



European Migration Network



**ANNUAL REPORT ON ASYLUM AND MIGRATION STATISTICS REFERENCE YEAR
2007 FINLAND**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report aims to give an overview of the migration and asylum statistics in Finland in 2007. The first section gives short introduction and outlines the methodology used for preparing the report. In Section 2 "Asylum" an overview of the numbers of asylum applications and decisions is given. Comprehensive tables on asylum issues have been added to Annexes at the end of the report. Section 3 "Migration" analyses the trends of migration to and from Finland as well as outlines the legal, political and procedural developments in this area during 2007. Section 4 "Refused, Apprehended and Removed" gives a brief overview on illegal immigration to Finland.

After the parliamentary election in March 2007, the new government headed by Prime Minister Mr. Matti Vanhanen nominated Mrs. Astrid Thors as the first Minister of Migration Affairs in Finland.

In 2007, Finland experienced a 38% decline in asylum seekers and the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors declined by 11%. 67 persons were granted asylum (Convention status) in Finland. Most of these persons were citizens of Russia originating from Chechnya and citizens of Iraq. Compared to the previous years, the number of positive decisions on international protection has risen to 860 (2005: 597, 2006: 618).

As in previous years, immigration to Finland was higher than emigration from Finland in 2007. Total number of foreigners in Finland has grown steadily and in 2007 there were over 130 000 foreigners living in Finland of which 84 000 were third-country nationals. Russians formed the largest group of foreigners in Finland in 2007. The number of residence permits issued in 2007 experienced a large increase compared to the previous year.

Regarding illegal immigration the number of refusals at border was almost the same as in 2006, but the number of number of apprehended aliens illegally present in Finland showed a significant raise. The number of removed aliens continued the decreasing trend from 2006.

1.1. Methodology

This report has been prepared by the European Migration Network (EMN) national contact point for Finland. It has been compiled on the basis of the format for studies of EMN. The starting point for this report was the statistical data provided by Eurostat. However, during the analysis of the data it was noticed that there are some differences between Finland's national, official statistics and figures given by Eurostat. Therefore, the source of data is indicated separately for each table or figure. For different sections of this report, sources used for data are as follows:

Section 2. Asylum: Finnish Immigration Service

Section 3. Migration: Statistics Finland, Finnish Immigration Service and Eurostat

Section 4. Refusals, Apprehensions and Removals: Border Guard Headquarters (refusals) and Eurostat (apprehensions, removals)

Throughout the report, the figures for 2007 are as a general rule compared to the figures of 2005 and 2006. This is due to the fact that in May 2004 new Aliens Act came into effect. Therefore, the figures for decisions made in 2004 are not entirely comparable with the figures for 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Please note that the data used in this report is mainly based on figures delivered to Eurostat, although in some cases graphs or tables of national figures are presented. This might entail some slight discrepancies, which are due to the fact that the databases are continuously updated. Finland is aiming to meet all the requirements of Migration Statistics Regulation 862/2007, although the process is still ongoing.

Please also note that Directorate of Immigration has changed its name in the beginning of 2008 and is now called the Finnish Immigration Service.

2. ASYLUM

The statistics for asylum decisions include all first instance decisions. First instance decisions can be appealed to the Administrative Court of Helsinki and the Supreme Administrative Court. The decisions annulled by court are sent back to the Finnish Immi-

gration Service for reprocessing. It is to be noted that the total number of asylum decisions includes also the decisions made after reprocessing.

