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EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

First Focussed Study 2013

*Attracting Highly Qualified and Qualified Third-
Country Nationals*

FINLAND

EMN FOCUSSED STUDY 2013

Attracting Highly Qualified and Qualified Third-Country Nationals

Top-line “Factsheet”
(National Contribution)
Executive Summary
(Synthesis Report)

Finland just recently adopted a Future of Migration 2020-strategy that includes the attraction of skilled migrants to come to work in Finland, but does not yet have action plans at national level aimed specifically at attracting highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals for the purpose of work. However, there are some projects and studies that relate to highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals and the Finnish National Contribution aims to highlight these.

The numbers of highly-qualified third country nationals who come to work in Finland are very low. Therefore this group of migrants has not been the subject of much attention until only recently. Reliable statistics that give proof of the effect of measures directed at this group are not available. The study strives to give an overview of the present situation and some indications for the future in light of the recently adopted strategy.

Section 1
National Policies and Measures
(Maximum 8 pages)

1.1 Policies

Q.1. Are there national policies in place for the attraction of highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals?

Yes, as a part of an overarching strategy on Migration, but not on its own.

On the 13th of June, the Finnish Government adopted the Future of Migration 2020 strategy, which has been elaborated by a working group led by the Ministry of the Interior and encompassing all the relevant actors in the field of migration. The intention to update the strategy was included in Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen’s Government Programme in 2011.

The strategy includes the following section highlighting the issue of attracting highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals for the purpose of work.

“Migration is one solution to the dependency ratio problem, and competition between countries for qualified and creative workers is bound to increase. The competition for labour will intensify globally as countries compete on the location of added value generating economic activity. **For Finland to succeed in this competition, it must be able to effectively attract competent people to its work force.** This need is emphasised in industries with the largest labour shortages. In addition, the employment of third-country nationals migrating to Finland for purposes other than employment must be faster and more effective than it currently is.”

The strategy also singles out highly-educated persons and specialists, as well as, entrepreneurs

and states that Finland needs an active, managed and targeted policy for work-based immigration.

The strategy does not define the issue of attracting workers, or the definition of highly qualified and qualified workers.

It can also be stated that, as the Future of Migration 2020 strategy, was only just adopted, no information is yet available on specific measures regarding the attraction of highly-qualified persons. The strategy will provide the framework for the elaboration of more specific action plans and measures.

The Finnish National Contribution to the 2012 EMN study on the *Immigration of International Students to the EU* discussed the potential role of foreign degree students as future highly qualified and qualified workers in Finland.

Finland has prepared a Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland for the period 2009–2015. The objective of the strategy is to increase the number of foreign degree students in Finland (2015 target: 20,000, up from 11,000 in 2007). The strategy is indirectly related to the subject of the present study, as the hope is that attracting foreign students to Finland will lead to foreign graduates subsequently finding work in Finland and benefiting the Finnish labour market.

Foreign students are also mentioned as a resource in the Government Integration Programme for 2012–2015. An excerpt from the EMN study on the *Immigration of International Students to the EU*: “In the Government Integration Programme it is noted that along with the increase in the number of international students, the discussion about their potential role in responding to future labour needs in Finland has increased. One of the topics discussed has been the extent to which educational institutions take the probable future needs of the Finnish labour market into consideration when making student selections for different fields of study. In general, it is considered easier for a person who has completed his/her studies in Finland and whose integration and language learning has already begun to commit to the Finnish labour market than for a person who has not established any ties with Finland. The Integration Programme suggests measures for promoting the integration of international students into working life.”

The Action Plan on Labour Migration, published in November 2009 by the Ministry of Interior and discussed in more detail in the EMN report *Satisfying Labour Demand through Migration*, has been the most detailed policy document regarding to date on the issue.

The action proposals outlined in the Action Plan on Labour Migration are implemented through, among other programmes, a development programme funded by the European Social Fund that was originally established by the Immigration Department of the Finnish Ministry of the Interior and subsequently transferred to the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The development programme will continue until the end of the programming period 2013. The primary focus areas and objectives of the development programme are listed below (source: the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy).

