



Country Report  
For  
MIGRATION IN EUROPE

# Finland



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## Introduction

The aim of this report is to present information related to the migration phenomenon in Finland. In particular, the used data are collected and made available by EUROSTAT, the official database of the European Union.

Over the past five years, Finland has generally reinforced its comprehensive approach to integration. Indeed, the country has improved its MIPEX score by +3 points on the 100-point scale and its comprehensive approach to integration is most like Canada, Sweden, and Portugal and more inclusive than the other Nordic countries. Compared to Sweden, Finland's policies are more inclusive on political participation and permanent residence, but slightly less inclusive on health and access to nationality. Also, Finland improved its support for equal opportunities in labour market and public life and reinforced the basic rights of immigrants to non-discrimination and family life. Newcomer workers enjoy better access to the labour market. Reunited family members should have their personal circumstances considered to extend their permit in cases of violence or abuse since 2015, thanks to implementation of the Istanbul Convention. Looking at the negative aspects, it appears that the family reunification requirements were restricted for beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. Members of the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) gained the right to initiative. The Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014) stepped Finland's comprehensive approach to improve public awareness, reporting and justice for potential victims of discrimination<sup>1</sup>.

The report is structured into eight sections, according to the eight different objects of analysis:

1. Stock of total population.
2. Stock of migrants in the last 10 years.
3. Immigrant stock by category (sex, age, country of birth and reasons for migration).
4. Population growth.
5. Flows of migrants in the last 6 years Immigration flow (by sex, age, country of birth and reason for migration).
6. Total number of refugees (asylum seekers, sex, age).
7. Share of refugees on total migration.
8. Migrants' integration indicators employment or unemployment.

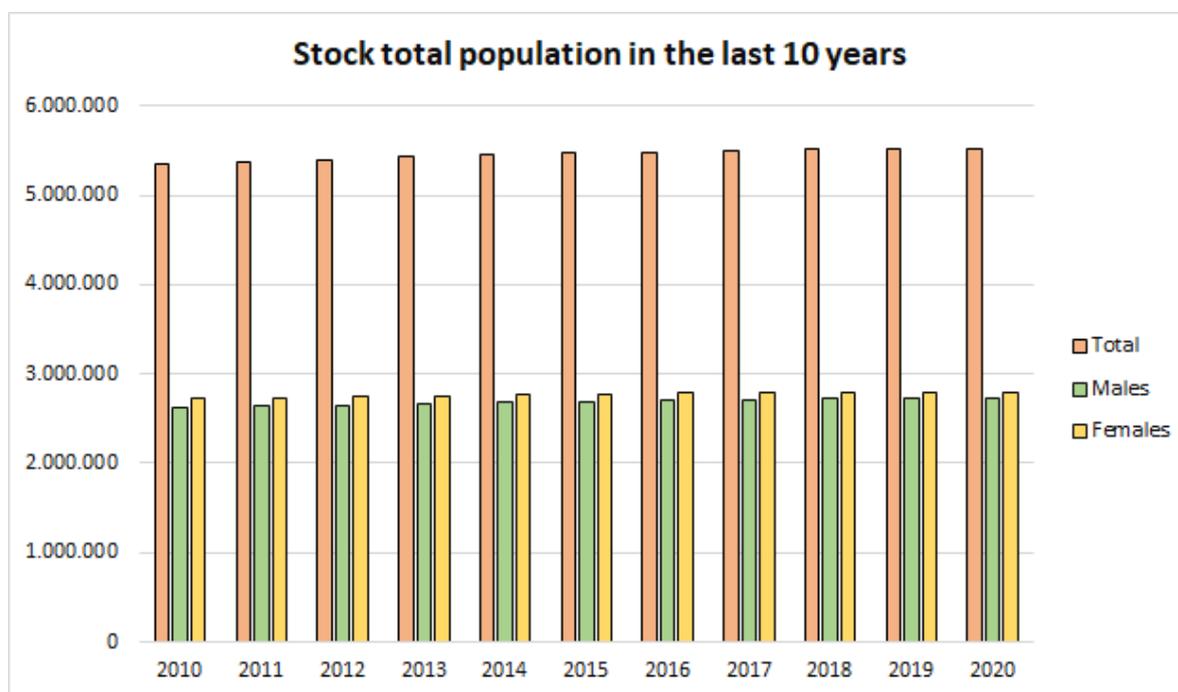
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<sup>1</sup> MIGRANT INTEGRATION POLICY INDEX 2020 – report on Finland, available at: <http://mipex.eu/download-pdf#>