2.1. Analysis and interpretation of asylum statistics

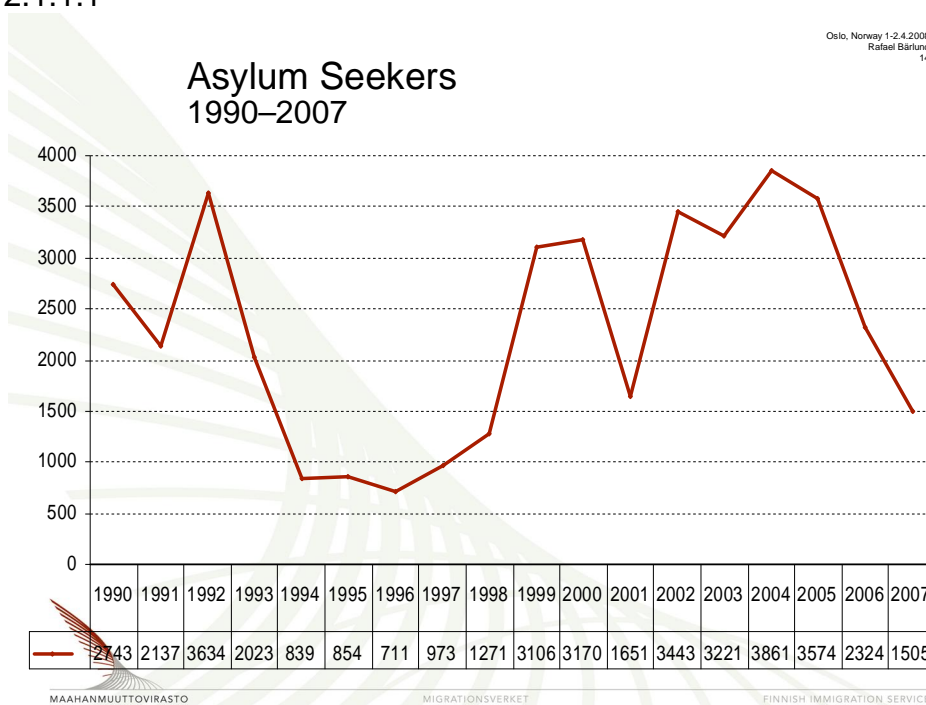
2.1.1. Trends in first-time asylum applications (on the basis of persons,¹ e.g. dependant children² should be included, but counted separately) in 2007 compared to the previous year

The number of asylum seekers exhibited a marked drop in 2007 compared to previous years amounting to 38% fewer applications. The number for 2007 was 1505, compared to 2324 in 2006. The asylum seekers in 2007 came from 76 different countries.

The ratio of male/female asylum seekers in 2007 was 74% males and 26% females.

The number of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers was 96 in 2007 compared to 108 in 2006.

Figure 2.1.1.1



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

¹ If this is not possible, add a note stating this and clarifying on what basis the asylum data are provided.

² A dependant child refers to a person below the age of 18 years who claims asylum with their dependants (e.g. parents, guardians) and would then be counted as an individual person. In addition, their dependant(s) would also be counted as separate person(s).

The table below shows the top-10 asylum seeking nationalities from 2005-2007.

Table 2.1.1.1

Oslo, Norway 1-2-4.2008
Rafael Bärhund
15

Asylum Seekers Top ten 2005–2007

2005		2006		2007	
Bulgaria	570	Bulgaria	463	Iraq	327
Serbia & Montenegro*	457	Serbia & Montenegro*	286	Russia	172
Somalia	321	Iraq	225	Serbia	152
Iraq	289	Russia	176	Afghanistan	96
Afghanistan	237	Belarus	97	Somalia	82
Russia	233	Afghanistan	97	Iran	79
Macedonia	191	Somalia	92	Turkey	73
Turkey	97	Iran	91	Belarus	48
Azerbaijan	93	Nigeria	64	Nigeria	41
Iran	79	Turkey	41	Congo, Dem. Republic	36
Asylum seekers total	3574	Asylum seekers total	2324	Asylum seekers total	1505
Different nationalities	78	Different nationalities	77	Different nationalities	76

MAAHANMUUTTOVIRASTO MIGRATIONSVERKET *) incl. asylum seekers from Serbia, former Yugoslavia and Serbia Montenegro

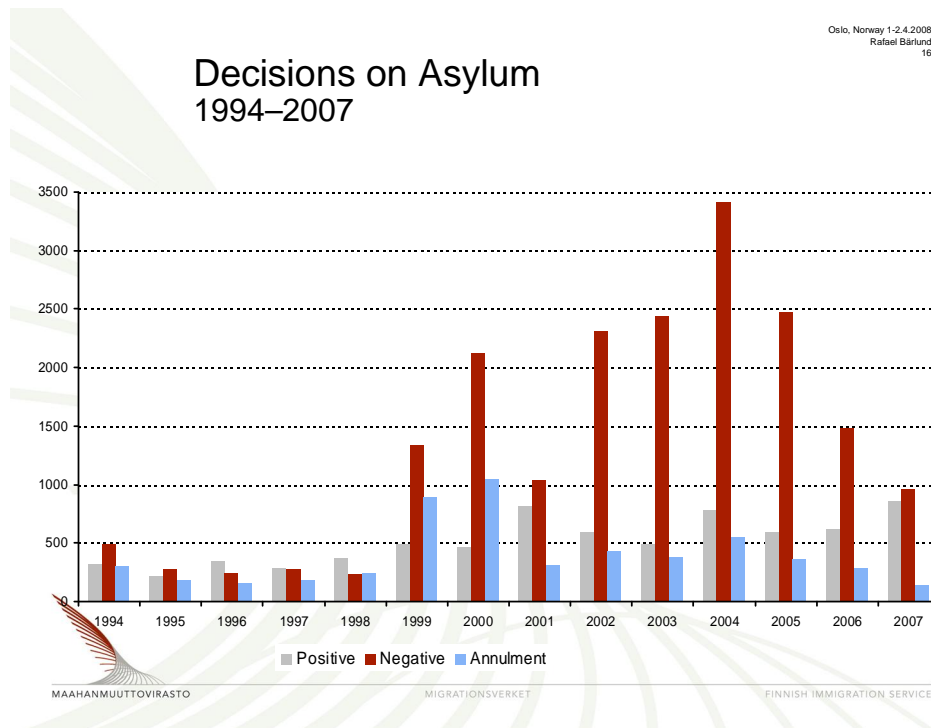
Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The most striking difference compared to 2005 and 2006 is the absence of Bulgarian asylum seekers in 2007, as Bulgaria became a member of the European Union. Iraq, Russia and Serbia formed the top-3 asylum seeking nationalities in 2007. There was a rise of Iraqi asylum seekers by about 27% in 2007 compared to 2006. The number of Serbian and Belorussian asylum seekers decreased by about 50% each.

