

**Government  
Policy Programme  
for Expatriate Finns**

**for 2006-2011**

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## 1. Introduction

During the various phases of her history, Finland has been a significant nation producing emigrants, considering her population size. In all probability, every Finn has either a family member, relative, friend or acquaintance somewhere in the world. The number of expatriate Finns is approximately 1.3 million. A considerable share of expatriate Finns have married abroad, which enlarges and diversifies the phenomenon of Finnish expatriation and Finland's interface with the world. Additionally, Swedish-speaking Finns and their descendants comprise a significant number of Finnish expatriates.

A possibility of preserving the cultural features of one's country of origin and a cultural identity based on these features has been established as an immigrant right which the recipient state should allow pursuant to international conventions concerning migration. The preservation of cultural features generally is advantageous for the receiving state, as it typically supports rather than hinders integration in the new country of residence. The preservation of cultural characteristics also frequently is in the interest of the country of origin. A vibrant, functional network of expatriates can in many ways benefit the commercial, cultural and political life of the country of origin. For expatriate Finns themselves, a strong cultural identity also supports their active participation in the various activities in their new country of residence.

Although people have emigrated from Finland for a long time, Finland has not actually had a specific programme to address the needs of these expatriates. For this programme, which is a first of its kind, viewpoints, assessments and operational models were collated by which the interaction between expatriate Finns and Finland can be further strengthened.

This policy programme for expatriate Finns was prepared within the Ministry of Labour. The views of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament were also heard in the preparation of the programme.

## 2. Background to the programme

### 2.1. Finnish expatriation

The earliest emigration flows from Finland during the 1500's and 1600's were directed towards Sweden, Norway, North America, and the areas conquered by Sweden in Russia (Ingria). With respect to these types of migration, certain traces of Finnish expatriation still remain. Finnish expatriation is also a consequence brought about by the shifting of borders. For the most part, however, Finnish expatriation is the result of later migrations such as :

- emigration to the United States and Canada which began at the end of the 19th century,
- a migration flow to Australia which started during the 1920's,
- migration to St Petersburg and Ingria that continued until the Russian revolution,
- migration flows of Finns and Finnish Canadians and Americans to the Soviet Union during the 1920's and 1930's
  - emigration to Sweden and other European countries that started after the Second World War.

The reasons behind emigration have been partly economic and partly political. Some of those who left Finland as emigrants were Swedish-speaking Finns.

During the 1980's and 1990's, the character of migration has changed. These days, a more permanent form of traditional emigration is represented mainly by marriages abroad, which are a fairly significant reason for moving to a foreign country. To a large extent, current emigration is intended to be temporary. Often the rationale is study, work experience, acquiring foreign language skills, career advancement, or new life experiences. Retirees make up an entirely new group of emigrants. Some pensioners live abroad for part of the year or the whole year. The emigrants of today are, on average, better educated than their counterparts in the past.

No accurate statistical information is available on the numbers of expatriate Finns. According to the register maintained by the Population Register Centre, the total of Finnish citizens living abroad in 2004 was approximately 255,000. According to the estimates of the Institute of Migration, approximately 300,000 first-generation expatriate Finns born in Finland are living in foreign countries, and expatriate Finns consisting of both first and second generations total approximately 600,000. Including the estimated numbers of third and further generations, the total of expatriate Finns rises to approximately 1.3 million. Of these, approximately 600,000 reside in the United States, 100,000 in Canada, and some 400,000 in Sweden.

The concept of an expatriate Finn frequently refers to native-born Finnish nationals who have moved from Finland to live abroad together with their descendants, regardless of whether or not the descendants are Finnish citizens or born in Finland. These persons must, nevertheless, regard themselves as Finnish (i.e. be Finnish in their identity).

Today, the common features primarily shared by expatriate Finns are an awareness of a Finnish background and roots, an attempt to preserve a Finnish identity, and the need to maintain contacts with Finland regardless of their country of residence, generation, and political opinion.

## **2.2. Development of policies concerning expatriate Finns**

The vast migration flows from Finland to America, which began at the end of the 19th century, attracted interest in immigration issues among public authorities. At the proposal of the Parliament, the Senate had a report prepared on migration, simultaneously endeavouring to enact legislation on emigration. This, however, was not successful. What attracted attention was the extent of emigration, and the social and individual evils connected to it. The general attitude towards emigration was negative. Activities addressing expatriate Finns were mainly ensured by the Evangelic Lutheran Church and the Finnish Seamen's Mission Society.

Once Finland had gained independence, the formulation of emigration legislation continued. The goals include the elimination of some of the evils associated with emigration, compensation for losses incurred by emigration, and the promotion of the return of emigrants. This preparative work did not, however, lead to the enactment of actual laws.

After the turn of the century, the emergence of policies concerning expatriate Finns resulted in the establishment of an expatriate Finn division within the Association of Finnish Culture and Identity. From this, the Finland Society was founded in 1927, and government representatives were included in its board. In practice, this was a recognition of the fact that it was also in the interests of the government that expatriate Finns had contacts with Finland, and a desire to retain their language skill and Finnish identity.