## 1. Stock total population

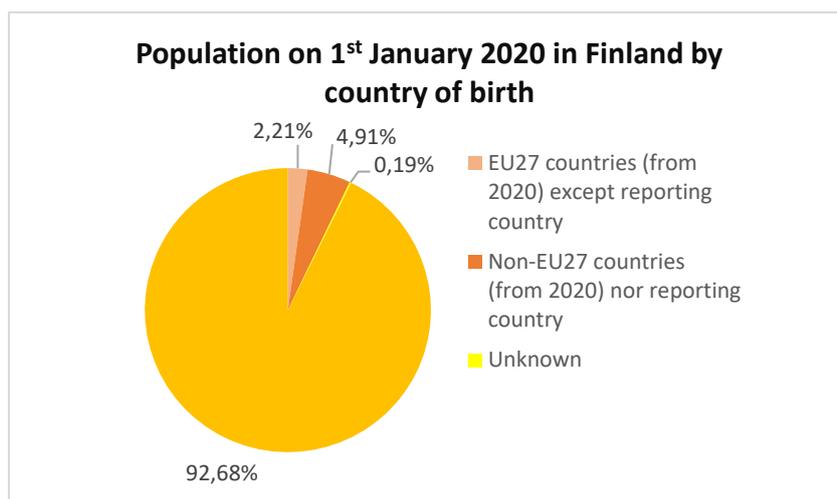
Starting from the first section, we have considered the stock of total population in the last 10 years by sex and then we focused our attention on data of the stock by country of birth in the period 2010-2020.

In the following graph, we can see that, despite a slight majority of females, the population is distributed almost equally and there is not a large gap between the two sexes.

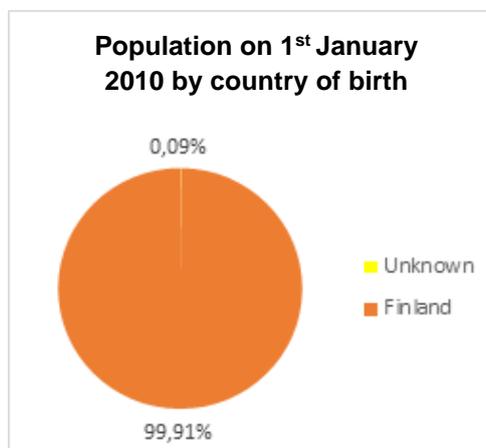


Source: EUROSTAT [demo\_pjan]

Also, if we go deeper into details, looking at the data 1st of January 2020 and considering the country of birth, we notice that only the 7.31% of total population (TOT. 5.525.292) were not born in Finland but their country of birth is non-European country (4,91%), a European country different from Finland (2,21%) or their country of birth is unknown (0,19%). Even if we look at the population on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010, we see that the main country of birth is Finland and only the 0,09% of the population were born in an unknown country. We have no data for EU27/Non-EU 27 countries.



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]



## 2. Stock of migrants in the last 10 years

Immigration can be considered a relatively new phenomenon in Finland, as the first wave of migration started in the early 1990s when people from Somalia came to Finland as refugees or asylum seekers<sup>2</sup>. Only in the late 90s, when the Finnish government allowed the “Right to return” of Finnish people descendants residing in other countries<sup>3</sup>, the migration’s figure saw an exponential growth. Currently, there are almost 400.000 foreign-born people residing in Finland.

To calculate the stock of international migrants residing in Finland in the last 10 years, we must consider the data about foreign country nationals present in the destination country on the 1st of January of each year. According to the “Push-Pull model”<sup>4</sup>, migration is a result of economic, political, and social factors.

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics Finland, [http://www.stat.fi/til/muutl/2019/muutl\\_2019\\_2020-05-14\\_tie\\_001\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/til/muutl/2019/muutl_2019_2020-05-14_tie_001_en.html)