2.1.2. Total number of first and final positive decisions in 2007, disaggregated by the citizenship of the person concerned

The total number of asylum decisions in 2007 amounted to 1956, of which 860 were positive decisions and 961 negative; the rest (135) were other non-status or annulment decisions. The total number of decisions made decreased compared to the two previous years as a result of fewer applications. The significant trend that can be noted is that the share of positive decisions is on the rise, and it is even more notable when the declining number of all decisions is taken into account. In 2005 only about 15% of all decisions were positive and 26% in 2006 compared to about 43% in 2007.

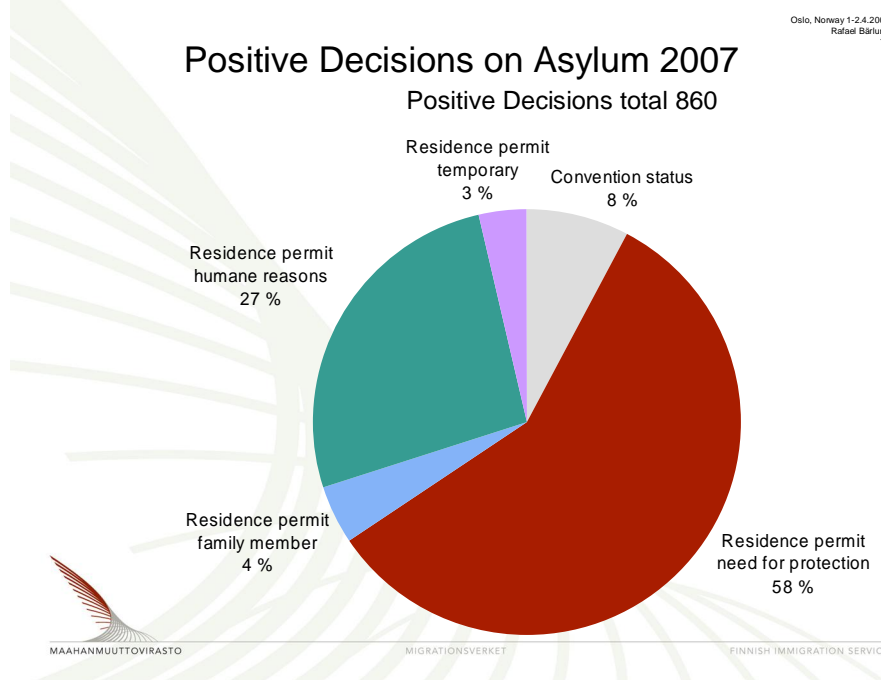
Figure 2.1.2.1



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The figure below shows how the spread of positive decisions in the different categories, over half of the decisions being residence permits granted on the need for protection. Convention status represented 8% of all positive decisions, which is a clear augmentation compared to 2005 (2%) and 2006 (6%).

Figure 2.1.2.2



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

The table below shows the positive decisions grouped according to the main nationalities and categories in 2007. Further below the tables for 2005 and 2006 can be found for the sake of comparison. Somalis were the largest nationality regarding positive decisions as in the previous years, although it should be noted that only one person received convention status in 2007. Iraqi positive decisions amounted to 221, of which 18 received convention status, continuing on the trend from the year before. The same can also be found regarding Russians, who were granted the highest number of convention status protection, 27 of 31 positive decisions. As in the year before, all Russians granted convention status emanated from Chechnya.

