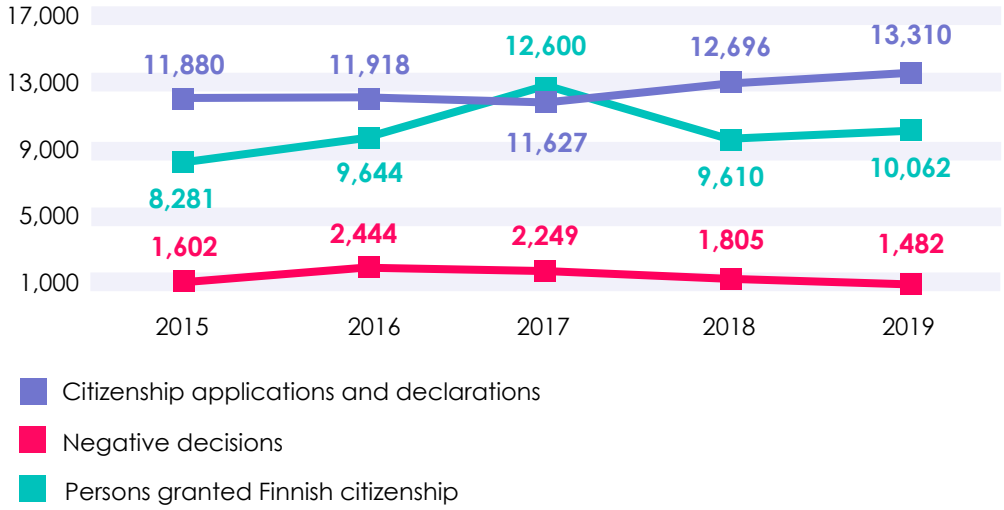
Clients in the Assistance System based on the category of victimisation in 2019

VICTIMISATION CATEGORY	NEW CLIENTS
Sexual exploitation	81
Employment-based exploitation	76
Forced marriage	52
Other exploitation	20
Total	**229**

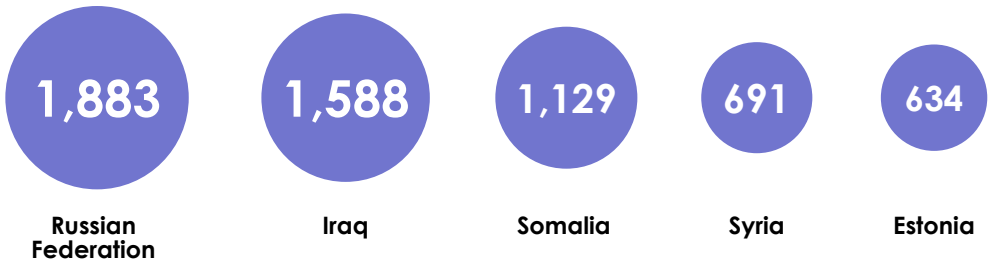
Citizenship

In 2019, a total of 10,062 persons acquired Finnish citizenship, which was again slightly lower than in the record year 2017 (12,600). The number of citizenship applications and declarations received was 13,310, an increase of 614 compared to 2018 (12,696). The number of negative decisions was 1,482 (11% of all decisions). Negative decisions are most often due to insufficient proficiency in Finnish or Swedish.

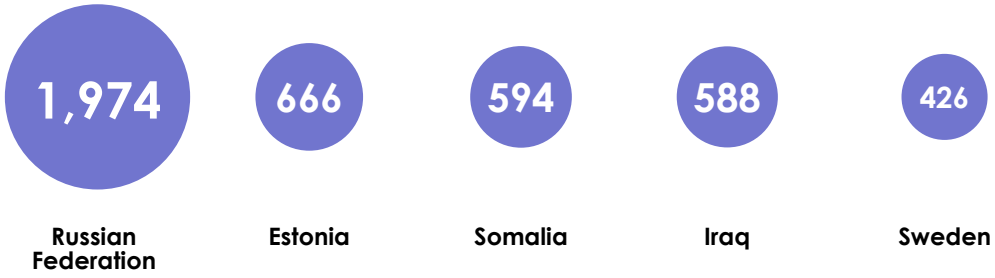
Citizenship applications, citizenship declarations and persons granted Finnish citizenship, 2015–2019