The aim of the ESF development programme on labour migration is to develop the services, functions and processes related to labour migration and to increase the knowledge and competence of those working with labour migration with regard to the different aspects of recruiting foreign labour. The development programme is coordinated by the MATTO support structure, which has the task of supporting and promoting projects by providing a forum for the exchange of experiences, opinions and lessons learned. The MATTO support structure is responsible for ensuring that the models and practices developed in the projects

under the development programme are made visible and shared.

The national development objectives for the MATTO support structure are as follows:

- creating systems for the guidance of foreign workers and employers recruiting people from abroad,
- determining the pull factors for labour migration and preparing tools, and
- preparing a study module on Finnish language, culture and working life to serve the needs of foreign nationals relocating to Finland for the purpose of employment.

At present, there is a possibility that the development programme might continue through 2014 if the funding is continued. During 2013, work has been on going in developing a communication plan and tools for e.g. employers who wish to recruit labour from abroad.

Q1.a. If Yes, please indicate the following:

- ***National definition of highly qualified third-country nationals, including references to relevant international standards such as ISCED/ISCO and/or salary thresholds;***

The grounds for the definition of highly-qualified third-country nationals are laid out in the Finnish Aliens Act (Section 79). It stipulates the criteria for the third-country nationals, who are allowed an unlimited right to work without a residence permit for an employed person. Section 79 (1) mentions persons who work in senior or middle management in companies or in other duties, which require special competencies. These are the persons, who are referred to as specialists, which are closest to the mentioned definition of highly qualified third-country nationals.

The current policy regarding specialists employed in expert duties is based on the Government proposal for the new Aliens Act (HE 28/2003 vp). Labour demand in the Finnish IT industry for foreign IT professionals was a significant factor behind the policy, as the domestic labour market had a shortage of qualified professionals. The need to recruit foreign workers was urgent, and the business sector had expressed a desire to have the residence permit procedure expedited for specialists employed in expert duties. The practical policy guidelines with regard to specialists employed in expert duties were prepared in cooperation between the Finnish Immigration Service and the employment administration.

The most significant differences between highly qualified third-country nationals and other third-country nationals arise in the residence permit process, as a normal residence permit for an employed person is decided in a two-step process that includes a labour market needs assessment, which is performed by the employment administration and a decision on the actual residence permit by the Finnish Immigration Service. If the employment administration decides, based on the needs assessment, that a certain vacancy can be filled by domestic labour, the Finnish Immigration Service has to issue a negative decision on the residence permit application even though the general criteria and the working terms for granting a residence permit for an employed person are fulfilled.

Residence permit for a specialist

The criteria, which a third-country national must fulfil in order to qualify for a residence

permit for a person working as a specialist in expert duties, are described in more detail in the Finnish Immigration Service's residence permit guidelines. The residence permit process for specialists working in expert duties is a one-step process, with the decision on the application made by the Finnish Immigration Service.

The criteria include that the work tasks are demanding and require academic qualifications. The salary has to be higher than the average salary, which corresponds to a gross salary of at least approximately EUR 3000,- per month. Specialists include, for example, IT experts, experts in a special field who have a university degree, and other persons who have a university degree and whose duties require special expertise. The applicant must prove that the nature of his/her employment fulfil the abovementioned conditions.

Each residence permit application is processed separately. During the processing it is assessed whether the above criteria are satisfied and whether the applicant satisfies the general criteria for granting a residence permit.

EU Blue Card

The EU Blue Card criteria are specified in the Finnish Aliens Act (Section 81b) and they are based on the EU Blue Card Directive. A more detailed description of the established practice is provided in the Finnish Immigration Service's residence permit guidelines.

The criteria are that the work demands a high level of competence and requires high qualifications or special expertise. A higher education degree is mandatory and the applicant must present the necessary documentation to prove this. A gross minimum salary of EUR 4,667 per month is required, which is the national salary threshold applicable in Finland in 2013, and it is reviewed annually. Any additional perks or daily allowances are not included in the salary. The contract for the job requiring a high level of competence has to last for a minimum of one year.

Q1.b. If Yes, do the policies distinguish between highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals?

[Yes/No]

No

Q1.e. If Yes, briefly outline the main features of the policies. Please consider whether the following exists:

- *Points-based system (i.e. a system that admits third-country nationals who have a sufficient number of qualifications and experiences from a list that typically includes language skills, work experience, education and age¹);*

No.