Table 2.1.2.1 Positive asylum decisions, 2007

YEAR 2007	Total	Geneva Conv. Stat. Granted	Humanitarian Status and all other types of subs. protect.	Other
TOTAL	860	68	724	68
Somalia	232	1	231	0
Iraq	221	18	177	26
Afghanistan	122	3	117	2
Serbia*	43	2	37	4
Iran	37	4	31	2
Russia	31	27	4	0
Others	174	13	127	34

* Including Serbia and Montenegro, Yugoslavia and Yugoslavia Fed. Rep.
Source: Finnish Immigration Service

Table 2.1.2.2 Positive asylum decisions, 2006

YEAR 2006	Total	Geneva Conv. Stat. Granted	Humanitarian Status and all other types of subs. protect.	Other
TOTAL	618	38	248	332
Somalia	184	0	61	123
Afghanistan	132	0	39	93
Iraq	113	12	19	82
Serbia and Montenegro	31	0	24	7
Russia	25	20	5	0
Iran	25	0	23	2
Others	108	6	77	25

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

2.1.3 Changes in the statuses regularly granted to particular citizenship groups

As in 2006, Iraqis and Russians were the largest nationalities in 2007 regarding granted Convention status; therefore in this regard no significant changes can be noted. The situation remained difficult or even deteriorated in Iraq and the Russian citizens granted convention status emanated from Chechnya.

Regarding the category "Humanitarian Status and all other types of subsidiary protection" a large increase in decisions can be seen for citizens of Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. The main reason for this is that the Directorate of Immigration overtook the responsibility from the Police, by an internal decree, to issue continued residence permits based on the need for protection or for humanitarian reasons for applicants from these countries. The situation in the aforementioned countries (as a whole or certain specific areas) was deemed to have deteriorated based on COI (Country of Origin Information), thus the decision was made that the Directorate of Immigration was better equipped to make decisions regarding continued permits.

2.2. Contextual interpretations (legal, political and international factors)

2.2.1. New or amended laws effective in 2007

There were no major changes in the legislation concerning asylum in 2007.

2.2.2. Procedural changes effective in 2007

As mentioned in section 2.1.3, there was a new arrangement regarding the issuing of continued residence permits based on the need for protection or for humanitarian reasons for citizens of Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq. The responsibility for these decisions was taken by the Directorate of Immigration from the Police. The decisions were based on new assessments of COI (Country of Origin Information) and the aim was also to avoid a large number of new asylum applications of the same groups of people already granted a temporary residence permit on the need for protection, which was about to expire. It should also be stressed that not all residence permits based on the need for protection or for humanitarian reasons, were continued for applicants of the mentioned nationalities, as the situation was assessed individually in each case.

2.2.3. European / international factors explaining certain changes regarding asylum trends

The sharp drop in Bulgarian asylum seekers in 2007, correlates with the event of Bulgaria becoming a member of the European Union that year. The number of Bulgarians seeking asylum was 570 in 2005 and 463 in 2006, compared to 11 in 2007, which explains a large portion of the general decrease in asylum seekers.

The number of Dublin-cases also decreased, as well as the number of so called Eurodac-hits, which most likely points to the fact that asylum seekers are becoming increasingly aware of the procedures.

3. MIGRATION

Section 3 provides an overview of 2007 statistics relating to migration flows, residence permits compared with the figures of the previous years.

3.1. Analysis and interpretation of migration statistics

3.1.1. Migration Flows

Migration flows to and from Finland have not seen dramatic changes, although the number of recorded immigration has been constantly increasing when looking at the period from 2003 to 2007. The recorded emigration has remained more or less constant with the exception of 2004, which saw a slightly higher number of emigrants. Conse-

quently, Finland's net migration has increased by almost ten thousand in the period between 2003 and 2007, which can be seen in table 3.1.1

