

# Finland



**Population:** 5,255,068 (July 2010 est.)  
**Population Growth Rate:** 0.084% (2010 est.)  
**Birth Rate:** 10.37 births/1,000 population (2010 est.)  
**Life Expectancy:** *total population:* 79.13 years; *male:* 75.64 years; *female:* 82.76 years (2010 est.)  
**Literacy Rate:** *total population:* 100%; *male:* 100%; *female:* 100% (2000 est.)  
**Net Migration Rate:** 0.62 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2010 est.)  
**Unemployment Rate:** 8.5% (2009 est.)  
**Gross Domestic Product per Capita:** \$34,900 (2009 est.)  
**Religions:** Lutheran Church of Finland 82.5%, Orthodox Church 1.1%, other Christian 1.1%, other 0.1%, none 15.1% (2006)[E:99.9% total; ok?]  
**Languages:** Finnish 91.5% (official), Swedish 5.5% (official), other 3% (small Sami- and Russian-speaking minorities) (2006)  
**Ethnic Groups:** Finn 93.4%, Swede 5.6%, Russian 0.5%, Estonian 0.3%, Roma (Gypsy) 0.1%, Sami 0.1% (2006)  
**Capital:** Helsinki<sup>1</sup>

## Trafficking Routes

Finland is a destination country for victims of trafficking. Estonian women are one of the most commonly found nationalities among the women and girls working in the Swedish and Finnish sex trade. Most trafficking takes place within the Baltic region: the most common route found was the Russian-Baltic route, transporting women from Russia and Estonia to Finland and Sweden.<sup>2</sup> Men, mostly from Southeast Asia, are trafficked to Finland for purposes of forced labor in the restaurant and construction industries.<sup>3</sup>

## Factors That Contribute to the Trafficking Infrastructure

Finland's geographical location as an intermediate country between source countries such as Estonia and Russia and destination countries such as Norway and Sweden is a major

<sup>1</sup> CIA, THE WORLD FACTBOOK (2010), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fi.html>.

<sup>2</sup> SWEDEN NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CRIME PREVENTION, REPORT 2008:21: THE ORGANIZATION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A STUDY OF CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN SWEDEN, FINLAND, AND ESTONIA (2008), available at: <http://www.iss.uio.no/forskning/eumargins/publications/other-publications-of-the-participants/documents/markina-organisation-of-human-trafficking.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Press Release, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Strengthening Counter Trafficking Expertise, (Sept. 14, 2007), available at: <http://www.iom.az/releases/14-09-07/>.

contributing factor to its being a transit country.<sup>4</sup> The poor economic situation in the neighboring countries in conjunction with the acceptability of sexual purchase in Finland have contributed significantly to foreign women being trafficked to Finland for purposes of sexual exploitation.<sup>5</sup>

## Forms of Trafficking

Finland is a popular destination and transit country for sexual trafficking from several former Soviet countries where a large market for such exploitation exists. The trafficking relationship between Finland and Estonia is well established, given their proximity. The much publicized arrests by Finnish police of a trafficking ring based in Estonia came on the heels of the country's National Action Plan Combating Human Trafficking in Finland, enacted in March 2005.<sup>6</sup> Male victims of trafficking are usually exploited in ethnic restaurants and in the construction industry. Although their presence is known in Finland, little data exists on the actual number of men trafficked into the country.<sup>7</sup>

## Government Responses

In 2005, the country also implemented its National Action Plan to combat trafficking.<sup>8</sup> The plan uses a human rights-based approach that focuses mainly on victims' rights, the rights of children, and the individual victim's situation.<sup>9</sup> The plan also considers the different vulnerabilities that women and girls face with regard to trafficking and its long-lasting effects on the victim.<sup>10</sup> A victim referral mechanism ensures that victims are referred to shelters run by nongovernmental organizations, and not delivered back into the hands of their traffickers.<sup>11</sup> Since the beginning of 2007, the system of victim assistance has provided services for 10 victims presumed to have been trafficked.<sup>12</sup>

The Finnish government also intensified prevention efforts, in source countries and domestically, as well as ceasing the deportation of victims of trafficking. Moreover, in October 2005, the Ministry of the Interior proposed a complementary action plan to the aforementioned plan, focusing on victim identification training for all Ministry of the Interior officials dealing

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<sup>4</sup> *Estonian Trafficking Ring Broken in Finland*, BUSINESS TRAVELERS, June 20, 2006, available at: [http://www.stopvaw.org/Estonian\\_Trafficking\\_Ring\\_Broken\\_in\\_Finland.html](http://www.stopvaw.org/Estonian_Trafficking_Ring_Broken_in_Finland.html).

<sup>5</sup> VENLA ROTH, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, TRAFFICKED WOMEN, FOREIGN PROSTITUTES AND THE LIMITS OF CONSENT 2007, available at: [http://www.helsinki.fi/rpol/naisoikeus/Roth\\_linkit/Law%20and%20Anthropology.pdf](http://www.helsinki.fi/rpol/naisoikeus/Roth_linkit/Law%20and%20Anthropology.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Business Travelers *supra* at 4.

<sup>7</sup> Roth *supra* at 5.