The wide-scale emigration to Sweden, which began at the end of the 1950's, presented a whole new dimension in the debate on Finnish expatriation. The permanent Finnish population in Sweden also required active measures on the part of the Finnish government, as well as bilateral cooperation between the Finnish and Swedish governments. This has extended to the more general Nordic collaboration in questions related to the position and circumstances of the Finns in Sweden. The Finns in Sweden have, as a result of active lobbying by their associations, achieved the position of a national minority and, as an outcome, protection for the Finnish language and culture. In the history of Finnish expatriation, this represents a unique accomplishment.

Proposals for measures concerning expatriate Finns and return migration were included in many of the 1970-1992 reports of the Advisory Board on Refugees and Migration established and functioning under the auspices of the Council of State. Many of these were also implemented. Additionally, the principles of the Finnish expatriation policies were specified in a report prepared by the Advisory Board (1980). These helped to orientate and guide the activities of the authorities in matters associated with Finnish expatriation.

During the 1980's, questions connected with the migration of Finns to Sweden were dealt with by the *Svenska emigrationskommitté*.

In the beginning of the 1990's, the Ingrian Finns residing within the area of the former Soviet Union and those who had moved to the USSR during the 1920's and 1930's, as well as the descendants of these groups, came into the limelight as a 'new' group of expatriate Finns. For decades, these groups had not had any possibilities of maintaining contacts with Finland, nor the Finnish state with them.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament, established in 1997, symbolized a new stage in Finnish expatriation policies. The expatriate Finns living in various parts of the world can, via this parliament, converse directly with the national government of Finland, bring up problems and needs, and present suggestions for measures concerning expatriate issues.

### **2.3. The need for a policy programme for expatriate Finns**

Expatriate Finns provide a multifaceted resource for Finland. They make Finland better known in the world. The network of expatriate Finns is beneficial to Finland's commercial, cultural and political life. Those who return home bring back knowledge and skills they learnt abroad. The integration of returning migrants in Finland is not generally associated with major problems.

Despite the Finnish expatriation policies formulated over the decades, Finland has never had any official programme in this area. Finnish expatriation-related policies were not contained in the decision-in-principle adopted in 1997 concerning a government programme on migration and refugee policies. Since there has been no official position, Finnish expatriation policies and their implementation have lacked continuity.

In 1994, the Council of Europe issued a recommendation to the member states to formulate a programme embracing legislative, political and administrative functions in order to improve the relationship with their population living abroad.

According to the programme of Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's government, the government should formulate an immigration policy programme. Although the programme under preparation is

comprehensive, its main emphasis will be on promoting work-based immigration. The government's policy programme on expatriate Finns complements its immigration policy programme.

### 3. General political framework and measures

The policy guidelines and measures presented below compose the government's policy programme for Finnish expatriation for the years 2006-2011. The implementation and responsible parties for the programme, in addition to the programme's economic impacts, are dealt with in Section 4.

#### 3.1. The preservation of a Finnish identity

##### 3.1.1. *Development of Finnish Schools (Suomi-koulu)*

Finnish Schools represent the most successful educational aspiration on the part of expatriate Finns during the last few decades. The purpose of these schools is to support the children's learning of the Finnish and Swedish languages, Finnish culture, and the preservation of language skills already acquired. The study groups set their own goals. The target may be a sufficient language ability to interact with relatives, or to complete an official language test in Finland. Finnish Schools also provide expatriate Finnish women in particular a framework for maintaining social networks.

There are about 150 Finnish Schools in operation in various parts of the world, and their pupils total over 3,200. These facilities are for the most part maintained by an association founded by the parents, or parochial or other local organizations. The National Board of Education also grants discretionary assistance towards the activities of these schools. In 2005, such aid amounted to 336,400 euros for education of a Finnish and Swedish language study circle type. The National Board of Education also supports and assists in the arrangement of seminars and conferences of the relevant field for the teachers at Finnish Schools.

The advancing data transmission technology — in particular, the Internet — is also unveiling new possibilities for the development of the Finnish Schools. Nevertheless, adult support in learning is generally required as well. At the moment, an investigation initiated by the Ministry of Education into the numbers of Finnish-speaking or Swedish-speaking expatriate native speakers and further education needs of instructors at the Finnish Schools is in progress. This report is scheduled for completion in 2006. The results will be used to develop the operations and financing of Finnish Schools.