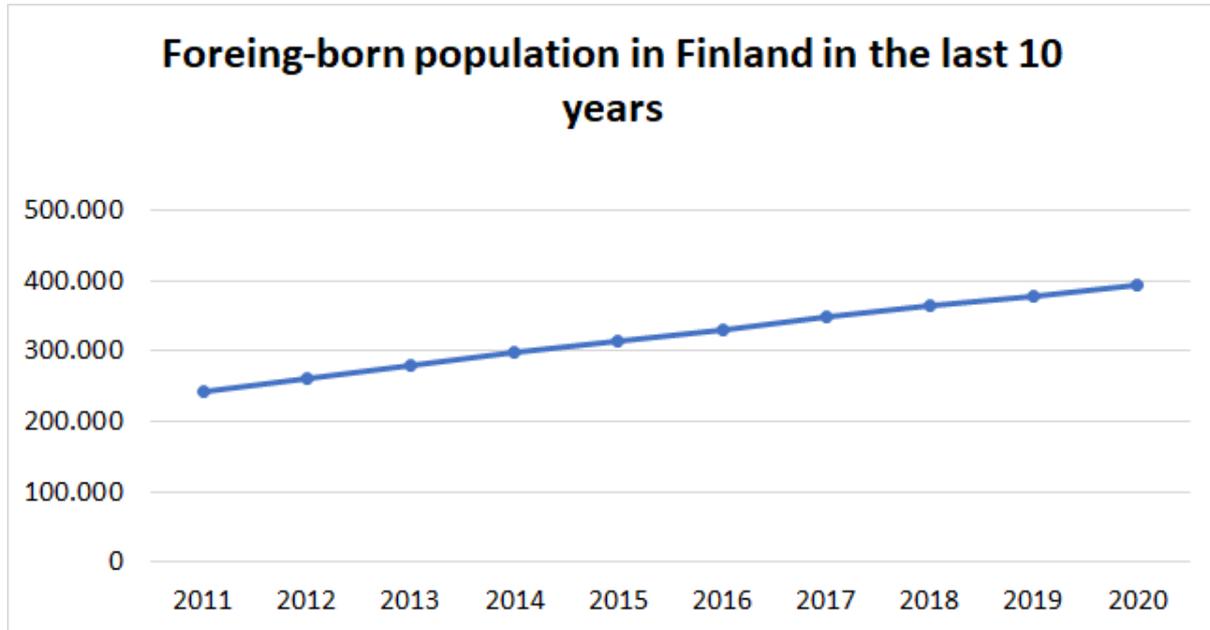
<sup>3</sup> referring to “ethnic return migrations” of Finnish descendants from Russia to Finland in 1990. For more details: “A longitudinal study on the ethnic identity construction in the context of ethnic migration” ( <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24441660?seq=1>). Ethnic remigration from the Soviet Union to Finland- Patterns of Ethnic Identity and Acculturation among the Ingrians Finns.

See: (<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjq-7EnvjvAhWCPewKHef1BNQOFjAGegQICRAD&url=https%3A%2F%2Fjournal.fi%2Ffypr%2Farticle%2Fview%2F44924%2F43899&usq=A0vVaw0vZbQNGNAFkwziR2KJ6bIT> )

<sup>4</sup>Lee’s migration model, created in 1996, refers to push and pull factors that are reasons for emigration and immigration, a push factor is something negative about the country that someone lives in and can be decisive for them to leave (e.g., war, economic crisis). A pull factor is something that attracts migrants (e.g., favorable labour market). For more details: Le migrazioni internazionali, Teorie e Dibattiti di Maria Marta Muro.



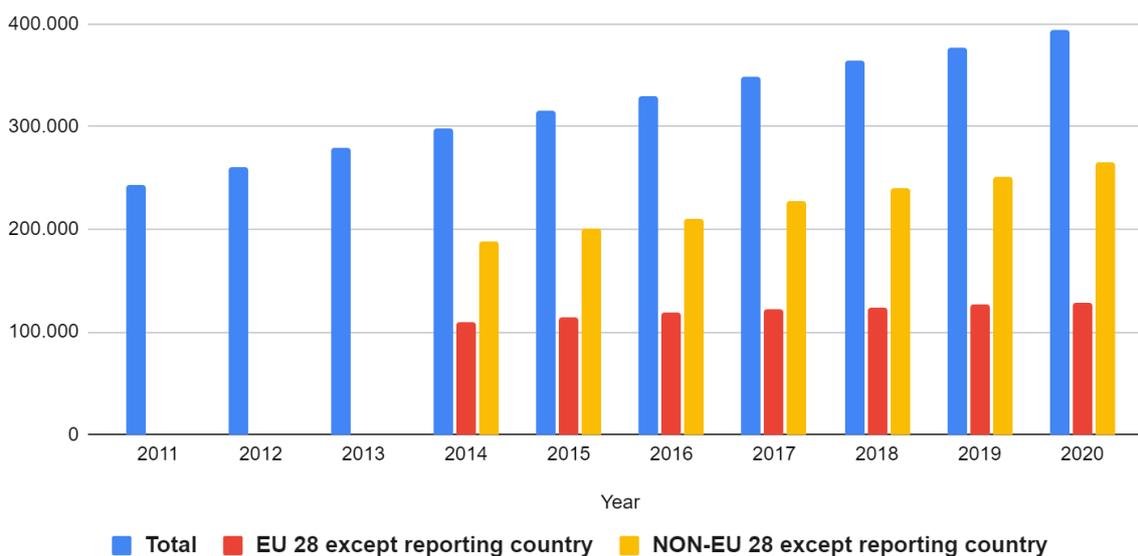
The following graph shows the stock of foreign-born population residing in Finland from 2011 to 2020. As we can see, the graph confirms a growth trend continuous and constant reaching the highest figure in 2020.