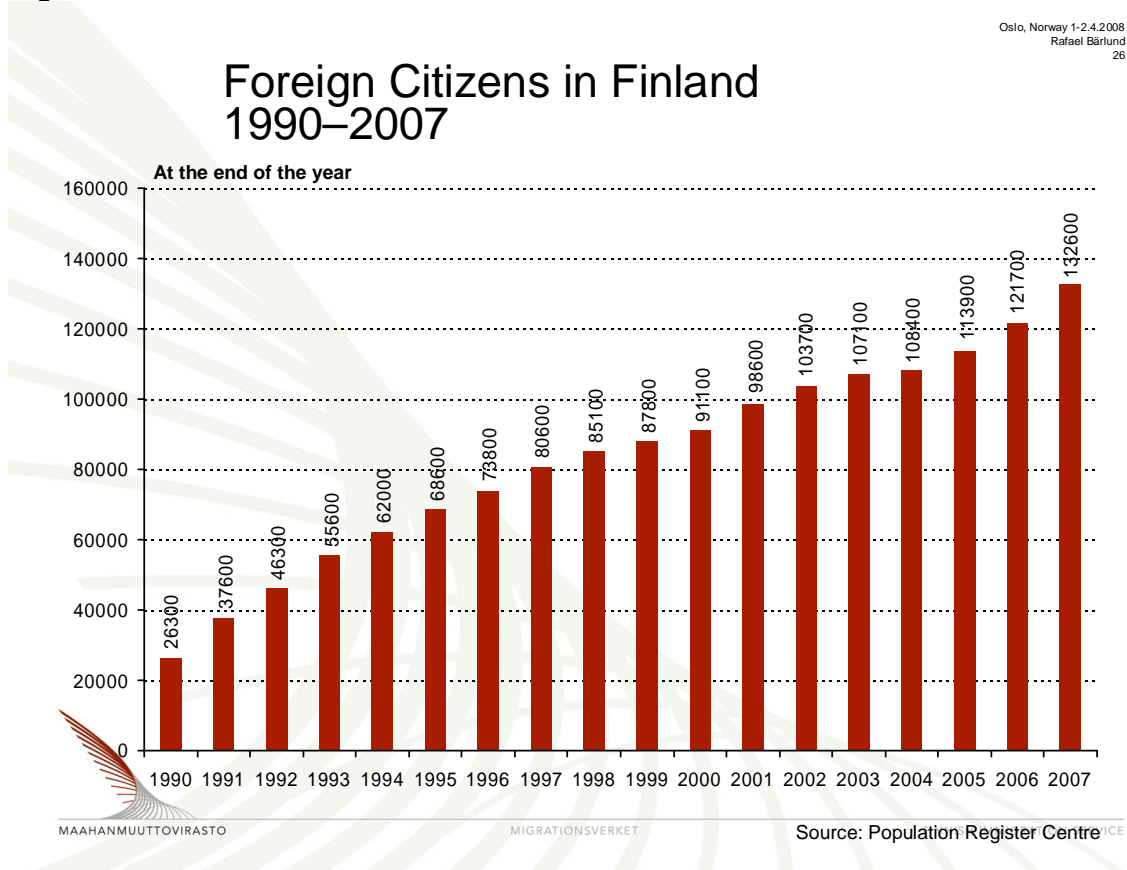
Table 3.1.1

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Legally resident population (1st January)	5 206 295	5 219 732	5 236 611	5 255 580	5 276 955
Recorded immigration	17 838	20 333	21 355	22 451	26 029
Recorded emigration	12 083	13 656	12 369	12 107	12 443

Source: Eurostat

3.1.2. Population by Citizenship in 2007

Figure 3.1.2.1



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

A slow increase of the number of foreigners began to take place during the 1980's. This was followed by a "wave of immigration" beginning in 1990, when the Finnish-speaking

Ingrians from the former Soviet Union were granted the status of "returning emigrants". This led to an immediate increase in immigration and made a significant contribution to the rise in the numbers of foreigners resident in Finland. The steepest annual rise of all was recorded in 1991, over 11000 persons, the largest groups among whom were the Ingrians and asylum seekers from Somalia

Table 3.1.2.1

Population by main groups of citizenship, 2007

	31-12-2007
Total Population	5 300 484
Nationals	5 167 776
Other EU(-27) Nationals	47 184
of which EU-10 Nationals	23 971
of which EU-2 (BG, RO) Nationals	1 388
Non-EU-27 (3rd country) nationals	84 051
<i>Most important third country nat.:</i>	
Russian Federation	26 211
Somalia	4 852
China	3 978
Serbia and Montenegro*	3 501
Thailand	3 470
Turkey	3 182
Iraq	3 036
Islamic Republic of Iran	2 611
United States of America	2 296
Afganistan	2 197
Others	27 389