1) **Policy framework: To continue the active development of Finnish Schools**

**Measures:**

- **The National Board of Education will continue to financially support Finnish Schools within the limits set by the State budget.**
- **Resources provided by advancing information technology, as well as information obtained through the investigation organized by the Ministry of Education will be utilized.**

### ***3.1.2. Support for basic education given to children temporarily residing abroad***

The increase in the number of Finnish families temporarily residing abroad has highlighted the need to secure in other countries an education corresponding to the Finnish comprehensive school. The legislation and enactment of laws concerning education equivalent to that provided by the comprehensive school entered into force in 1981. According to this legislation, a full state grant is awarded to these so-called 'Finnish schools abroad'. The Basic Education Act, which came into force in 1999, also covers comprehensive schools functioning abroad. In 2004, the total number of Finnish schools abroad, which were in operation in Estonia, Russia, Belgium, Spain and Thailand, was 12.

Those who cannot attend a Finnish school can utilize the home-based comprehensive school provided by Kansanvalistusseura (the KVS Foundation). This format was launched as a correspondence course in 1975 and currently functions via the Internet, e-mail, and post. In 2004, approximately 500 pupils in 55 countries attended this home-based comprehensive school. A large proportion of pupils also attend a local or international school in their country of residence alongside the home-based school. The Ministry of Education supports the home-based comprehensive school with a financing share of 65%.

- 2) **Policy framework: To support the basic education of children temporarily residing abroad.**

**Measures:**

- **The National Board of Education supports electronic distance learning projects directed towards the target group.**

### ***3.1.3. Monitoring the condition of and influencing Finnish expatriate school systems***

In countries that have a relatively high population of Finnish origin, it is possible to study in Finnish, or receive either teaching given in Finnish or teaching of the Finnish language. In Swedish municipal schools, there are 20 – 30 Finnish-language classes comprising some 450 pupils. 'Free' schools total eight, with approximately 1,100 pupils. In the comprehensive and secondary schools of Norway's Finnmarken province, statutory teaching hours apply to the Finnish language. Finnish enjoys the position of an academic subject in some secondary schools in Canada. In France and some states of Germany, Finnish can be included in the secondary school matriculation examination. Finnish is taught as the first foreign language at five comprehensive schools in St Petersburg, Russia. In addition, Finnish is taught either as a second language or a voluntary subject at ten schools in St Petersburg, Karelia and the areas inhabited by Ingrian Finns. There is a Finnish-language school in St Petersburg and Tartu. In Estonia, Finnish is taught in 140 schools, either as an additional subject or as a club type activity.

- 3) **Policy framework: To monitor and promote the development of school systems for expatriate Finns.**

**Measures:**

- **To work with the relevant authorities in the main countries of residence of expatriate Finns to improve opportunities of obtaining teaching in Finnish or Swedish, or teaching of the Finnish or Swedish language**

#### ***3.1.4. Promoting the use of European schools***

The European Schools are educational institutions established for the children of personnel working for the European Community. At the moment, there are 13 of such schools in operation, situated in seven countries, the largest being located in Brussels and Luxembourg. Finland joined the agreement concerning European Schools in 1995. At the European Schools, instruction at pre-school and lower comprehensive school level is mainly given in the pupil's mother tongue, and at the upper comprehensive school level and at secondary school some of the subjects are taught in the pupil's native language. The secondary school leads to the European Baccalaureate (EB) diploma, which provides the same rights in Finland as the national matriculation examination. Of the costs for the European schools, the proportion of the Commission is currently about 57% and that of the member states 22%, with the remainder being collected in the form of tuition fees etc. Tuition fees are not collected from the children of EU officials. Upon application, other children may also be admitted in these schools. Term fees for these children at the moment vary between 2,400 euros (preschool) and 4,500 euros (upper comprehensive level and secondary school).

#### **4) Policy framework: To promote application and entry to the European schools.**

##### **Measures:**

- **To enhance the dissemination of information about European schools to expatriate Finns residing within the European Union, as well as to those planning to move there.**
- **To participate in the development of the activities of the European schools**
- **To promote general publicity regarding the EB diploma.**

#### ***3.1.5. Promoting the study of the Finnish language and culture at foreign universities***

Visiting professors and lecturers are sent to foreign universities offering Finnish language and culture-related instruction. In many foreign universities, however, the future of chairs and professorships of Finnish and Finnish culture is uncertain. In Sweden, for example, the universities are reducing such instruction for financial reasons. On the other hand, the teaching of the Finnish language and the culture of Finland has been enhanced in Norwegian universities. The extent of the instruction offered is naturally affected by the number of students interested in such a line of study.

#### **5) Policy framework: Promoting the study of the Finnish language and culture at foreign universities**

##### **Measures:**

- **To intensify dissemination of information to expatriate Finns on courses available in foreign universities in the Finnish language and culture.**
- **To bring up the need to preserve education in areas of Finnish language in the context of bilateral cooperation with countries that have, or are in the process of, cutting back on such instruction.**

### ***3.1.6. Promoting school attendance, study and training in Finland***

Foreign language educational programmes in Finnish institutions of higher learning provide the opportunity for young expatriate Finns to apply for study in Finland. Agreements on temporary attendance by expatriate Finns of comprehensive or secondary school age can be made with the individual schools.

