

EMN Finland National Conference Webinar

”Is Finland ready for increased labour immigration?”

Background

Labour immigration has been one of the most widely discussed topics in the public and political debate in recent years. According to population projections, Finland’s population, and especially the working-age population, is declining. This is largely due to a low birth rate combined with the age structure of the population. Already, the increase in the number of employed has been mainly based on the increase in the number of foreign language speaking employees.

There is a broad consensus among experts and policy makers that increasing education and labour immigration plays a significant role in developing Finland’s population, the labour market, economy and competitiveness.

In the Roadmap for Education Based and Work-Based Migration 2035 published by the Government in September 2021, the objectives are set as follows:

”The Government is seeking to at least double the current volume of work based immigration by 2030 to attain the overall increase of at least 50,000 work-based immigrants that is required in the sustainability roadmap. Beyond 2030, the goal is an annual increase of at least 10,000. The number of new foreign degree students should be trebled to 15,000 by 2030, and 75% of the foreign students should find employment and stay in Finland.

The vision of the roadmap summarises the long-term target state by 2035. The vision is that Finland will be an international competitive and attractive place for education, work, business and living. The service pledge and strategic objectives of the roadmap constitute a plan by which the desired target will be reached.”

The Ministry of the Interior also set up a new project in June 2021 to define long-term objectives for Finland’s comprehensive migration policy. The project aims to bring together the responsibilities of different actors and set uniform long-term objectives for them. The goal of the project is to, inter alia, examine the expectations for migration and the areas for development in migration policy, compile an overall assessment to increase the attractiveness of Finland as a destination country for employment, study and remigration, and assess the impact of migration on different sectors of society. Furthermore, the aim is to prepare a framework for Finland’s migration policy to support political debate and decision-making.

Objective

The aim of the EMN conference is to look ahead on the basis of the vision and measures presented in the Roadmap for Education and Work-Based Migration 2035 and the project on long-term objectives for a comprehensive migration policy. The public debate has largely focused on the need to strengthen labour immigration, e.g. by streamlining recruitment and entry and by shortening the processing times of residence permit applications. Less attention has been paid to the actual readiness of the labour market and the rest of society to significantly increase labour migration. The purpose of the conference is to activate this discussion and provide answers based on OECD and international research data, for example. Employers' organisations and trade unions will also be given a turn to speak. Finally, a practical example of successful sectoral recruitment in peer country Germany will be provided.

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