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_\_pop3ctb]

According to the following graph, we can see that Finland’s migration gain is almost completely made of people coming from outside the European Union. Accurate data is not available for the years 2011-2013. In 2020 immigration from non-EU countries grew by 13.000 people from last year, while immigration from EU countries remained almost at the same level (the United Kingdom is here to be considered as a Member State).

**Stock of migrants sorted by country of birth in the last 10 years**

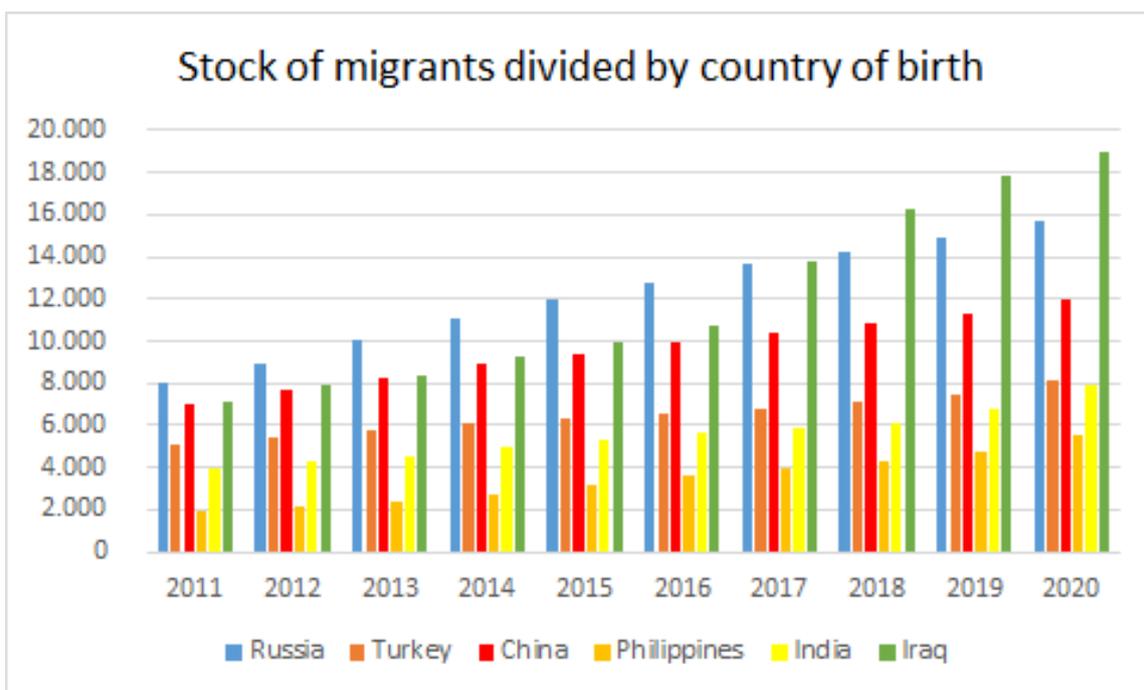


Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]



Since we have seen how non-EU countries nationals are the majority of individuals moving to Finland, we have decided to take a closer look at some non-Member States to further investigate this point<sup>5</sup>.