- *Employer-led system (i.e. a system that allows employers to select the workers they need, subject to, government regulations²);*

Yes.

The Finnish system for attracting highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals

¹ Definition from: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/rethinkingpointssystem.pdf>

² Ibid

for the purpose of work is employer-driven. If the criteria mentioned in Q1.a. as well as the general criteria for being granted a residence permit are satisfied, there are no obstacles to an employee needed by an employer obtaining a residence permit for a person working as a specialist in expert duties.

➤ *Hybrid system (i.e. combination of points-based and employer-driven model³);*

No

Q.2. Are other groups of third-country nationals included in the national policies on attracting (highly) qualified third-country nationals?

No. Other groups are not directly addressed at national policy level, but attracting talented foreign students to Finland through high-quality education, research and the opportunities presented by Finnish working life is part of the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland for the period 2009–2015. Also see Section 1.1.

Q2.a. If Yes, please indicate what other groups are included (i.e. investors, entrepreneurs, international graduates, transferred workers etc.)?

The issues of attracting international students to Finland and retaining international graduates who have received their degree from a Finnish higher education institution are addressed in the EMN Study on the *Immigration of International Students to the EU*.

Q.3. Do the policies in your Member State focus on specific areas of occupations?

No

Q.4. Has the transposition of EU Directives⁴ led to more favourable legislation/measures/conditions for specific groups of (highly) qualified third-country nationals?

No.

The flexible entry into Finland of specialists employed in expert duties and researchers was already enabled by Finnish legislation.

Q.5. Are the national policies addressing the aspect of brain drain in the countries of origin?

Yes

Q.6. Are the national policies addressing the aspect of brain circulation with the countries of origin?

Yes

Q6.a. If Yes (to either of these questions), please briefly indicate how the national policies address these aspects, supporting your answers with reference to research or

³ Ibid

⁴ E.g. EU Blue Card Directive and Researchers Directive

any other sources of information.

The 2010 EMN studies, *Satisfying Labour Demand through Migration and Temporary and Circular Migration*, addressed the brain drain and brain circulation aspects. The following paragraph is taken from *Satisfying Labour Demand through Migration*, a joint publication produced by the Finnish EMN contact point that also includes the Finnish National Contribution to the EMN study on *Temporary and Circular Migration*:

“Cooperation with the country of origin to prevent brain drain and to promote development in the country of origin has been taken into account in Finland's Migration Policy Programme published in 2006. The third policy guideline sets the following goal: “Cooperation on labour mobility shall be increased with other EU countries, Finland’s neighbouring areas and other countries that Finland considers potentially significant sources of labour.” The objective of cooperation is to promote managed immigration and to support recruitment to Finland. The Migration Policy Programme also highlights the negative impacts caused by brain drain in the country of origin on the one hand and opportunities created by brain circulation on the other.”

The Ministry of the Interior also states in its report on the promotion of labour migration and cooperation with the countries of origin, that emigration can have a negative effect on the countries of origin especially if large numbers of people are recruited from a vital sector for the functioning of the society, e.g. the health sector. It further concludes that active recruitment campaigns should not be targeted at such employee groups, whose emigration might endanger the development of the society in the country of origin.

Q.7. Have your national policies been the subject of public debate?

[Yes/No]

Yes

Q7.a. If Yes, please briefly indicate the main features of the policies which were debated as well as the reasons for such debate and the level at which these occurred (e.g. Parliament, society, media). Please support your answer with reference to research or any other sources of information.

The public discussion on employment-based migration, and particularly its promotion, has been quite opinionated and prejudiced. There has not been much constructive deliberation between the opposing sides. The business sector has emphasised the importance of labour migration in satisfying future labour demand and facilitating economic growth in the public discussion, which has primarily been initiated by the Confederation of Finnish Industries and other interest groups such as employers organisations, as well as research institutes connected to such organisations. Trade unions have held the opposite view, as the domestic unemployment rate is relatively high and with an upward trend. However, the opposing sides in the debate agree on the issue of immigrants who already reside in Finland. All parties to the discussion have expressed their hope that the members of this group be included in working life at the earliest opportunity.