Citizenship applications, Top 5 nationalities in 2019



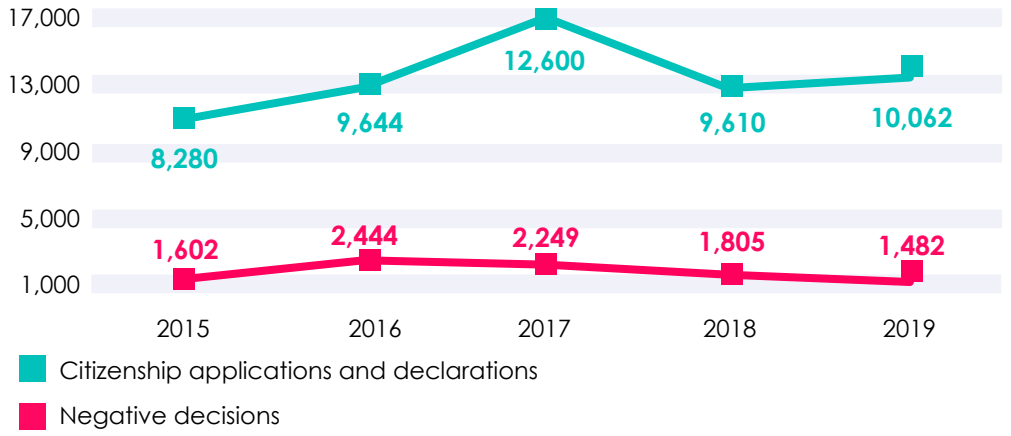
Persons who were granted Finnish citizenship (by application and declaration), Top 5 by former nationality in 2019



Finnish citizenship, negative and positive decisions, 2015–2019

	POSITIVE	%	NEGATIVE	%	TOTAL
2015	8,280	84	1,602	16	9,882
2016	9,644	80	2,442	20	12,086
2017	12,600	85	2,249	15	14,849
2018	9,610	84	1,805	16	11,415
2019	10,062	87	1,482	13	11,544

Citizenship applications, citizenship declarations and persons granted Finnish citizenship, 2015–2019



Irregular migration

Persons found to reside in the country illegally

In the migration glossary produced by the EMN network, the EMN Glossary, the Finnish translation of "irregular migration" means "immigration against the regulations". Among the Finnish authorities, the more common terms are "illegal entry" and "illegal stay".

The compilation of statistics on irregular stay has been the subject of development and revision by the authorities in Finland due to previously identified deficiencies. Statistics on persons found to reside in Finland without a valid permit are maintained according to various criteria. The statistics shown below include — in accordance with the Eurostat criteria on illegal stay — persons found staying or working in without a valid permit either inland or at the external borders as well as persons who have been found to reside irregularly without valid documents before applying for asylum in Finland. Approximately 40 per cent of the persons included in the statistics were persons who were at an external border of Finland leaving the Schengen area, which can be seen in the large proportions of Chinese and Russian citizens, among others. Most of the irregular migrants included in the statistics only stay in the country for a short period. Factors behind the increase in the total volume of irregular stay when compared to the previous year include the increasing number of observations related to undeclared foreign workers, the increasing number of irregular migrants found at an external border and, in part, more detailed statistics.

Found staying without a valid permit, Top 5 nationalities in 2019

Russia	174
China	120
Iraq	105
Turkey	77
Gambia	70
Total all	**1,219**

Source: Police

ARM 14

Violations of the prohibition of entry

Criminal activity is often the cause for imposing a prohibition of entry (entry ban), which is evident in the group who are violating the prohibition of entry as well. As such, these figures reflect international itinerant crime.

Found within the country to be violating a prohibition of entry, Top 5 nationalities in 2019

Gambia	42
Belarus	28
Stateless	14
Georgia	6
Russia	6
Total	**129**

Source: Police

Irregular employment

Irregular employment is part of the informal economy, which is partly connected to irregular stay. For most irregular migrants, undeclared employment is the most convenient means of livelihood, but the international supply of cheap labour and undeclared workers is also growing. The use of undeclared workers distorts competition: the supply of undeclared workers and cheap labour also involves organised crime, for which crime within corporate structures is a growing source of income. The supply of undeclared workers and cheap labour, in particular, increased the volume of irregular stay in Finland in 2018. Not nearly all of the persons who work illegally are staying irregularly in the country. The following statistics include persons working without any work permit regardless of whether they were staying in the country legally or not.