<sup>8</sup> THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND, NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS, FINLAND (2005), available at:

<http://formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=14308&GUID={5B2E4E0E-3A5C-4DAE-B5F0-0FB794184D21}>.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>12</sup> Roth *supra* at 5.

with trafficking.<sup>13</sup> The plan also emphasized efforts to identify human trafficking in source countries, through increased cooperation between border control and Finnish representation abroad, as well as including awareness training in civilian crisis management training.<sup>14</sup>

In 2008, the Ministry of the Interior adopted the Safety First Internal Security Program with the goal of becoming the safest country in Europe by 2015.<sup>15</sup> Goals of the program include improved border security, prevention of illegal immigration, improved customs security, prevention of human trafficking, and reduction of violence.<sup>16</sup> The Ministry of the Interior explained that between 2005 and 2008, only 15 cases of suspected trafficking were filed, with the low numbers due to the unexpected difficulty of victim identification.<sup>17</sup> Although several criminal cases in 2005 included trafficking facets, the 2004 Law on Trafficking in Human Beings was not immediately used to prosecute or sentence anyone.<sup>18</sup> However, in March 2007, the first trafficking conviction was obtained under the new law.<sup>19</sup> In order to rectify and improve the situation, the government proposes to improve detection through cross-border traffic and inland surveillance, as well as increasing public awareness of human trafficking to lower the demand.<sup>20</sup>

## **Nongovernmental and International Organizations Responses**

According to the report submitted by the Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in June 2008, trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution is an underreported problem in Finland.<sup>21</sup> The report finds that the 2005 action plan has not received sufficient funding to make it effective. The report also finds that the mediatization of prostitution by a minority group, United Sex Professionals of Finland, has colored the public and legal discussion of prostitution and does not recognize that the vast majority of those involved in prostitution in Finland are not professionals working by choice, but rather women and girls who are victimized or coerced by any number of means.<sup>22</sup>

The Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations proposes concrete solutions to this problem, including establishing a special post of reporter to deal specifically with human

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<sup>13</sup> International Humanity Foundation, *Human Rights in the OSCE Region-Finland* (2006), available at: [http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewdocument.php?doc\\_id=6845](http://www.ihf-hr.org/viewbinary/viewdocument.php?doc_id=6845).

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at 13.

<sup>15</sup> MINISTER ANNE HOLMLUND, TARJA MANKKINEN, & RITVA VILJANEN, MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR OF FINLAND, SAFETY FIRST; INTERNAL SECURITY PROGRAMME (2008), available at: [http://www.intermin.fi/intermin/biblio.nsf/B48B12C5D837461AC22574C00025B90A/\\$file/252008.pdf](http://www.intermin.fi/intermin/biblio.nsf/B48B12C5D837461AC22574C00025B90A/$file/252008.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at 15.

<sup>18</sup> International Humanity Foundation *supra* at 13.

<sup>19</sup> Roth *supra* at 5.

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of the Interior of Finland *supra* note 15.

<sup>21</sup> Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations to the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in June 2008, available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/CFWA.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 21.

trafficking, a successful method in other countries.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the coalition calls for the victim assistance system to be critically assessed and reformed to be more efficient and less complex to receive more funds, and to incorporate training for authorities to better recognize victims of human trafficking.<sup>24</sup> The report also notes that Finnish NGOs are actively working to aid the victims of human trafficking and prostitution, and would benefit from an independent study of human trafficking and prostitution in Finland, in order to better understand and aid victims.<sup>25</sup>

## Multilateral Initiatives

In August 2006, Finland signed but did not ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.<sup>26</sup>

As a result of a two-day conference, Finnish and Estonian police agreed on Jan. 28, 2008, to create a joint task force targeting drug-related crime and human trafficking.<sup>27</sup> The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was chaired by Finland in 2008, and during that time combating trafficking was a priority for the organization. In May 2008, the OSCE held the eighth Alliance Against Trafficking in Persons Conference on combating child traffic in urban areas, which focused specifically on concrete solutions. At the conference, Finnish Minister of Migration and European Affairs Astrid Thors stated, “Passive acceptance and silence about human trafficking cannot be tolerated.”<sup>28</sup>

On Jan. 23, 2009, Finnish Interior Minister Anne Holmuld and Russian Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev agreed to draft and sign a cooperation agreement between the Higher Police School of Finland and the St. Petersburg Interior Ministry University, effective July 1, 2010. The interaction of law enforcement officers at the border level would focus on drug trafficking and human trafficking as well as resistance to transnational organized crime.<sup>29</sup>

On March 10, 2009, Tarja Halonen, president of Finland, agreed to work with Nigeria to eradicate transnational crime, specifically trafficking in persons.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Id.* at 21.

<sup>24</sup> *Id.* at 21.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.* at 21.

<sup>26</sup> Council of Europe, *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings- Finland*, available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/Docs/Profiles/FINLANDProfile\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/trafficking/Docs/Profiles/FINLANDProfile_en.asp).

<sup>27</sup> *Estonian and Finnish Law Enforcers to form Joint Task Force*, 18 ESTONIAN REVIEW 2, (Jan. 28, 2008), available at: [http://web-static.vm.ee/static/failid/109/ER\\_5\\_2008.pdf](http://web-static.vm.ee/static/failid/109/ER_5_2008.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Press Release, OSCE, Countries share responsibility to protect children from trafficking, says OSCE official at Vienna conference (May 26, 2008) available at: <http://www.osce.org/item/31281.html>.

<sup>29</sup> *Russia and Finland to Strengthen Police Cooperation in Border Areas*, Jan. 26, 2009, available at: <http://www.barentsobserver.com/russia-and-finland-to-strengthen-police-cooperation-in-border-areas.4549656-58932.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Andrew Oota, *Nigeria: Transnational Crime-Mark Calls for Mutual Cooperation*, Mar. 10, 2009, available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200903100341.html>.