The immigration of highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals has rarely been addressed in the debate as a separate topic of discussion due to the low percentage of migration that it represents in Finland. Recent statistics indicate that unemployment among the academically educated in Finland is rising rapidly, which is likely to negatively impact the popularity of the immigration of highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals.

Political debate on the subject is cautious and it is unlikely that any major policies or initiatives will be introduced on this front in the prevailing economic situation. In the run-up to the 2011 parliamentary elections, the parties on the left and the True Finns party emphasised the importance of prioritising domestic labour over the migration of foreign workers.

The views of various labour market participants and political entities, and the media discussion on employment-based immigration were comprehensively discussed in the EMN Study *Satisfying Labour Demand through Migration*. The public debate on these topics has not changed substantially since then.

Q7.b. If Yes, please briefly indicate possible impacts of the debate on the national policies.

Maintaining policy at the current level can be seen as one possible result of the debate. At present, it is difficult to find broad political or social support for the promotion of employment-based migration due to the prevailing economic and employment situation.

1.2 Measures

Refer to the legal framework in case relevant changes to labour migration legislation have occurred as compared to the information contained in the EMN Study on Satisfying Labour Demand through Migration.

Q.8. Does your Member State employ concrete measures in order to satisfy the policy goals?

As Finland does not yet employ concrete measures at national level to attract highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals for the purpose of employment, this section will discuss related projects at local, regional and sectoral levels. The forthcoming action plan in relation to the recently adopted Future of Migration 2020 strategy as mentioned in section 1.1, will provide more indications of concrete measures in due time.

Counselling services offered to highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals

Employment and Economic Development Offices

Employment and Economic Development Offices (TE Offices) adopted a new service model at the beginning of 2013. The objectives of the service model reform included improving the services offered to immigrants of various backgrounds and ensuring a harmonised service model, consistent service quality and common operating guidelines across all offices. The new service lines are:

Employment and business services: for jobseekers whose qualifications and skills make them directly employable in the open labour market. This service line also has primary responsibility for business and employer customers.

Development of competence: for jobseekers and individual customers whose employment requires an increase in professional competence and/or support for determining their objectives and available alternatives.

Services related to supported employment: for jobseekers who need more individual support and/or multidisciplinary services to find employment in the open labour market.

Helsinki Region Immigrant Employment Council (HERIEC)

The Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce and Helsinki Education and Research Area (HERA), which is a consortium of the eight universities and seven universities of applied sciences in the Helsinki metropolitan area, are investigating whether establishing a regional service to help qualified foreign workers and local employers find each other is feasible. The working title for the envisaged council is Helsinki Region Immigrant Employment Council (HERIEC) The regional service would be responsible for supporting the employment of international jobseekers with higher education qualifications and improving related business services. The project is supported by a group of mentors and has patrons representing the senior management of private sector businesses as well as universities. The project's first phase is focused on determining whether establishing a regional service is feasible, which will be followed by identifying potential alternatives for implementing the service.

The project is modelled on a service implemented in Toronto, Canada. In Toronto, a multi-stakeholder organisation comprised of representatives of the authorities, regional municipalities and the private sector promotes the integration of highly qualified immigrants, develops and coordinates business services and participates in the political debate on employment-based immigration.

Individual good practices

Talent Match (www.talentmatch.fi)

Talent Match is a concept developed by the Otaniemi International Network and Technopolis for matching qualified individuals with employers who require their services. While the target group of the Talent Match service is not limited to foreign nationals, the Talent Match events attract a significant number of highly qualified foreign jobseekers. At the Talent Match events, both employers and jobseekers have the opportunity to introduce themselves during "pitching sessions". If a jobseeker is interested in an employer, or vice versa, they can set up a one-on-one meeting during the event. The aim is to establish connections between individuals and businesses that will potentially lead to internships or full-time employment.

The Expat-project (<http://www.expatriationproject.info/>)

The aim of the Expat-project is to promote the states in the Central Baltic Sea Region, Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Latvia, and to make them attractive as a destination for skilled and educated foreign labour, as it is crucial for the competitiveness of the region. The project seeks to facilitate the improvement of services and networks available to the international talents and their families before their departure from their home country, upon their arrival in the region and during their stay. This means, for example: Ensuring the visibility and accessibility of accurate information on the region and immigration procedures already in the country of origin. Better coordination among the public service providers for all the necessary registration, permits and practical information for newcomers.