International summer courses are organized in Finland for foreign university students. These courses arranged by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) are primarily intended for those studying Finnish or Swedish as a foreign language in foreign universities. However, those students of Finnish origin whose skills in Finnish or Swedish and knowledge of Finland and Finnish culture are deficient may also take part in these summer courses.

The educational, youth and cultural programmes of the European Union offer possibilities for such as collaboration between schools, basic and supplementary training for teaching staff and the creation of networks between various EU and ETA nations.

Information on study and work experience opportunities in Finland is available from the *Discover Finland* web service as well as from guidebooks printed by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO). CIMO also looks after the Finnish section of the PLOTEUS portal, which contains information on educational possibilities in various European countries.

All Finnish citizens, including expatriate Finns, may apply for student grants and loans for the purpose of pursuing a degree in Finland.

- 6) **Policy framework: To promote school attendance, studying and training in Finland for expatriate Finns.**

**Measures:**

- **To increase dissemination of information directed to young Finnish expatriates on school attendance opportunities, and on studying and work experience programmes available in Finland.**
- **To encourage expatriate Finnish teachers to take part in exchange programmes.**

### ***3.1.7. Support for organizational activities arranged by expatriate Finns***

Expatriate Finns have traditionally endeavoured to preserve their Finnish identity through various hobbies and leisure activities. It is estimated that there now are almost 1,500 non-profit and cultural/educational organisations that started from these activities.

In the United States, some of the best known of these associations are the Finlandia Foundation, the church-based Suomi Conference, and the FinnFest USA, which organizes a summer festival for expatriate Finns on a yearly basis. In Canada, the Finnish-Canadian Cultural Federation arranges gala parties for Finnish Canadians, which annually bring Canada's various Finnish societies together. In Australia, the Australasian Federation of Finnish Societies and Clubs Inc., which organizes Finnish Days each year, functions as the central organization for the Finnish societies there. The Ingrian Federations of Russia, Estonia and Sweden function as the cooperative organ for Ingrian Finns. The National Association of Finns in Sweden (RSKL) is Europe's largest organization for expatriate Finns. Finlandssvenskarnas Riksförbund i Sverige (FRIS) — the Organisation for Swedish Finns in Sweden — also operates as an association for Sweden Finns in Sweden. Finnish students have organized activities in e.g. Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Sweden and Estonia. Finnish clubs, friendship societies and other corresponding organizations also function in other European countries.

Organized activities by expatriate Finns are varied, but in places, conflicts between the old and new groups of immigrants have emerged.

In Finland, the lobbying organization for expatriate Finns is the Suomi-Seura ry. (the Finland Society). This Society was founded in 1927 and has approximately 20,000 individual and some 230 organizational members. The activities of the Finland Society comprise such as:

- advice in questions concerning moving and living abroad as well as returning to Finland,
- the distribution of official communications and the preparation of country guides intended for those migrating abroad,
- the arrangement of courses for returnees to Finland and those planning to spend their retirement abroad. For young Finnish expatriates, Finnish language courses as well as cultural summer seminars and Finnish refresher courses are organized annually.
- the development of a support network and training in collaboration with associations for expatriate Finns: at the moment, there are more than 40 support persons in 20 different countries providing guidance for those having recently migrated from Finland
- working as the secretariat for the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, and arranging parliamentary sessions every second or third year.

The Finland Society distributes on an annual basis grants totalling approximately 100,000 euros to associations for expatriate Finns. Support is also given to expatriate Finns' own media. The Ministry of Education economically supports the society's activities. In 2004, the amount of such support was 250,000 euros.

7) **Policy framework: To support the organizational activities of expatriate Finns.**

**Measures:**

- **The Ministry of Education will continue to safeguard the operational prerequisites of Suomi-Seura ry. (the Finland Society).**
- **To support the development of organizational activities in such a way that**

**currently non-accessible groups will be included. As the goal has been established to improve collaboration amongst old and new immigrant groups.**

- **To develop cooperation between the diplomatic missions abroad and Finnish cultural and scientific institutes with expatriate Finns and their associations.**

### **3.1.8. More efficient dissemination of information to expatriate Finns**

A central instrument in disseminating information from Finland to expatriate Finns is the Finland Society's *Suomen Silta/Finland Bridge* magazine, which comes out six times a year. The society also publishes *Suomen Sillan Uutisviikko*, which represents a weekly wrap-up of news from Finland as well as other matters significant to expatriate Finns. *Uutisviikko* is also published on the Internet. The Ministry of Labour subsidises the publication of *Suomen Silta/Finland Bridge* (in 2005 this support totalled 122,000 euros). The Ministry of Education provides support for the publishing of *Uutisviikko* as well as media operated by the expatriate Finns themselves through the Finland Society (in 2004, this support reached 115,000 euros and was divided between some 80 individual media).

