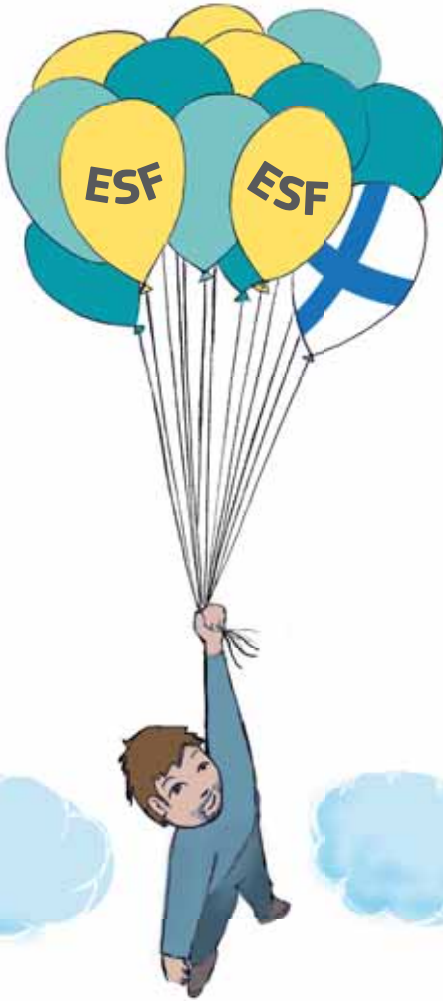




European
Commission



FINLAND

AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Finland's main source of growth over the past decade has been in its dynamic small and medium-sized enterprises which have created over 75% of new jobs since 1995. ESF funding is supporting enterprise and job creation, with an emphasis on greater 'internationalisation', as well as addressing the challenges of a rapidly ageing population, diminishing workforce and long-term unemployment in certain sections of the population.

*Social
Europe*

FINLAND

INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND JOBS: THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FINLAND

Finland is aiming for economic growth that is both ecologically and socially sustainable while seeking greater productivity and competitiveness through the development of know-how, innovation and an inclusive job market. Its goal is to ensure that all those capable of working are given the opportunities and incentives to do so.

“Ensuring opportunities and incentives for work”

However, in the coming years, the ageing population will begin to make a significant impact as the workforce gets smaller. It is therefore vital to help older workers to get back into work or stay in work for longer. Ensuring access to lifelong learning and vocational training is a key part of giving them the new skills to do this. Likewise, specific measures are needed to help other disadvantaged groups, such as young people, the disabled and immigrants, to obtain skills and enter the job market. As part of its efforts to

get more people into the labour force, Finland is targeting a 78% employment rate by 2020.

Finland is also boosting the diversity and flexibility of its industrial sectors and its export activities, led by investments in R&D, innovation and green technologies – particularly in SMEs. This will open new job opportunities, so education and vocational training must be mobilised to provide the highskill levels workers will demand to fill these jobs. Indeed, Finland wants to offer educational opportunities to the whole adult population and intends that 42% of 30-34-year-olds will have a tertiary degree by 2020. Finland welcomes immigration as part of the solution to an ageing population. However, unemployment is higher in this group and immigrants need help to integrate better.

ESF spending in Finland

The ESF is supporting Finland in achieving its objectives with funding of over EUR 615 million for the period 2007-2013. The Åland islands are receiving a further EUR 3 million. National co-funding brings the total amount being spent on the ESF programme in Finland (mainland) to over EUR 1.4 billion. This is being channelled into supporting entrepreneurs and SMEs, improving access to jobs and reducing social inequalities.



FINLAND'S ESF PRIORITIES

A spirit of enterprise

The forest and metal industries are traditionally Finland's most important economic sectors, although it has also seen exceptional growth in the information technology sector, and strong investment in R&D has put it at the forefront of Europe's most innovative countries. This is a position it intends to maintain whilst at the same time ensuring high social standards and maximum employment. ESF projects in Finland aim to support the spirit of enterprise and the internationalisation of business whilst promoting equal access to training and employment for all. An example is a project linking Finnish centres of business excellence with Finnish enterprises in Latvia, Lithuania and Russia – offering training and support for competitiveness.

“Innovation boosts competitiveness”

Another initiative is Kymenlaakso University's 'Wood Academy' project, which is helping to generate new talent, innovation and new

products. It has helped people learn new skills and also encouraged the development of new activities in the traditional wood industry to replace those that are in decline. Likewise, the significant investment in the promotion of entrepreneurship within the education system is providing young people with the skills and attitudes they will need to be tomorrow's entrepreneurs. By the end of 2010, ESF funding had contributed to almost 7 300 new enterprises and nearly 12 000 new jobs.

Training for employment

At the same time, an increasing amount of funding is being channelled towards measures to combat unemployment, targeting in particular the long-term unemployed, older workers, the young, and those who are less able. An important driver for these measures is Finland's intention that every young person under 25 (under 30 for graduates) should be offered a job, on-the-job training, a study place or an apprenticeship within three months of becoming unemployed.

THE ESF IN FINLAND: SOME EXAMPLES

Supporting healthy immigration

With the help of ESF funding, the 'Doktor' project in North Karelia took an innovative approach to a shortage of doctors in municipal health centres. Russian doctors were invited to take up posts as assistants in local health centres while following a training programme for a permanent post. This included language and vocational training as well as support with integration, including that of other family members. As a result, eight Russian doctors are now providing much-needed medical help in regional communities, and a clinical study book and tutoring guide have been produced to assist future immigrant doctors.

Graduate to innovate

The 'Innovation Assistant' project has been helping young graduates to get a foot in the door of SMEs in the North Karelia region of Finland. Initially a little skeptical, SMEs are now enthusiastic about the contribution of their young recruits. The region produces plenty of highly educated graduates but many leave because of high unemployment rates. This project is helping to keep young people in the region by providing twomonths' training in business-related areas such as marketing, project management, innovation and networking. This is followed by a six-month in-house placement. In 75% of cases the placement has led to a permanent position and demand from SMEs for more graduates is now very high!



Do you want to...?

- ...learn more about the ESF in Finland?
- ...understand better how the ESF works?
- ...see video clips on projects from across the EU?

Then visit the ESF website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/finland>