* Former Serbia and Montenegro and present Serbia

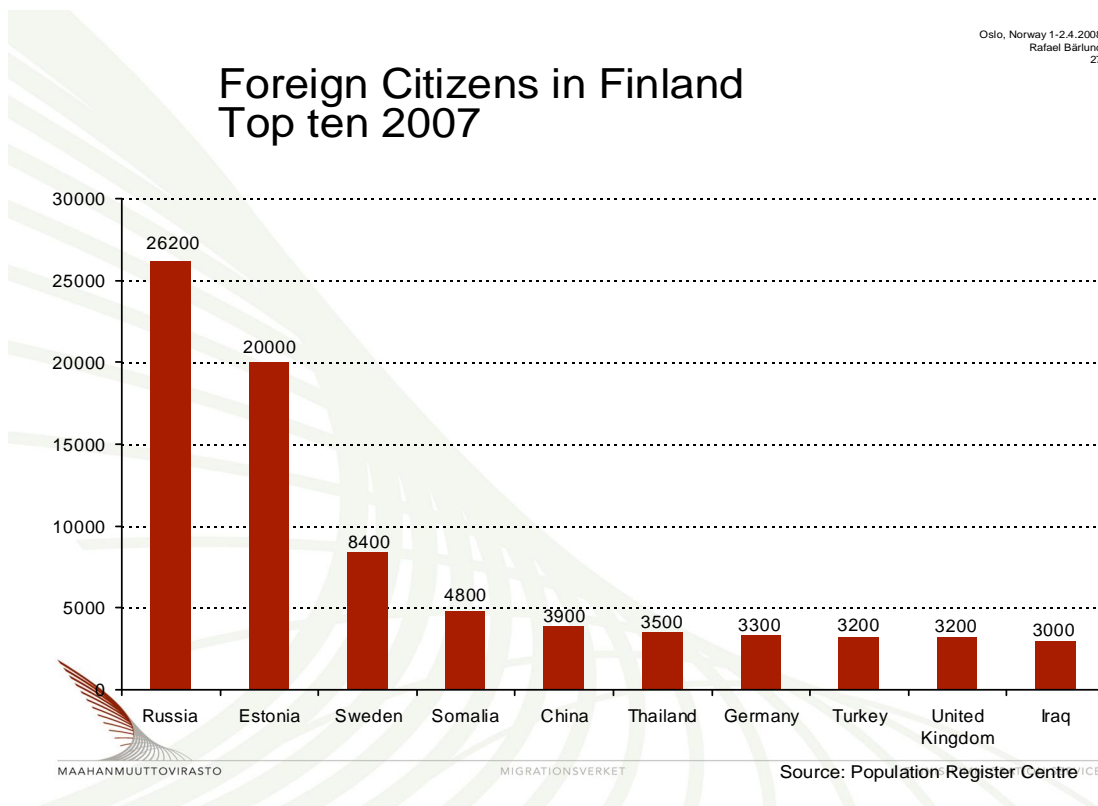
The citizens of Russia have since the beginning of the 1990's formed the largest single nationality group of foreign citizens (third-country nationals) permanently residing in Finland. In 2007 there were 26 211 Russian citizens permanently residing in Finland. The comparably high number of immigrants from Russia may be explained by the emigrating Ingrian Finns who since 1990 have the status of "returning emigrants". The second largest group of third-country nationals in Finland in 2007 was Somalis and after them citizens of China.

Compared to 2006 there have not been any significant changes, the number of Thai citizens and Turkish citizens have increased somewhat, changing the order by overtaking Iraq in the table above. These increases are in part due to marriages between Finnish and Turkish as well as Thai citizens.

The graph below illustrates the top-ten foreign citizens in Finland also including EU-citizens.

Please note that the figures are rounded in the graph.

Figure 3.1.2.2



3.1.3. Residence Permits:³ annual total of first issuing in 2007

In 2007, the number of issued first residence permits exhibited a major increase compared to the two previous years. Overall the number of permits issued increased by over 30%, with especially the residence permits issued for employment topping the list

³ Owing to the different definitions and practices between the Member States, prior to the entry into force of Regulation 862/2007, there are limited comparable data. You are, therefore, requested to provide the data you have, according to the manner in which data are recorded in your Member State, noting that it should be only for the first issuing of such permits. Remember to explain exactly what your data represents, e.g. including or not seasonal workers.

with almost a 55% increase compared to 2006. The other categories also exhibited increases although not as drastic. Residence permits issued for family formation/reunification also increased by about 10%, as well as the permits issued for study.

Table 3.1.3.1 Annual total number of residence permits issued according the main categories for migration (excluding seasonal workers), 2005, 2006 and 2007⁴

	2005		2006		2007	
	Pos. decisions		Pos. decisions		Pos. decisions	
	Total	sub-total	Total	sub-total	Total	sub-total
Total	13 724		14 252		18 769	
Family formation/reunification	5 281		5 573		6 528	
- spouse		3 331		3 460		3 772
- children < 18 years		1 769		2 018		2 525
- other family members		181		95		231
Study	3 107		3 196		3 810	
Employment	3 066		2 929		5 347	
- self-employed persons		38		58		68
- employed persons		3 028		2 871		5 279
Other categories	2 270		2 554		3 084	

Source: Finnish Immigration Service

⁴ In category "Family formation/reunification" spouses include residence permits issued for spouses, registered partners and cohabitants of Finnish citizens and non-EU citizens. For 2005-2007, figures of spouses and children have been counted by dividing amount of residence permits issued for family members of Finnish citizens by age so that those under 18 years old have been included in category "children < 18 years" and those over 18 years in category "spouses". Even this is not statistically good practice it gives a rough idea on numbers of positive decisions in these categories.