YLE (Finland's National Broadcasting Company) transmits Finnish radio programmes both in Finnish and Swedish for listeners around the world. The standard of service in Europe is virtually the same as in Finland, aside from eastern and southern areas in the vicinity of Finland in Russia and Estonia. In other continents, the service is more limited but nevertheless works 24 hours a day, excluding the continent of Northern America. All YLE's networks are represented in the programme offer, including provincial radio broadcasts. The share of Swedish language programmes is approximately one-fourth of the quantity broadcast in Finnish. Broadcasts can in part also be listened to on the Internet. For those with poor command of Finnish, programmes in simplified Finnish are transmitted. Programmes designed to teach Finnish are broadcast for those who speak English or Russian. These broadcasts are also freely available for use by foreign radio stations. Consequently, expatriate Finnish communities are able to retransmit them.

YLE TV Finland mainly serves expatriate Finns living in Western Europe. The programmes mainly consist of the most popular programmes originating from and produced specifically by YLE's various television channels as well as by MTV3 network. The daily broadcast period is 15 hours on average. The broadcasting of these programmes is handled by a satellite, so receiving them requires appropriate equipment. To some extent, TV-Finland's broadcasts are visible as part of a payable TV package only, which has the effect of restricting the group of expatriate Finnish viewers. Finnish TV broadcasts can also be seen on the Internet.

In addition to Finland Society publications and YLE, some associations and commercial media focus their provision of information on expatriate Finns — primarily those who are working abroad.

- 8) **Policy framework: To intensify the dissemination of information to expatriate Finns.**

**Measures:**

- **To increase the use of media operated by expatriate Finns themselves in official communications directed towards expatriate Finns.**

- **To establish the possibilities of improving the accessibility of YLE's radio programmes in the areas in the vicinity of Finland in Russia and Estonia.**
- **To establish the possibilities of improving the accessibility of YLE's television broadcasts to the level corresponding to that of radio broadcasts.**
- **To encourage YLE to continue its versatile range of programmes directed to expatriate Finns.**

### ***3.1.9. Parochial work amongst expatriate Finns***

Finland's Evangelic Lutheran Church carries out regular parochial work in over 40 countries. The Church has a cooperation agreement concerning work with expatriate Finns with the Lutheran churches of Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria, Australia, the United States and Canada, as well as with the Finnish Seamen's Mission Society (Suomen Merimieskirkko ry.). In addition, missionary workers in many Asian and African nations work with expatriate Finns.

The Evangelic Lutheran Church's goal is to provide parochial services in each country for the Finnish people in their area in their own mother tongue. The Church sends Finnish workers to serve foreign churches, consults with such churches, and assists as required in the launching of new projects.

The parish work of Finland's Evangelic Lutheran Church in foreign nations is widespread. Among other things, the Church supports cultural activities, functions as a background community for the Finland schools, and with the Finland Society, arranges support person and other assistance and support activities.

Temporary immigrants represent a new challenge for the work of the Evangelic Lutheran Church amongst expatriate Finns. Outside Europe, new migration is largely directed to regions where the church has no established activities brought into being by traditional migration. The Church's work with tourists is expanding continuously. Some of the major areas are the Canary Islands and the Sun Coast of Spain in addition to Costa Blanca, Rhodes and Cyprus.

The Evangelic Lutheran Church of Finland operates abroad either within its own premises, or in facilities made available by a foreign affiliated church. There is a need for premises, however, in the new residential areas for expatriate Finns, particularly in large cities.

Eastern Orthodox expatriate Finns have organised parochial activities in both Sweden and Germany. The Finnish Pentecostal movement has organized activities in Canada and Australia.

### **3.2. Improving the legal rights of expatriate Finns**

In Finnish legislation, Finnish nationality is a central factor in determining the legal rights of Finnish expatriates. Special provisions concerning former Finnish citizens or foreign nationals of Finnish origin exist solely in the Aliens Act and the Nationality Act. Certain rights based on residence in Finland, such as residentially based social security, and obligations such as tax liability, only concern Finnish nationals residing abroad to a limited extent.

Rights provided by law for Finnish citizens living in other countries include the right to vote, and eligibility in state elections. A central statutory duty is the liability for military service.

### **3.2.1. Encouragement for re-obtaining Finnish citizenship**

Finland's current Nationality Act, which came into effect on 1 June 2003, allows for multiple (or dual) citizenships. According to this Act, the Finnish nationality is preserved when a person assumes the nationality of another state. The prerequisite for this, however, is that the other state also accepts multiple (or dual) citizenships. Of the European Union states, such as Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and Spain do not recognize multiple (or dual) citizenship without reservations.

By recourse to the Nationality Act, former Finnish citizens and their descendants can re-obtain their Finnish nationality through a declaration procedure. According to the Directorate of Immigration, declarations of re-obtained Finnish citizenships totalled 5,648 by 26 July 2005. The processing charges for this declaration are, however, rather high (€240). This has resulted in many expatriate Finns giving up the re-acquisition of their Finnish citizenship.