DOKTOR –A project for promoting the labour migration of doctors

The regional DOKTOR-project was implemented in 2008-2011 with the aim of coaching

doctors who had moved from the Russian Federation to Finland, to obtain the necessary professional qualifications in order to work as doctors in Finland. The experiences of the project were compiled in a manual called *Lääkäriksi Suomeen* (Work as a doctor in Finland), which was executed by the education and development service of the University of Eastern Finland.

Q8.b. If Yes, are there any measures aimed at facilitating the integration of (highly) qualified third-country nationals?

No.

There are currently no measures specifically aimed at facilitating the integration of highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals.

Q9. Do public policies exist in your Member State that specifically aim at positively influencing the immigration decision of (highly) qualified third-country nationals?

No, although one tax incentive can be mentioned that concerns the top level management in companies.

Q9.a. If Yes, please also indicate such incentives.

Tax incentives

Persons coming to work in Finland for a period exceeding 6 months and earning in excess of 5800 Euros per month with tasks that require special skills or competencies, can pay tax according to a flat tax rate of 35% instead of the usual progressive taxation. No exact number of persons who use this possibility are available, although it is estimated that only a relatively small number of higher management are concerned.

1.3 Relations with third countries and labour migration agreements

Q10. Do the policies in your Member State focus on specific third countries?

[Yes/No]

No.

Finland has concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Vietnam in 2009. The MoU strives to promote co-operation between the countries e.g. in the field of employment, labour policy, labour force education and labour mobility, as well as in questions relating to the promotion of innovation, regional development and sustainable energy solutions and environmental issues. The MoU is more related to aspects of development co-operation and there is no specific mention of the migration of (highly)-qualified labour.

Q10.a. If Yes, please list these third countries, providing a brief indication of the reasons for focusing on specific third countries?

[Insert response here]

Q.11. Has your Member State entered into labour migration agreements relating to attracting qualified and/or highly qualified third-country nationals to the national territory?

No

Q.12. Has your Member State adopted legislations facilitating labour migration from specific third countries ('country-specific legislation')?

No.

Q.13. Has your Member State entered into other more favourable arrangements with non-EU/EEA countries and/or regions relating to attracting qualified and/or highly qualified third-country nationals to the national territory?

No.

Section 2
Evaluation and Effectiveness of Measures
(Maximum 4 pages)

2.1 Evidence of effectiveness based on statistics

Q.14. Is there any evidence (quantitative and/or qualitative) of a link existing between the measures outlined in Section 1 and the immigration of highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals?

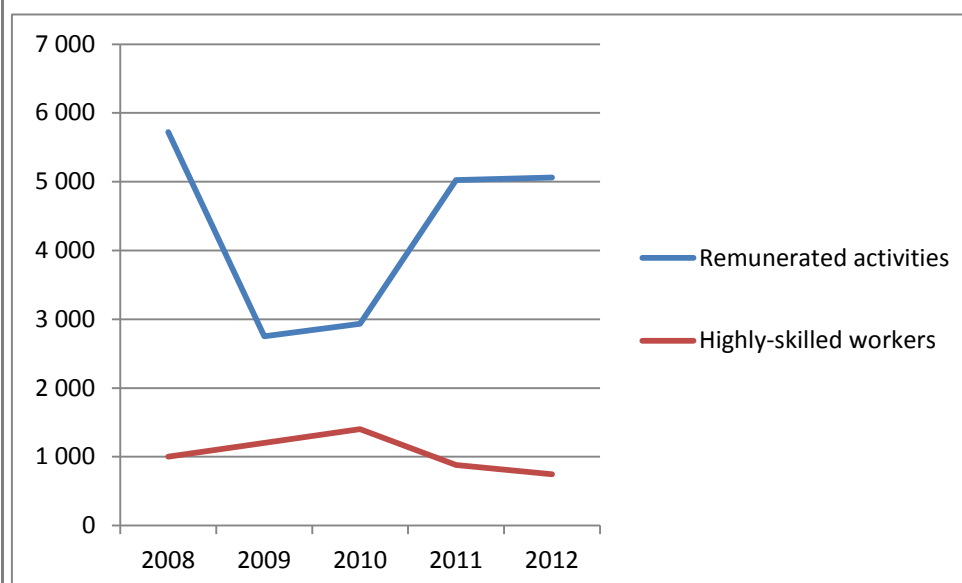
No

No statistical evidence is available due to the fact that Finland does not have an actual strategy or action plan concerning the employment-based migration of highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals specifically. Quantitative data can be used to analyse the trend in the number of highly qualified and qualified migrant workers during the review period, but no reliable causal relationships between the statistics and national strategies or policies can be discerned.