3.2. Contextual interpretations (legal, political and international factors)

3.2.1. Migration policy and legal amendments since the previous year.

In 2007, Finland has amended its national legislation based on the requirements of European Council directives: 2003/109/EC concerning the status of third-country nationals who are long-term residents; 2004/38/EC on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States; and 2004/114/EC on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service.

The amendments have been made to the relevant provisions of the Alien's Act regarding residence permits.

Paraphrasing the Finnish Annual Report on Asylum and Migration Statistics 2006⁵, a working group appointed by the Ministry of the Interior prepared a strategy for the development of immigration administration and legislation in Finland. The most essential proposal was to centralize immigration expertise and policy preparation to one ministry, to the Ministry of the Interior. Regarding immigration legislation, the simplification of the permit system pertaining to labour immigration was listed as one of the most urgent matters.⁶

In 2006, the Government Migration Policy Programme was announced. A comprehensive approach is adopted and in all 34 policy guidelines with measures listed in the Programme. The Programme emphasizes particularly the promotion of work-related immigration to prevent the future shortfall in labour force.⁷

After the parliamentary elections in 2007, Prime Minister Mr. Matti Vanhanen's second government reaffirmed its commitment to Government Migration Policy Programme of the previous year. Mrs. Astrid Thors became the first Minister for Migration Affairs and an ombudsman was appointed to review the migration administration and the Directorate of Immigration (from 1.1.2008 the Finnish Immigration Service), and he was due to present his report in the spring of 2008.

⁵ Annual Report on Asylum and Migration Statistics, Finland Reference Year 2006, October 2008

⁶ Sisäasiainministeriön strategia maahanmuuttopoliittisen ja ulkomaalaislainsäädännön kehittämiseksi: työryhmän ehdotus. Sisäasiainministeriön julkaisuja 30/2006.

⁷ Hallituksen maahanmuuttopoliittinen ohjelma 19.10.2006 = Government migration policy programme - government resolution 19.10.2006.

3.2.2. What were the existing categories of admission or non-admission⁸ in 2007?

The main admission categories are:

- Employed persons,
- Self-employed persons,
- Persons of Finnish origin,
- Students,
- Other grounds
- Family tie, marriage etc.
- Family tie, children
- Family tie, others
- Family members to Finnish citizens

Statistics on the grounds for negative decisions are not available. The reasons for refusing a residence permit if the alien in question would otherwise fulfil the requirements (such as requirement for means of support and for a valid travel document) are laid down in sections 36 and 57 of the Aliens Act. According to the section 36, a residence permit may be refused if the alien is considered a danger to public order, security or health or to Finland's international relations. Endangering international relations does not, however, prevent the issuing of a residence permit on the basis of family ties nor if the alien has been granted a long-term resident's EC residence permit. Section 57 of the Aliens Act states that the issuing of a permanent residence permit or a long term resident's EC residence permit can be refused, if the alien is suspected of or has committed a crime for which the punishment is a prison sentence; or if an alien is suspected of or has committed two or more crimes. Section 57 also states the exceptions to the aforementioned situations; the alien's length of stay and ties in Finland are also taken into account in the decisions, as well as the fact if a prison sentence already has been served for the crimes committed.

⁸ This refers to the categories which might be used in your Member State for the admission or non-admission of migrants. Examples for admission are family reunification, work, study; and, for non-admission, examples are false documents, known criminal activities, potential threat to national security. Please list the categories used in your Member State (or, if none, state this also) and breakdown any data provided using these categories.

A residence permit may be refused if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the alien intends to evade the provisions on entry into or residence in the country (false documents being a common example of such intention in connection with the applications based on study and suspicion of marriage of convenience in connection with the applications based on family ties).

3.2.3. European / international factors explaining certain changes/continuity regarding migration

2007 saw a significant increase in employment-related migration, which can be accounted to demand from the labour market during a favourable macro-economic climate. Educational institutions attracted more students from third countries, which amounted to a rise in study-related migration. Migration for family-reasons also increased somewhat, which in part can be attributed to the high figures of asylum seekers in the previous years (especially in 2004 and 2005).

4. REFUSALS, APPREHENSIONS AND REMOVALS

This section presents the figures on refusals, apprehension and removals in 2007 and compares them with the numbers from 2006.