9) **Policy framework: To encourage expatriate Finns to re-obtain their Finnish citizenship.**

**Measures:**

- **To investigate the possibility of reducing the costs for declaration of citizenship so that it does not present an obstacle for the re-acquisition of Finnish nationality.**

### 3.2.2. *Increasing the voting rates of expatriate Finns*

Voting rates of expatriate Finns in state elections have been low. In the parliamentary elections of 2003, the percentage of expatriate Finns who voted was 8.5% (the number of the enfranchised was 205,399) and in the presidential elections of 2000, 10.6% during the first round and 11.7 % during the second round (the number of the enfranchised 204,917). The reasons for low voting rates may include a sense of estrangement from Finnish political life, and the polling facilities themselves. Using the right to vote may require travelling considerable distances. To increase voting activity of the expatriate Finns, the establishment of their own electoral district has been proposed (for instance, by the Advisory Board for Immigrant Affairs in 1981). However, the realization of a respective electoral district has not been considered feasible. Bringing the voting event closer for expatriate Finns by means of electoral assistants, and orienting political parties' activities towards expatriate Finns are other means to augment the frequency of voting.

The goal of the government's policy programme on civic involvement is to promote active citizenship, the functioning of the civic society, societal impact by citizens, and the viability of the representative democracy. Consideration should be given as to how expatriate Finns could be encouraged to take interest in their opportunities to influence the development of Finland through such as the electoral procedure.

10) **Policy framework: To increase voting activity on the part of expatriate Finns.**

**Measures:**

- **To increase the use of expatriate Finns as electoral assistants in order to facilitate the application of expatriate Finns' right to vote. The electoral assistants shall be trained in cooperation with Finland's diplomatic missions, its cultural and scientific institutes, and with organizations working with expatriate Finns.**
- **To increase the number of voting places. To expand the rental of polling stations from Finnish expatriate communities.**
- **To investigate the feasibility of voting via post and the Internet.**

### 3.2.3. *Safeguarding the operations of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament*

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament was established by organisations working on behalf of expatriate Finns in 1997 in order to further expatriate matters in Finland. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament convenes every two to three years for a two-day session. The participants are delegates selected by the associations which have ratified the rules of the Parliament. These associations have the right to put forward initiatives for the Parliament to discuss. The proposals concern problems in which expatriate Finns wish to see changes. During the parliamentary session, the select committees formulate suggestions into draft conclusions, which are approved in the plenary session. The conclusions are submitted to the Prime Minister. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament last convened in 2005.

Between sessions, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament issues are lobbied for by its speakers as well as the Finland Society (Suomi-Seura), which finances in full the operations of the former. The representatives pay their own travel expenses to the sessions.

The Finnish Expatriate Parliament has campaigned for allowing multiple (or dual) citizenships, and for launching a Finnish language social affairs and health work exchange in Finnish nursing homes abroad. Other matters lobbied for by the Finnish Expatriate Parliament are a reduction in the source tax deducted from employment pensions remitted abroad, safeguarding the radio and television services directed to foreign countries, supporting the activities of the Finnish schools, improvement in the voting opportunities of expatriate Finns, and supporting multicultural and newly migrated families.

11) **Policy framework: To safeguard the operational prerequisites of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.**

**Measures:**

- **To continue support for the Finnish Expatriate Parliament via the Finland Society (Suomi-Seura).**
- **to hear the Finnish Expatriate Parliament when preparing plans of action regarding matters that concern Finnish expatriates.**

### **3.3. Support for the social security and public health care of expatriate Finns**

Expatriate Finns rarely belong within the sphere of Finland's residential-based social security and public health care — exceptionally, this is the case when the person is an employee posted from Finland, or a family member of such an employee. Expatriate Finns generally belong to the domain of social services and public health systems of their countries of residence. The Finnish Government has not customarily assisted those expatriate Finns who are in financial trouble.

There has been an attempt to safeguard the social security and public health provisions of Finnish citizens on the basis of social security agreements with various countries. For the nationals of these countries who move between EU and ETA nations, EC regulation 1408/71 concerning the harmonization of social security systems applies. Tax agreements concluded in order to avoid double taxation also regulate the taxation of pension incomes of expatriate Finns. Occasionally, the application and interpretation of social security and tax agreements results in ambiguity.

A Nordic agreement exists concerning the transfer of patients to the Nordic country with which the patient has close ties. On the basis of this agreement, the sending and receiving municipality can agree on the distribution of costs required by treatment and transfer. Despite the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the allowance reserved for patient transfers in the State budget, patient transfers from Sweden to Finland seldom take place.

Retirement homes for expatriate Finns exist in Sweden, Canada, the United States and Australia (less than twenty in total). These homes serve their residents in Finnish and Swedish, and some of them have dementia and infirmary wards. These were founded by Finnish expatriate organizations, which usually collected funds for the building work from the Finnish community. The operating

expenses are paid for by the country of location and users of the services together. In a few districts, home care services for senior citizens are also being provided.