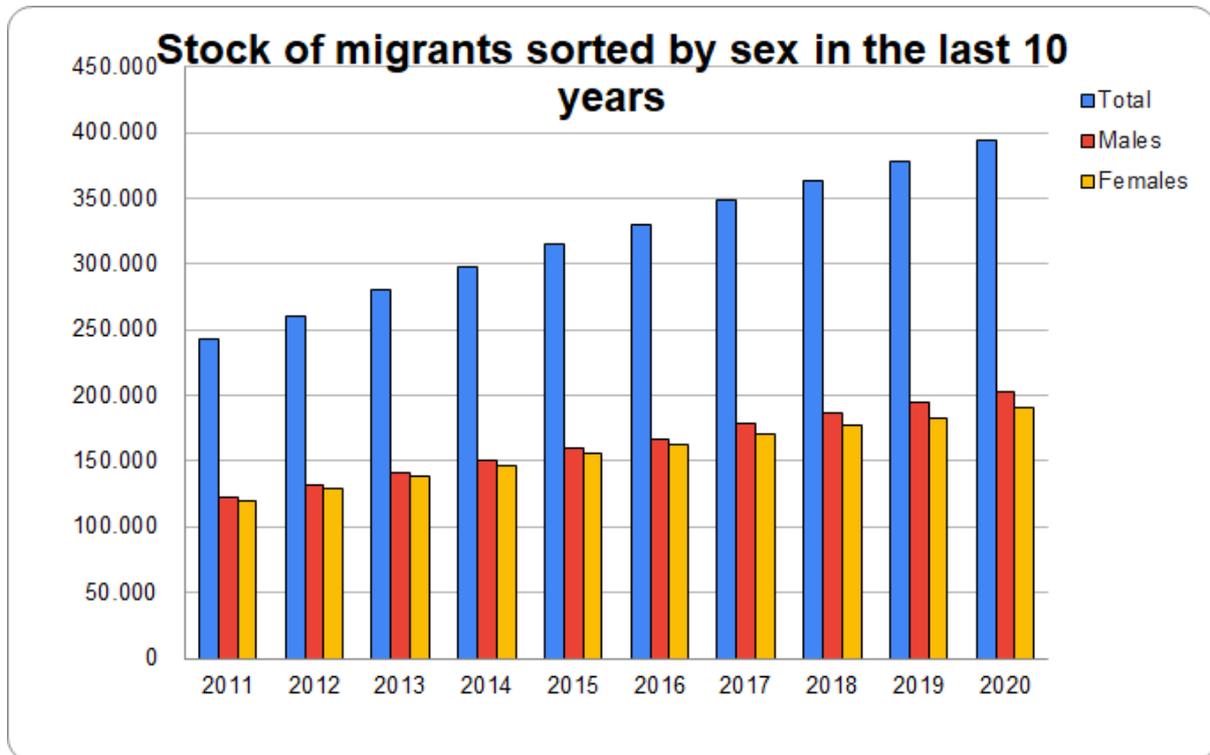
In the following graph, we can see that in 2020 the immigration gain was largest in Iraqi citizens followed by Russia, and the third most immigration gain to Finland comes from Chinese (including Hong Kong) citizens.



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]

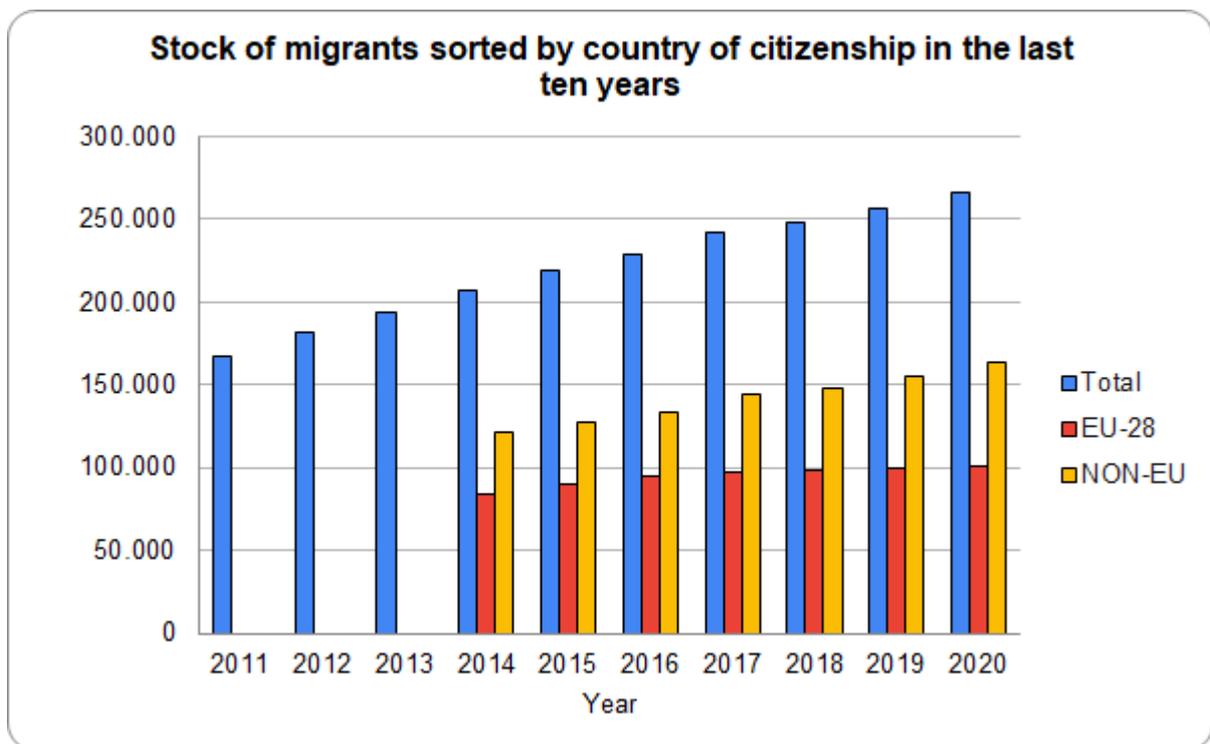
<sup>5</sup> For more details: Statistics Finland ([Statistics Finland - Migration 2018](#))