With regard to quantitative data on residence permits, the problem is that statistics on specialists employed in expert duties have only been separately recorded at a national level since 2011. Residence permit data prior to that is unreliable due to specialists employed in expert duties being classified in the group "Other grounds". The figures for first residence permits issued to specialists in 2008-2010 are estimates.

Residence permits for remunerated activities reasons compared with residence permits

for highly-skilled workers



Source: Eurostat remunerated activities 2008-2011, 2012 national figures
 Highly-skilled workers 2008-2010 estimates based on national figures, 2011 and 2012 national figures

As the EU Blue Card began being issued in 2012, the figure for that category is available for that year only.

In the case of Finland, according the Finnish National Statistical Office, the Labour Force Survey data, as provided by Eurostat is not very reliable because of the small sample. The tables below are provided by Eurostat and reworked to some extent by the EMN Service Provider.

Employment of Third –Country Nationals in Highly skilled occupations

Employment of Third-Country Nationals in high-skilled occupations (1 000)

Occupation according to ISCO categorisation	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
OC1 Legislators, senior officials and managers	:	2.1 (u)	:	:	:
OC 2 Professionals	3.3 (u)	4,3	4,8	4,4	5,5
OC 3 Technicians and associate professionals	:	:	:	:	:
Total	6,6	8,3	7,8	6,2	7,5

Source: Eurostat; (u) marks unreliable data

Employment of Third-Country Nationals in high-skilled occupations and sex (1000)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Male	4,2	4,9	4,9	4 (u)	5,3
Female	2.4 (u)	3.4 (u)	2.9 (u)	2.2 (u)	2.3 (u)
Total	6,6	8,3	7,8	6,2	7,5

Source: Eurostat; (u) marks unreliable data

Employment of Third-Country Nationals in high-skilled occupations and age (1000)

Age breakdown	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
25-34	2.9 (u)	3.5 (u)	3.2 (u)	3.1 (u)	3.9 (u)
35-44	2.2 (u)	2.4 (u)	2.3 (u)	:	2.1 (u)
45-54	:	:	:	:	:
55-64	:	:	:	:	:
Total	6,6	8,3	7,8	6,2	7,5

Source: Eurostat; (u) marks unreliable data

Regarding the employment of third country nationals in highly-skilled occupations, one can see that there is a peak for the years 2009 and 2010 and a relatively sharp drop in 2011, which at least to some extent correlates with the granted residence permits for highly-skilled workers, i.e. specialists in Finland. Regarding age and sex, the younger age groups and men are dominant.

Employment of highly-educated third-country nationals

Employment of highly educated Third-Country Nationals (1 000) (

Level of education according to ISCED categorisation	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
First stage of tertiary education (ISCED level 5)	5,6	6,1	6,1	5,3	5,9
Second stage of tertiary education (ISCED level 6)	:	:	:	:	:
Total	6,0	6,2	6,3	5,8	6,5

Source: Eurostat; (u) marks unreliable data

Employment of highly educated Third-Country Nationals by sex (1000)

Age breakdown	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Male	3.2 (u)	3 (u)	3.5 (u)	3.4 (u)	3.5 (u)
Female	2.8 (u)	3.2 (u)	2.8 (u)	2.4 (u)	3 (u)
Total	6	6,2	6,3	5,8	6,5

Source: Eurostat; (u) marks unreliable data

Employment of highly educated Third-Country Nationals by age (1000)

Age breakdown	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
25-34	:	2.2 (u)	2.6 (u)	2.4 (u)	3 (u)
35-44	2.4 (u)	:	:	:	:
45-54	:	:	:	:	:
55-64	:	:	:	:	:
Total	6	6,2	6,3	5,8	6,5

Source: Eurostat; (u) marks unreliable data

The numbers of highly-educated third country nationals have remained relatively constant during the reference period. The year 2011 exhibits a slight drop, which might be attributed to the overall economic situation, although it is difficult to draw more precise conclusions. Men and women are quite equally distributed, although the data is marked as unreliable.