The need for Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking nursing staff and apprentices in expatriate Finns' nursing homes is great. As a consequence of dementia, a person who has been away from Finland for an extended period often forgets the language of her/his new country of residence, and can not function in any other language but her/his mother tongue. On the initiative of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) has coordinated an exchange of students in the social welfare and public health care field to Finnish expatriate nursing homes since 2004. However, this is a temporary project.

12) **Policy framework: To support the availability of social and health care services for expatriate Finns.**

**Measures:**

- **To improve the expertise of the Finnish authorities in questions connected with social security and taxation-related agreements.**
- **To investigate the problems conceivably linked with the application of the patient transfer agreement between the Nordic states.**
- **To expand student exchange schemes in the field of social welfare and public health to Finnish expatriate nursing homes to also apply to students of upper level educational institutions.**

### 3.4 Expatriate Finns as a resource in business life

Expatriate Finns further the cooperation between their countries of residence and Finland. They have provided a link to foreign cultures and linguistic areas which have previously not been accessible because of the language skills and local knowledge required. This has had great significance for the internationalisation of Finnish businesses. Through a project implemented during the 1990's, *Business Roots*, it became evident that thousands of expatriate Finns' businesses are eager to engage in trade with Finnish enterprises. In the 2000's, the Federation of Finnish Enterprises has been collating a register of expatriate Finns. This has helped Finnish businesses engaged in foreign trade and considering entry to new markets. Finnish export organizations, chambers of commerce, and diplomatic missions can mediate these contacts. There also are expatriate Finns in positions of influence in economic and financial life. With a minimum effort, these contacts could yield great benefits for Finland's national economy. Expatriate Finns engaged in international business are already networking with Finland in our key export countries through Finnish commercial guilds and chambers of commerce, business councils, and via membership in corresponding associations.

Expatriate Finns also play a central role as intermediaries and distributors of knowledge about Finland in their countries of residence. It could be said that they engage in this duty on a daily basis at their workplaces, institutions of learning, and generally in their living environment. In this manner, they create an image of Finland in their surroundings, which has crucial importance in marketing Finland as a tourist destination and Finnish products internationally. Through their

networks, expatriate Finns can also re-convey information about work and business related opportunities offered by Finland.

13) **Policy framework: Supporting liaisons between economic and financial life and expatriate Finns.**

**Measures:**

- **To gain benefits from Finland's honorary consul network throughout the world by informing companies about this network and its service potential.**
- **To promote business contacts, an event will be arranged in Finland in 2008 for expatriate Finns, in which Finnish companies and expatriate Finns will have contact opportunities assisted by Finpro and the Federation of Finnish Enterprises.**
- **The Finnish Expatriate Parliament will continue to further contacts between businesses and expatriate Finns.**
- **To beneficially utilize the worldwide contact network provided by the Finland Society (Suomi-Seura), also in the field of economic life.**

### **3.5. Supporting the prerequisites of expatriate Finns' return migration**

Some expatriate Finns always return, including their foreign spouses. Successful expatriate Finn and immigration policies improve the prerequisites for expatriate Finns to return to Finland, should they so wish. The requirements for successful remigration are the preservation of contacts with Finland, the maintenance of a command of the Finnish language, and the ongoing monitoring of the conditions and development in Finland. Remigration can be guided through information and counselling activities. When necessary, other measures can be taken to ensure that remigration is desirable both in the standpoint of Finland and the life circumstances of expatriate Finns.

The prerequisites of returning for those in active working age are naturally dependent on the economic situation in Finland at the given time. Finland's employment situation is improving, and in many fields labour shortages are emerging. At the same time, the population is aging, which further increases the need for finding labour. As a result of this development, the preconditions for immigration and the return of emigrants have shown improvement. In the fields of health care and services in particular, a command of Finnish and often also Swedish is required. This is why skilled Finnish workers employed abroad can be a natural target for recruitment. In recent years, professionals in the health care field, for instance, have emigrated from Finland to Nordic countries, Great Britain and Switzerland.

According to the current legislation regarding foreigners, the completion of a returnee training course arranged by the Finnish authorities, and passable Finnish language skills assessed on the basis of a language test, are required from returning Ingrian Finnish migrants residing in the area of the former Soviet Union. The employment office working in conjunction with St. Petersburg's *Inkerin Liitto* (Finnish Ingrian Association) serves employers and Ingrian Finns searching for work in Finland. The majority of migrants to Finland are in prime working age and well-educated, and they are extremely willing to be integrated in Finland. Ingrian Finns intending to move to Finland thus are a natural target group for recruiting.

The need for information by returnees varies according to their life circumstances and those of their families. Information about such as work, day-care, schools, studying, housing, social security, pensions, taxation, and the removal of household goods is needed. In final analysis, each public official is responsible for disseminating information within her/his own administrative field to returnees. The Ministry of Labour has, however, coordinated official dissemination of information by publishing a guidebook for immigrants to Finland (*Työhön Suomeen [Working in Finland]*). In it, data has been gathered from various authorities. The Ministry of Labour also maintains an information service outlet (*FinnJobb*) at the Finnish Embassy in Stockholm for informing returnees. At the Finnish Consulate General in St Petersburg, a specialist in work administration assists returnees. It also is the task of employment offices to provide other advice for returnees, and to guide them to turn in each specific matter to the correct authority. Through the Eures portal, the Eures network of public work administrations additionally serves returnees by informing them about such as the working life, jobs, and the labour market situation in Finland. It also assists in recruiting for fields suffering from particular labour shortages.