For what concerns sex, the following graph shows that in the last 10 years males migrants exceeded female migrants, but the gap is ephemeral. The migration trend has been constant and there are no major changes from last year.



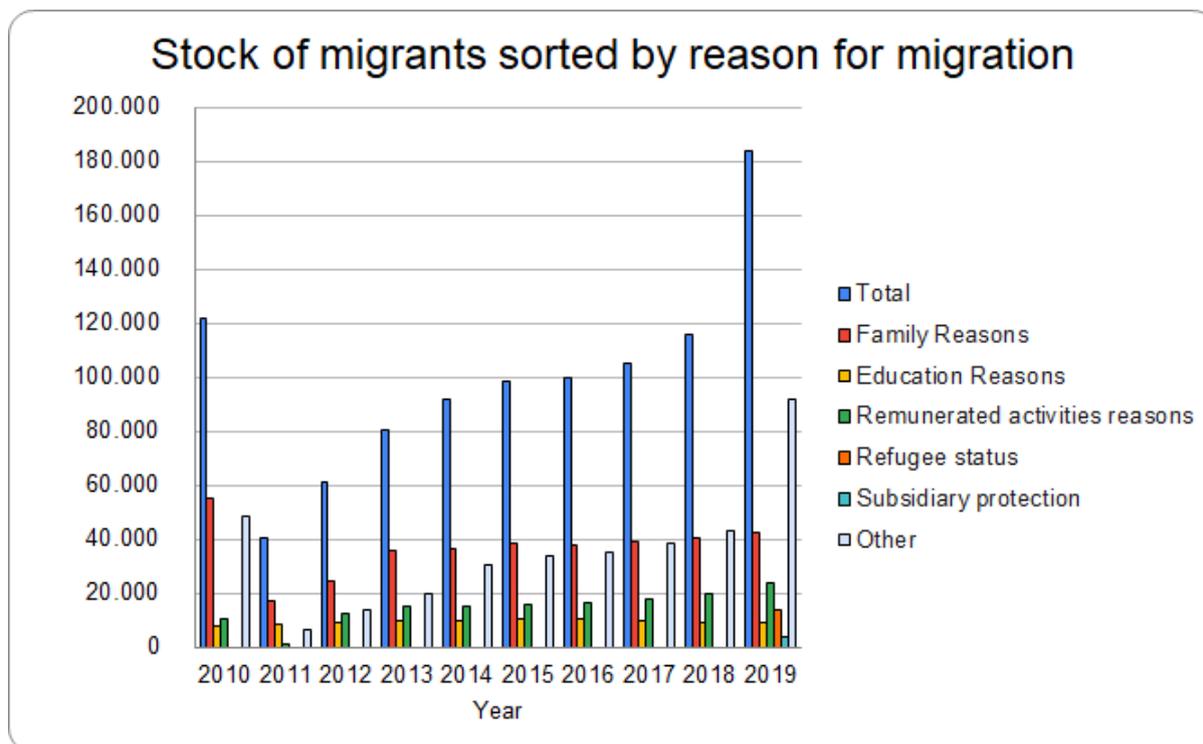
Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]

In the following graph, we see migrants sorted by their country of citizenship. Although data is not available for the years 2011-2013, we can draw the same conclusions as illustrated in the previous graphs, noticing that the figure of migrants coming from non-European countries in the last years has always exceeded the EU countries (British nationals are here accounted for as European citizens).



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop1ctz]

Speaking of reasons for migration, the following graph depicts the trend of the last 10 years in Finland. From 2010 to 2016, migrants moved to Finland mostly for “family reasons”, however, based on the latest statistics a change of trend is noticeable, as a matter of fact in 2019 reasons classified as “other” have been the first door to enter Finland.