The recording of statistics on employment-based immigration has been discussed at national level. The National Audit Office of Finland has addressed the matter in a report, stating that there is a need to develop the recording of statistics in this regard. As a result, the Finnish Ministry of Finance assigned Statistics Finland the task of establishing a working group on the development of recording statistics on employment-based migration, particularly with respect to temporary migration on the basis of employment.

Q.15. Is there a quota for highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals?

No

Q.16. Is there any evidence (quantitative and/or qualitative) of a link existing between the labour migration agreements (also in the framework of Mobility Partnerships) outlined in Section 1 and the immigration of highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals?

No.

If (statistical) evidence as requested above regarding concrete measures and labour migration agreements is not available, please outline and analyse any other statistics which may provide indications of the effectiveness of the national policies and measures.

2.2 National methods of evaluation

Q.17. Does primary research (using any methods) exist in your Member State evaluating the national policies, related practical measures and labour migration agreements (also in the framework of Mobility Partnerships) implemented to attract highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals?

No

At present there are no actual indicators that could be used to reliably measure the extent of this phenomenon.

2.3 Policy makers' or other stakeholders' (i.e. academics, non-governmental or private sector representatives) experience

Q.18. If evidence (see 2.1 and 2.2) is not available, what is then the national policies

makers' or other stakeholders' experience and assessment regarding the (perceived) effectiveness of measures (see also questions under 2.2)?

Section 3
Challenges and Barriers
(Maximum 4 pages)

This section reflects on possible challenges and barriers that may affect the attractiveness of a Member State for highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals' immigration.

3.1 Possible challenges and barriers

Q.19. Have challenges and barriers in your country been identified based on previous research which affect the attractiveness of your Member State for (highly) qualified third-country nationals?

Yes

Challenges and barriers have been discussed in the Valoa project, as part of the ALPO and MATTO projects and in the Expat survey conducted by Uusimaa Regional Council. Public and private sector entities have also brought up many of the issues that have been perceived as problems. They are listed in section Q19.a. under the relevant headings.

Q19.a. If Yes, please indicate these factors.

Salaries and wages

The salaries and wages for skilled third-country nationals are generally perceived as not being very competitive. This has been supported by research as well. (Kaisu Koskela: New Explorations in Finnish migration studies: the emerging case of the skilled migrants; http://www.mshs.univ-poitiers.fr/migrinter/e-migrinter/201005/e-migrinter2010_05_057.pdf). The income level is low compared to the cost of living and the salaries are considerably lower than in other Nordic countries, elsewhere in Europe and in the United States. This also has to do with the comparatively high tax levels and the high costs of living in Finland.

Economic crisis

The current economic situation has also had a big impact on the Finnish labour market. Domestic academic unemployment, i.e. the unemployment rate of persons who have graduated from higher education institutions, mainly universities is rising fast. In these conditions, it is even harder for e.g. international graduates or other skilled and educated migrants to gain a foot hold on the Finnish labour market. Several of the largest manufacturing and it-sector companies have been forced to announce lay-offs, and the general sentiments on the market do not favour recruitment, at least for the time being. Businesses and organisations may also be reluctant to recruit foreign labour when Finnish workers are available.

Language

Language has been named by most respondents and in most studies, as one of the top challenges and barriers that a skilled migrant faces, when he or she wants to work in Finland. E.g. the survey on the Employability of International Graduates Educated in Finnish Higher Education Institutions, that was conducted within the Valoa-project (<http://www.studentintegration.fi/summary/#/1/>) names the lack of adequate Finnish or Swedish language skills as one of the main obstacles to finding a job in Finland.

Public discourse / debate

As mentioned in section Q7.a. public discourse and debate regarding highly-skilled migrants is quite fragmented. There seems to be a tentative agreement that Finland will at some point need more skilled immigrants to work in different sectors, although the debate is fairly polarized. The current economic situation does not favour an objective discourse on the issue, although it remains to be seen how the recently adopted the Future of Migration 2020-strategy will affect the debate in the years to come.