Person working without any work permit 2019

Iraq	42
Nigeria	36
Ukraine	34
Turkey	13
Stateless	10
Total	**294**

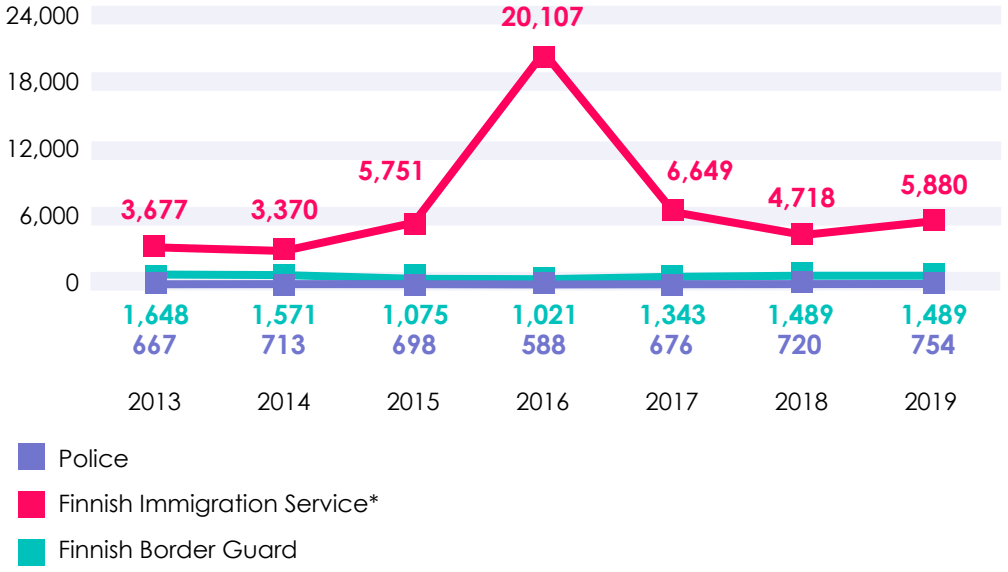
Source: Police

Removal decisions and prohibitions of entry

Refusal of entry decisions

Refusal of entry decisions may be made directly at the external border (returning) when the person does not meet the entry requirements or within the country on the grounds stipulated in the Aliens Act. The Police and border control authorities may decide on refusal of entry within three months of the alien's entry into the country. After that period, the Police or border control authorities must submit a proposal to the Finnish Immigration Service to the effect that the alien be refused entry or deported.

Refusal of entry decisions



* The difference between these figures and the statistics on the Finnish Immigration Service's website is due to the fact that the figure in this statistical review includes refusal of entry decisions made in connection with asylum decisions.

Deportation cases and decisions

When a foreign national has, or has had, a residence permit (the right of residence of an EU citizen has been registered / the EU citizen's family member has a residence card), and a decision is made to remove him/her from the country, he/she is subject to deportation. A total of 2,507 deportation cases were opened in Finland in 2019.

A deportation decision was made on 1,963 of the cases. The most common grounds for deportation in 2019 were that a new temporary residence permit could not be issued for the person or the previous permit had been revoked. The reasons for not issuing a permit or for revoking it included, for example, circumvention of the rules on entry or insufficient subsistence. Criminal grounds were the reason in 6% of the deportation cases.