4.1. Analysis and interpretation of statistics

4.1.1. Refusals

The total number of refused aliens in 2007 remained almost at the same level as in 2006. As in the previous year, Russian citizens formed the majority of the persons refused at border. This correlates with the fact that majority of refusals is made at border crossing points on Finland's border towards Russia. The main reasons for refusal of entry of third-country nationals were alien's failure to produce the correct documentation at border (visas and/or travel documents) and reasonable grounds to suspect that the alien may earn income through dishonest means while staying in Finland.

Table 4.1.1.1

Refused aliens by main country of citizenship, 2006		Refused aliens by main country of citizenship, 2007	
TOTAL	1 407	TOTAL	1 424
Russia	1 051	Russia	1228
China	77	China	26
Ukraine	30	Ukraine	22
Romania	22	Nigeria	12
Iraq	18	India	12
India	16	Belarus	11
Kazakhstan	16	Israel	6
Belarus	16	United States	5
Armenia	15	Moldova	5
Somalia	15	Chile	5
Others	131	Others	92

Source: Finnish Border Guards

4.1.2. Apprehensions

The number of apprehended aliens increased by almost 300 persons in 2007 compared to 2006. A notable absence in the table below compared to 2006 is Bulgaria as they became a member of the European Union on 1.1.2007. The same could already be noted in the chapter 2 regarding asylum. An increasing number of Russian citizens can also be noted; in part this can be attributed to persons overstaying their visas e.g. for purposes of employment. In 2007 the group "Unknown" was the third largest on the list of apprehended aliens; it is formed by the asylum seekers whose application is filed only inside the country and whose travel route and nationality can not be established due to the lack of documents.

Table 4.1.2.1

Apprehended aliens illegally present by main countries of citizenship, 2006		Apprehended aliens illegally present by main countries of citizenship, 2007	
TOTAL	1 689	TOTAL	1966
Bulgaria	309	Russia	363
Iraq	207	Iraq	305
Serbia & Monte-	184	Unknown	176

negro			
Afghanistan	84	Serbia and Montenegro	120
Russia	76	Somalia	91
Somalia	69	China	84
Belarus	63	Turkey	72
Nigeria	54	Iran	68
Iran	54	Nigeria	51
Unknown	51	Belarus	45
Others	538	Others	591

Source: Eurostat

4.1.3. Removals

The number of removed aliens decreased in 2007 by over 20% compared to 2006. This continues the correlation from the previous years with the decreasing number of asylum seekers. Again Russian citizens form the largest group, although in most cases they are removed for reasons other than refused asylum applications. The reasons for their removal range from e.g. overstaying their visas or otherwise found illegally present without a valid residence permit. Estonian citizens are also found in the table below; as they are citizens of the EU, their removal most often has to do with criminal offences or in some cases they are so called Estonian “non-citizens” of Russian origin issued with a Estonian Aliens passport, which entails that they are obliged to apply for a residence permit to stay in Finland.

Table 4.1.3.1

Total removed aliens by main countries of citizenship, 2006		Total removed aliens by main countries of citizenship, 2007	
TOTAL	1 410	TOTAL	1 155
Russia	287	Russia	318
Bulgaria	183	Iraq	71
Romania	77	Estonia	62
Serbia and Montenegro	72	China	51
Belarus	61	Serbia	47
Iraq	60	Belarus	47
China	56	Serbia and Montenegro	40

Turkey	45	Nigeria	39
Nigeria	43	Romania	38
Afghanistan	35	Moldova	27
Others	491	Others	415

Source: Eurostat

4.1.4. In cases of refused, apprehended, and removed migrants in 2007, are these from the same countries in all categories, or are particular citizenship groups more common in a particular category?

In all three categories citizens of Russia form a large group, for refused and removed they are even the largest citizenship group. This can be explained by geographical factor – Finland’s long border with Russia – as well as the fact that Russians form the majority of third-country nationals residing in Finland.

4.2. Contextual interpretations (legal, political and international factors)

4.2.1. New or amended laws influencing illegal immigration in 2007

The current Aliens Act came into effect in May 2004. The Aliens Act includes also provisions on violation of the Aliens Act and employer’s violation of the Aliens Act (Sections 185 and 186). Provisions for work permit offence and facilitation of illegal entry are included in the Penal Code. No notable amendments were made in 2007.

4.2.2. Procedural changes influencing illegal immigration in 2007

No notable changes in 2007.

5. LITERATURE

European Migration Network, National Contact Point: Finland (2008) Annual Report on Asylum and Migration for Finland 2006.

Finnish Immigration Service: Turvapaikkayksikön, Maahanmuuttoyksikön ja Kansalaisuusyksikön tilastoanalyysit 2007 – Statistical analyses of the Asylum, Migration and Nationality Units of the Finnish Immigration Service 2007 (available only in Finnish)

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