Bureaucracy

The process of entering into Finland and receiving a residence permit is in general perceived as being relatively easy for highly-skilled migrants. This is the view of both employers and the skilled migrants themselves.

Lack of information

Lack of information on different aspects linked to living and working in Finland has been mentioned by several instances as a problem. It is not easy for a skilled migrant or even an employer to quickly access relevant information; therefore several of the projects have concentrated on improving the provision of information (e.g. the MATTO-project, the Valoa-project, and the planned HERIEC-project).

Social and cultural barriers

The working conditions are generally perceived as being good and comparable with the natives. The social and cultural aspects of the society and the work place are more frequently mentioned as challenging issues. E.g. Kaisu Koskela has found in her research (mentioned in the salaries and wages-section above) that skilled migrants in Finland perceive that the Finns are “cold” and not good at including their migrant colleagues or neighbours in their social sphere. One of the main reasons for this is that so few natives or companies and organisations have gained experience in working with foreign employees. These social and multicultural skills take time to develop, which might result in the skilled migrant feeling detached or even unwelcome.

Perception, location and climate

The climate and the location of Finland are mentioned by some as a barrier to attracting skilled migrants to Finland, while others think that these factors are overstated. A more

plausible explanation is that Finland is not that well-known in many parts of the world, Finland is not a “globally recognised brand” and there is a lack of awareness of Finland’s strengths and positive aspects.

Q.20. If such evidence is not available, what is then the national policies makers’ or other stakeholders’ experience and assessment regarding the challenges and barriers which affect the attractiveness of your Member State for (highly) qualified third-country nationals?

Section 4
Conclusions
(Maximum 2 pages)

The Synthesis Report will outline the main findings of the Study and present conclusions relevant for policymakers at national and EU level.

Q.21. What conclusions would you draw from your findings that are relevant to the aims of this Focussed Study? Can you identify good practices and lessons learnt with regard to attracting highly qualified and qualified third-country nationals? What is the relevance of your findings to (national and/or EU level) policymakers?

The immigration of highly-qualified third-country nationals and even more so, the attraction of the mentioned group is a new and still very small phenomenon in Finland. The recently adopted Future of Migration 2020-strategy is the first time that the attraction of highly skilled and talented migrants is clearly stated as an aim in an overarching strategy document.

The Finnish IT-sector was the main driver for attracting highly-skilled migrants to work in Finland beginning in the end of the 1990:ies. The pressure from the large employers, mainly Nokia, formed the admission and residence permit procedures for this group in an employer and demand driven direction that ensured a steady flow of qualified workers that could not be found on the domestic labour market.

The present economic situation in Finland does not favour the attraction of skilled migrants at least in the short term, although especially the employers’ organisations keep reminding that the demographic realities show, that Finland needs the immigration of talented foreigners in order to maintain and improve its competitiveness in the future. In the public debate this is offset by the fact that unemployment in Finland is on the rise, and especially academic unemployment is rising fast, making the attraction of immigrants for the purposes of employment, an uneasy subject to address.

The scope of this study addresses issues that have been marginal in Finland, because of the small numbers. Some promising projects and initiatives have been presented, and many of them can be considered good practices that should be implemented on a larger scale, e.g. the Talent Match events, which bring together employers and highly skilled persons, often immigrants and international graduates. The events provide a forum for the companies and prospective employees to meet and maybe launch a fruitful cooperation.

Research on highly-qualified migrants is picking up in Finland as well, which is a prerequisite in understanding their role and needs. The highly-qualified third-country nationals must be recognized as a group that require another type of approach in e.g. services, information provision and integration measures in order to feel at home and perform well at work in their

new host society.

On the national level, a big step has been taken with the adoption of the Future of Migration 2020-strategy. The next step will be the elaboration of action plans that will channel the aims of the strategy towards concrete measures. On the other hand, it is important to discuss facts relating to immigration and employment, the labour market and the economic situation now and in the future. Without popular support, it will be difficult politically to make the necessary decisions to implement the strategy. With a popular sentiment that is negative towards immigration, the attraction of the country as a destination for highly-skilled migrants declines.