Deportation cases and decisions

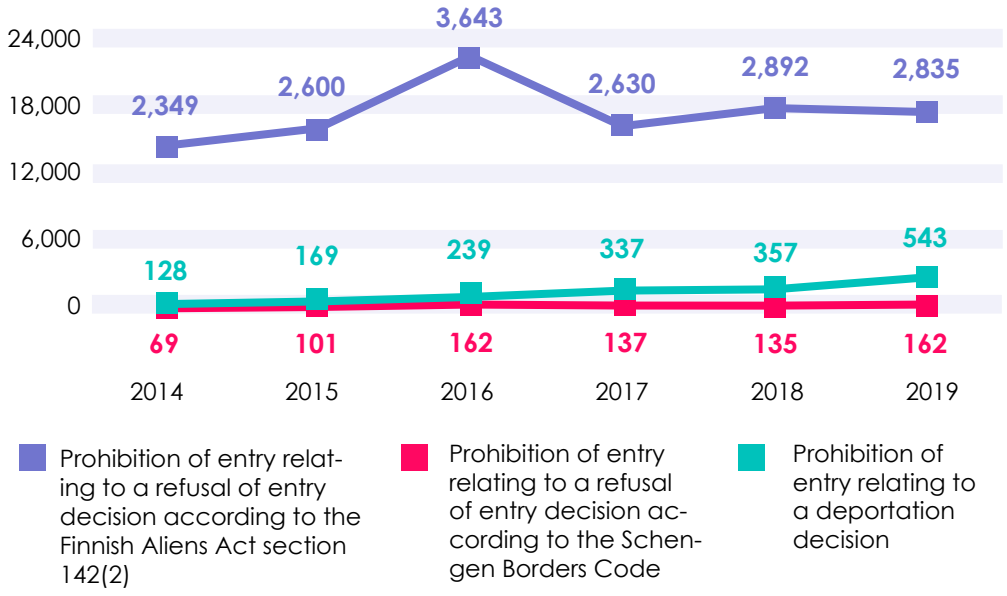
	DEPORTATION CASES	DEPORTATION	NO DEPORTATION
2019	2,507	1,963	544
2018	1,237	1,092	355
2017	1,391	905	229
2016	767	430	178
2015	380	279	112

Prohibitions of entry

The Finnish Immigration Service, Police and Finnish Border Guard issue a prohibition of entry on a person usually in connection with decisions on refusal of entry and deportation. The cases may include circumvention of the rules of entry or involvement in crime (among others, drug and property crimes).

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Prohibition of entry relating to a refusal of entry decision according to the Finnish Aliens Act section 142(2)	2,600	3,643	2,630	2,892	2,835
Prohibition of entry relating to a deportation decision	169	239	337	357	543
Prohibition of entry relating to a refusal of entry decision according to the Schengen Borders Code	101	162	137	135	162
Total	**2,870**	**4,044**	**3,104**	**3,384**	**3,540**

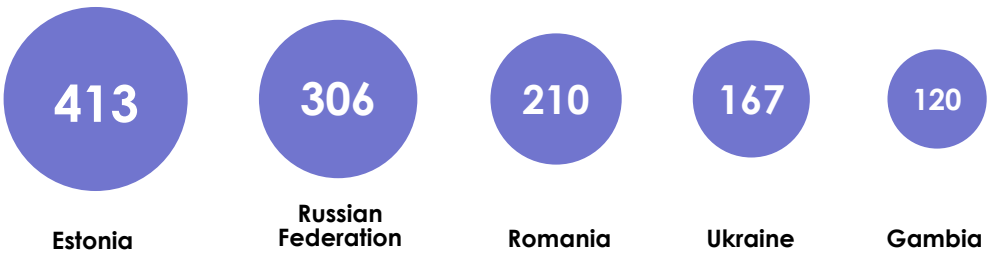
Refusal of entry decisions



Enforcement of removal from the country

In 2019, the Police removed a total of 2,870 persons from the country (2018: 2,638), of whom 430 were removed escorted (2018: 564). These figures did not change significantly from the previous year. The high figure for 2016 (6,657) was due to the number of removals from the country of persons who have received negative decisions on their asylum applications. The number of removals from the country has now returned to the levels seen in 2014 and 2015.