Finland has a positive attitude towards remigration, and it is regarded as favourable phenomenon in the perspective of both the labour market and the society. However, regulations and their areas of application still remain that pose problems to immigrants. Those moving from elsewhere may also become subject to prejudiced treatment by their immediate environment and also by the authorities. Promoting good ethnic relations also assists the returnees' integration in the society.

**14) Policy framework To take expatriate Finns into consideration as potential returnees in the development of work-based immigration policies**

**Measures:**

- **To intensify the dissemination of information to expatriate Finns on central issues related to remigration in collaboration with various public authorities and the Finland Society (Suomi-Seura).**
- **To inform employers operating in Finland about the possibilities of hiring returnees.**
- **To encourage those studying abroad to return to Finland at the end of their studies by actively informing them about work, training and continued education opportunities as well as the labour market situation and employment possibilities.**
- **To establish any legislative and administrative problems and obstacles which slow down remigration, and the feasibility of eliminating these problems.**

### **3.6. Support for research on Finnish migration and expatriation**

The need for up-to-date research data is also important in implementing Finnish expatriation policies. Considerable research data is available on Finnish emigration and expatriate Finns. The Institute of Migration, which functions as a separate department of the University of Turku, plays a central role in the production of research data and the coordination of related research projects.

The nature of migration flows changes constantly, however, so it is important that continuous research interest is focused on questions associated with Finnish emigration and Finnish

expatriation. At the moment, for example, there seems to be a need for research on the migration trends of Finns in Europe.

For both expatriate Finns and the entire population, gathering and filing information and material on the subject of Finnish emigration and expatriation is essential. Through this, it will be possible to preserve the reasons, consequences, and significance of immigration for future generations, as well as increase the understanding of the population resident in Finland towards immigration and immigrants.

**15) Policy framework: Supporting research on Finnish immigration and expatriation**

**Measures:**

- **To focus research funding on areas central to immigration studies.**
- **To support the collecting and filing of information and material on Finnish immigration and expatriates.**

#### **4. Implementation of the programme, responsible parties, and economic impacts**

The majority of measures proposed in the policy programme for expatriate Finns are those which are currently being implemented through the actions of central authorities. The suggested policy frameworks and measures reinforce and crystallise the Finnish expatriate policy.

Since the proposed procedures are already being implemented, the suggested policy frameworks and related measures will not result in considerable economic impacts. It is suggested that the new measures put forward will be implemented stage-by-stage within the confines of the budgetary expenditure framework. The additional expenses incurred will thus be distributed over the course of several years.

The Finnish expatriate policy is being developed on the basis of operational orientations and modes already established, taking into account the changes in the Finnish expatriate field, the new requirements resulting from these changes and, in particular, the possibilities presented by the advancing information technology. In planning the functions of the various ministries specific to expatriate Finns, it should be borne in mind that expatriate Finns are not only a group incurring expenses but also a resource that yields many benefits to Finland.

The *Ministry of Labour* is a general ministry for migration concerns, whose sphere of authority comprises such as the development and harmonization of remigration policy. The publication of *Suomen Silta / Finland Bridge*, directed towards expatriate Finns, is supported through the main division of the Ministry of Labour.

The *Ministry for Foreign Affairs* and the diplomatic missions subordinate to it have the best prerequisites to operate as the contact authority between Finland and expatriate Finns. For this reason, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs should take matters related to Finnish expatriation in consideration in its personnel training, in addition to ensuring that the missions have sufficient resources for the management of Finnish expatriation-related questions.

The administrative sector of the *Ministry of Education* supports the activities of the Finland schools and cultural institutes and promotes the study and position of the Finnish language and culture in countries with major groups of expatriate Finns. Through the main division of the Ministry of Education, Finnish expatriate organizations, periodicals and other media are supported.

The task of promoting Finnish language and culture studies at foreign universities, in addition to arranging international trainee exchanges, is handled by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) under the Ministry of Education.

For decades, Finland's national broadcasting company, YLE, has emphasised radio and television programmes directed to expatriate Finns. It is important that YLE continues and enhances its functions in this area. The procedures and development plans of the *Ministry of Transport and Communications* should take into account the fact that by means of new web links and technical solutions, YLE will be able to reinforce the contacts and interaction between Finland and expatriate Finns.

The *Ministry of Social Affairs and Health* and its subordinate administration are responsible for advisory and information activities concerning the pensions, medical care and social benefits issues of expatriate Finns. In the dissemination of information, it would be possible to work together with the Finland Society and foreign diplomatic missions.