

Summary:

# Social contract on immigration

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# Summary

## A solution to the immigration stalemate

As a result of its ageing population and labour shortage, Finland is facing a structural problem that can be partially solved by immigration. At the same time, immigration comes with societal tensions and uncertainties that must be solved by a controlled and consistent policy.

In a report commissioned by Akava Works and the Finland Chamber of Commerce, *Osmo Soininvaara* and *Jussi Pyykkönen* propose a solution in the form of a social contract on immigration. The aims of this social contract are as follows:

- Immigrants moving to Finland would be people with the means to create a good future for themselves and their families by working
- The sustainability gap of public finances would narrow because the working-age population would not decrease, as would happen without immigration
- Companies would not suffer from a labour shortage and opportunities for new innovations would grow

The authors suggest that the social contract on immigration offers a concrete and realistic solution to the stalemate of immigration policy. A controlled and considered policy would allow Finland to profit from immigration while also preventing the risks and societal tensions related to it.

## The foundation of the social contract

In order to get the most out of immigration while minimising the problems caused by it, the report proposes **a social contract on immigration** that would be built on three key principles:

- 1. Points-based model and jobseeker visa** – Work-based immigration must be based on predictable employment likelihoods.
- 2. Focal points of humanitarian immigration** – The number of asylum seekers must be decreased and the number of quota refugees increased.
- 3. Integration incentives** – Employment and language learning must be made more attractive and segregation prevented efficiently.

## Points-based model and jobseeker visa

The immigration process should be reformed to ensure that Finland mainly attracts people with a high likelihood of employment. A points-based model assesses the applicant's language skills (Finnish, Swedish, English), education level, work experience, age and potential length of the work career as well as any possible work offer or job in Finland.

Those who score lower may apply for a jobseeker visa that does not entitle the applicant to social security. Once they meet the employment criteria, the visa can be upgraded to a residence permit.

## Humanitarian immigration and asylum system

The current asylum system is susceptible to abuse and unjust to the most vulnerable. The aim is to move the focus from the asylum system to quota refugees, who can be chosen in a more controlled manner through the UN's refugee organisation. This would reduce people smuggling and human suffering.

## Integration improvement

Those who move to Finland need to gain fast and efficient access to the job market. This requires combining language learning and working, creating a more incentivising social security system, preventing segregation and opening up Finnish corporate culture to diversity.

## Steps forward

The authors consider immigration one of the biggest issues of the next Government Programme. The next Government should agree together on a single large "total package" that would improve both the opportunities for financial success and social cohesion.

The report emphasises that **in the long term, Finland needs a parliamentary consensus on immigration policy**. An inconsistent policy that bounces between tightening and loosening immigration rules serves nobody. Immigration to Finland will continue in any event, and it can be either controlled or uncontrolled. Controlled immigration could bring financial stability and success, but uncontrolled immigration creates political instability.