Persons removed from the country, Top 5 nationalities



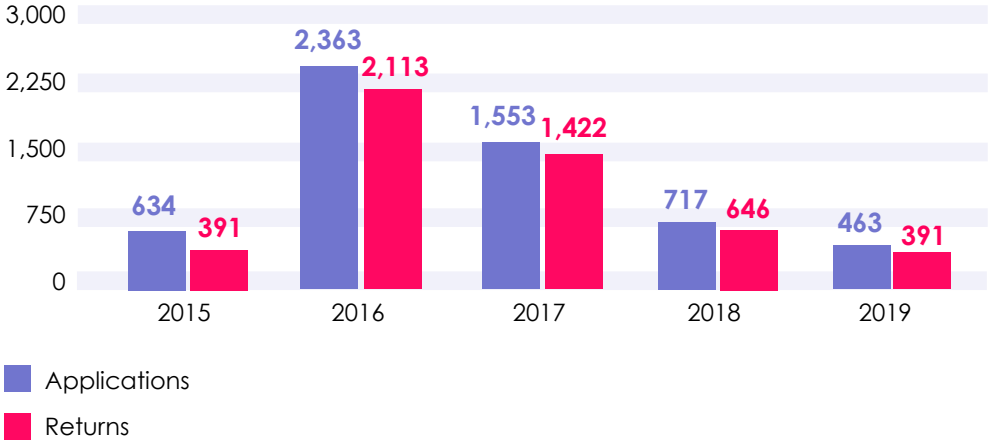
Source: Police

Assisted voluntary return

A total of 391 persons were voluntarily repatriated in 2019, representing a 40% decrease from 2018 (646). The declining trend continued.

Finland has had project-based voluntary repatriation programmes in place since 2010. The programmes have been co-funded by the EU Return Fund. The practical implementation has been carried out by the International Organization for Migration, IOM, which continues as the service provider for arranging the returns.

Assisted voluntary return

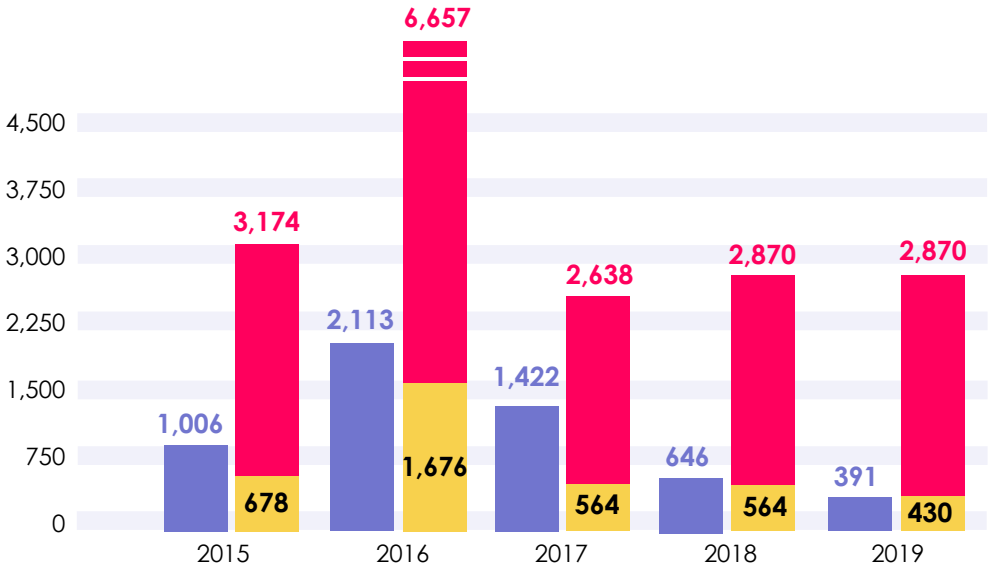


Returns by country of return, Top 10 in 2019

1. Iraq	187
2. Russian Federation	42
3. Georgia	26
4. Iran	22
5. Ukraine	17
6. Romania	9
7. Turkey	8
8. Somalia	7
9. Pakistan	7
10. Afghanistan	7
TOP 10 total	**332**
Total	**391**

Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM), Helsinki office

Returnees through the voluntary return programme and persons removed from the country by the authorities 2015–2019