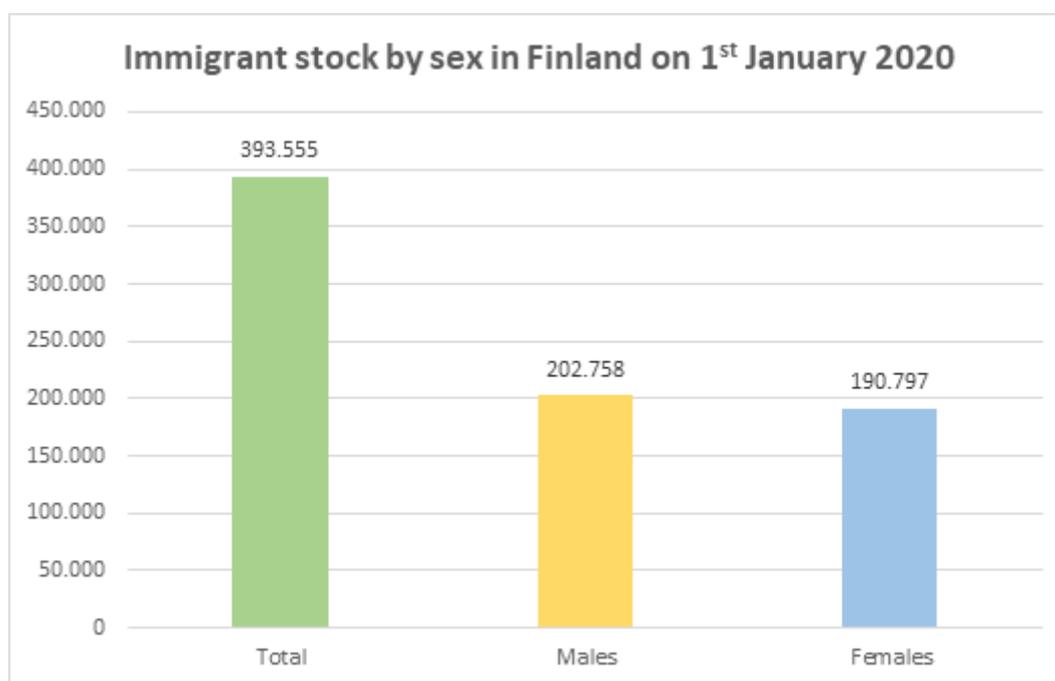
Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_resvalid]



### 3. Immigrant stock by category (sex, age, country of birth and reason for migration)

This part of the report analyses the immigrant stock by category in Finland on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020. The information used is taken from EUROSTAT following the labels [migr\_pop3ctb] and [migr\_resvalid].

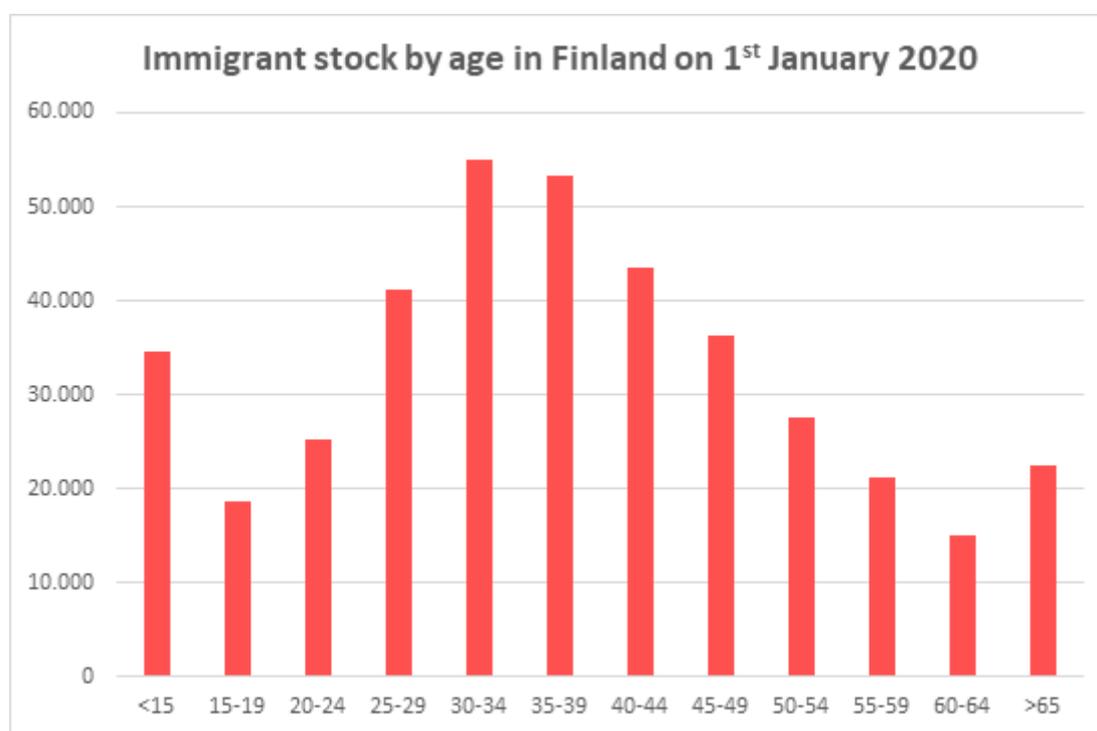
The first graph shows the immigrant stock by sex. Using the label [migr\_pop3ctb], we selected “Finland” as reporting country, “2020” as time, “foreign country” as country of birth and then both sexes. In this way, the database revealed an immigrant stock of 393.555 people, distributed in 202.758 males and 190.797 females, therefore a slight difference between the two sexes.