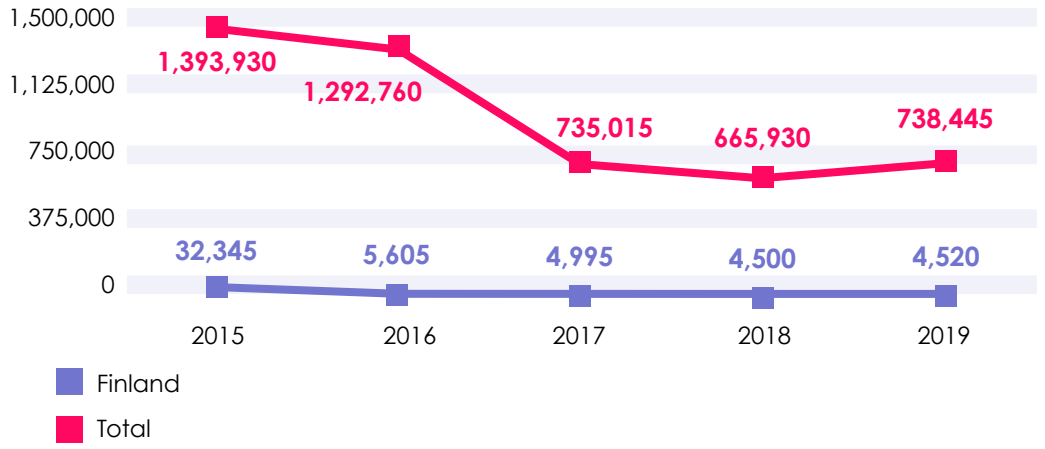


EU-level statistics on asylum and migration

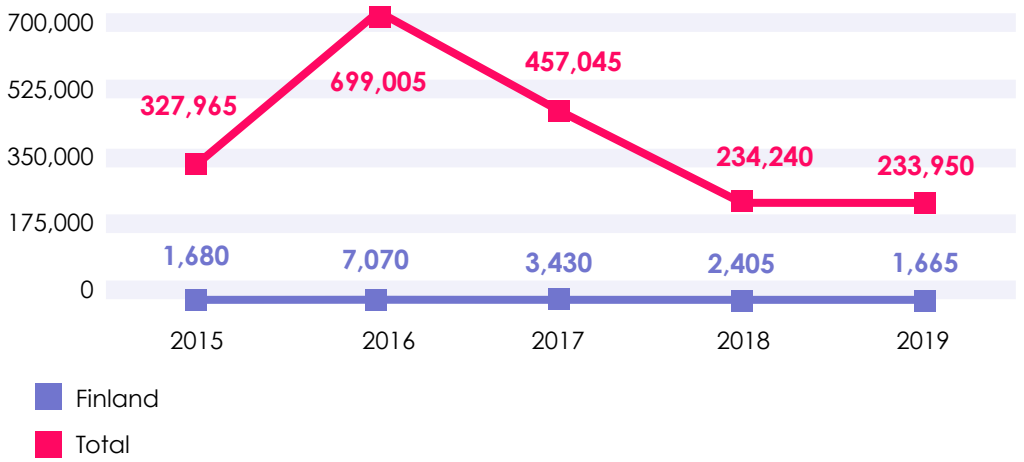
The table below presents figures on migration and asylum for the EU as a whole for the past five years. They give a scale to migration at the EU level and place migration to Finland in context compared to the rest of Europe.

International protection (source: Eurostat)
Residence permits (source: Eurostat)

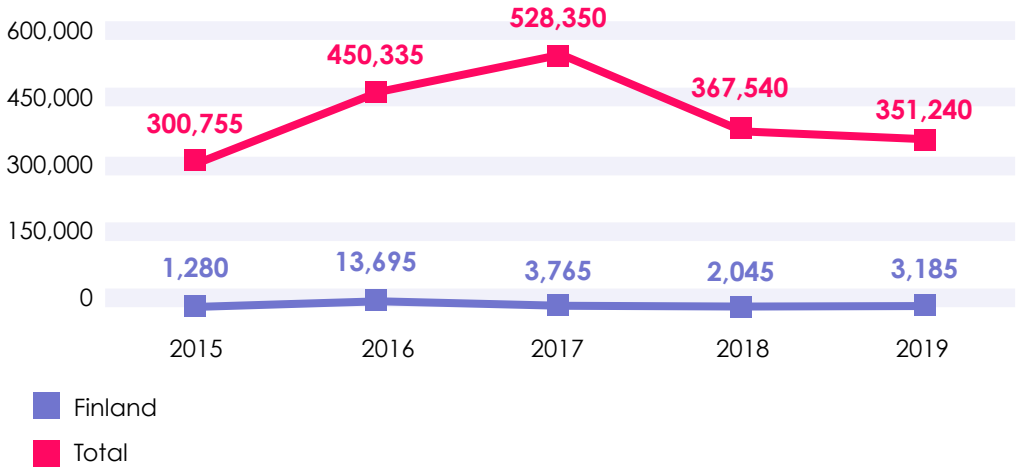
Asylum seekers, EU-28 (including Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland)



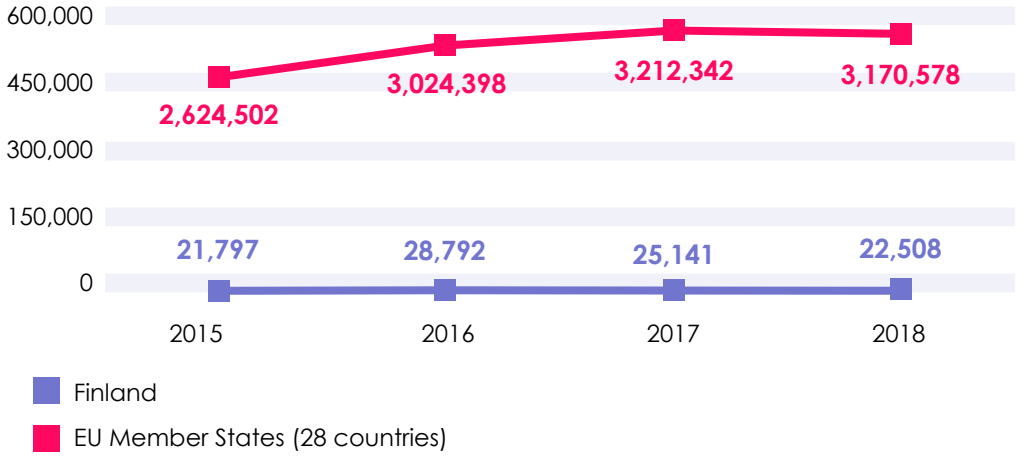
Positive decisions



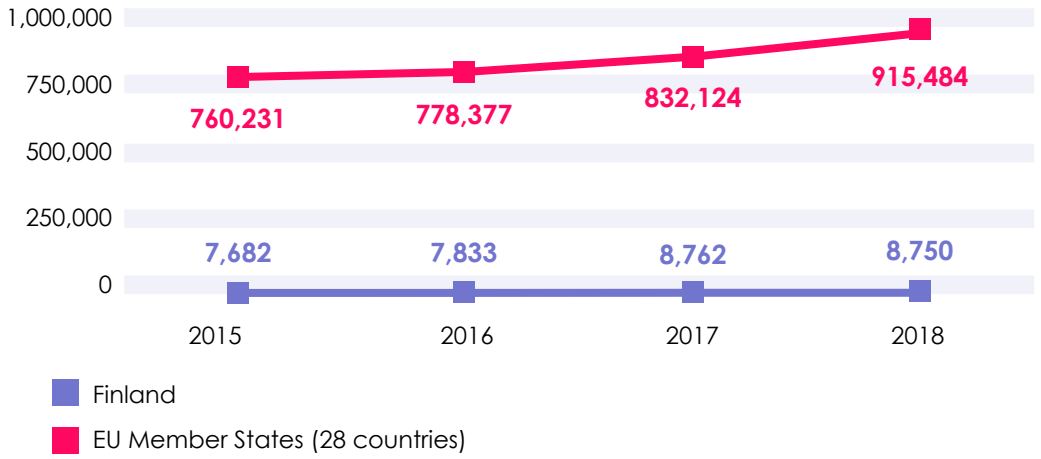
Negative decisions



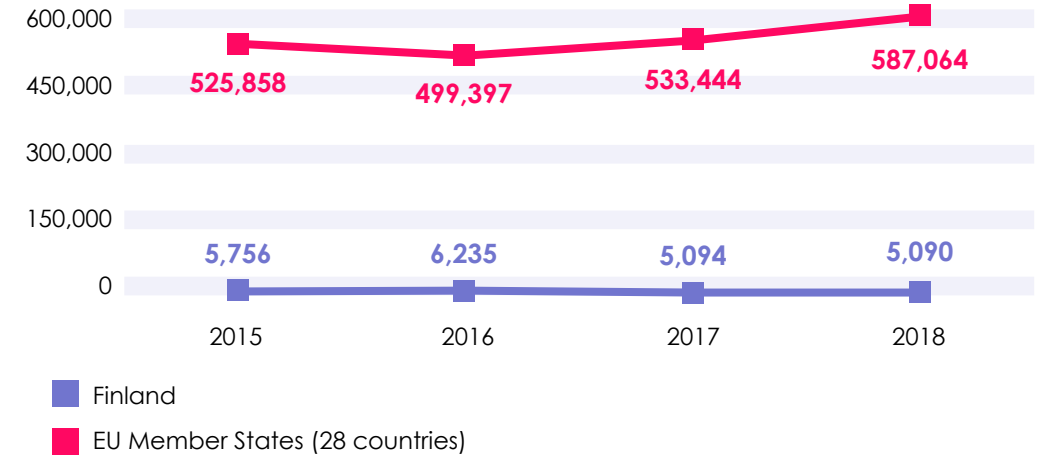
First residence permits issued



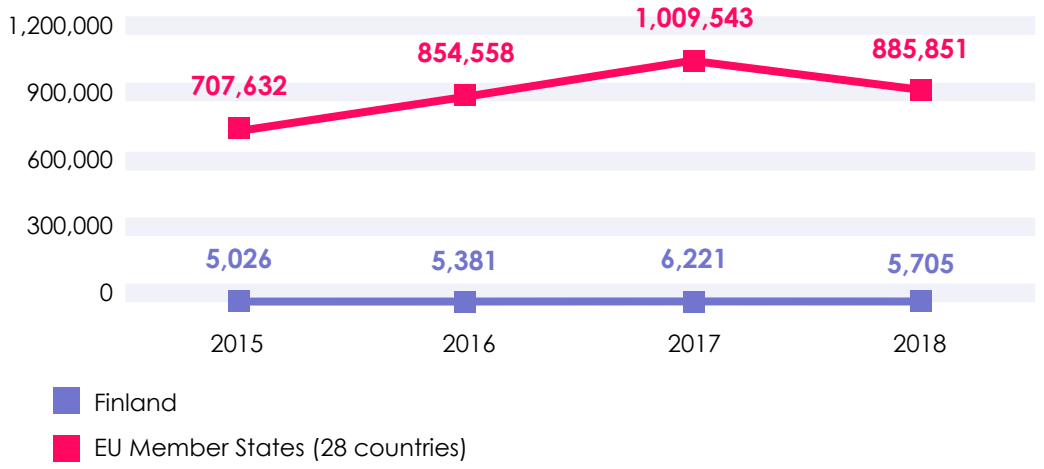
Family



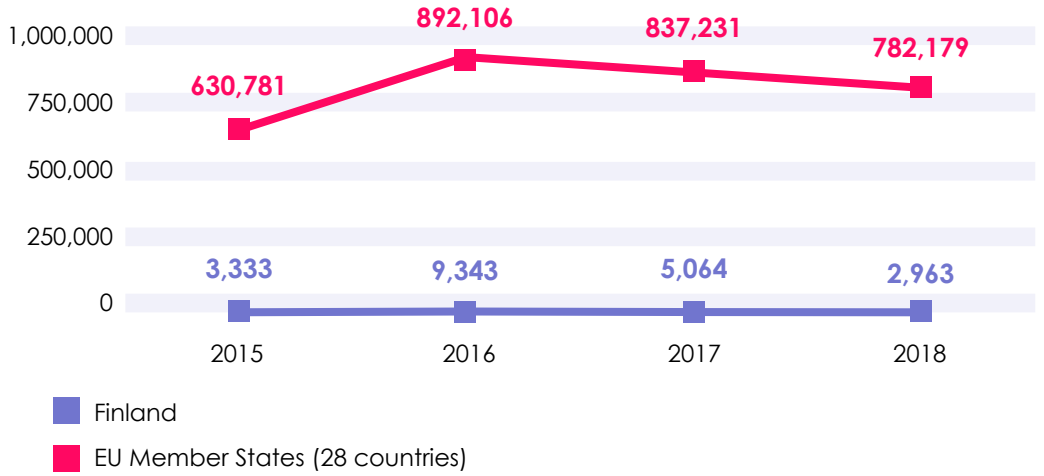
Studies



Employment



Other



Online statistics

Finnish Immigration Service | http://tilastot.migri.fi/
- Residence permit statistics
- International protection statistics
- Nationality statistics
- Deportation statistics
- Reception statistics

European Migration Network | http://www.emn.fi/tilastoja (in Finnish)
- Time series and trend statistics on residence permits and asylum seekers (the publication Key Figures on Immigration contains comprehensive statistics since 2014 and, since 2015, online at http://tilastot.migri.fi/)

Statistics Finland | http://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/index_en.html
- Thematic pages on migration and integration

Eurostat | http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database
- Population, migration and asylum statistics from EU Member States