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]

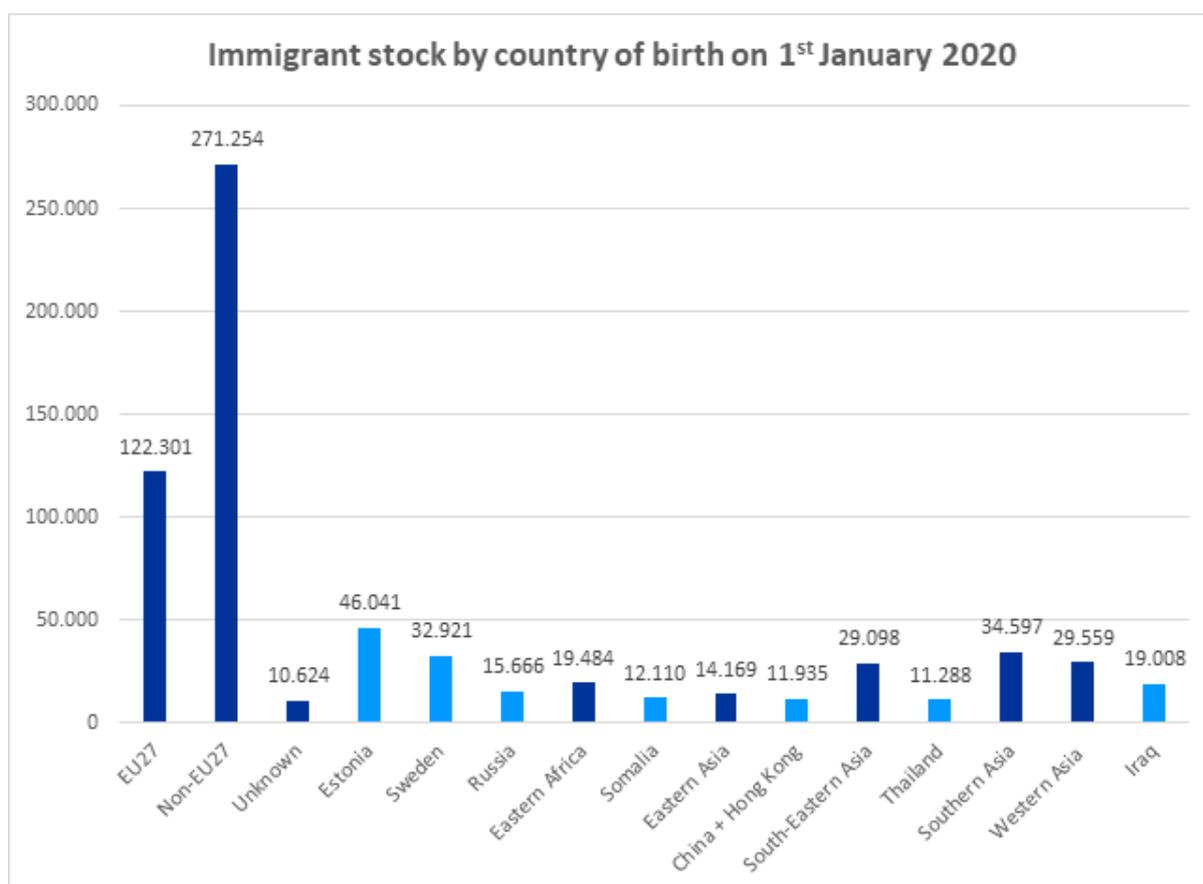


The second graph shows the immigrant stock by age. Using the same label [migr\_pop3ctb], in this case we highlighted the different ranges of age and it resulted that most immigrants are relatively young, with peaks of 54.981 people between 30 and 34, and 53.231 people between 35 and 39. Another relevant data is the number of minors under 15, around 34.481.



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]

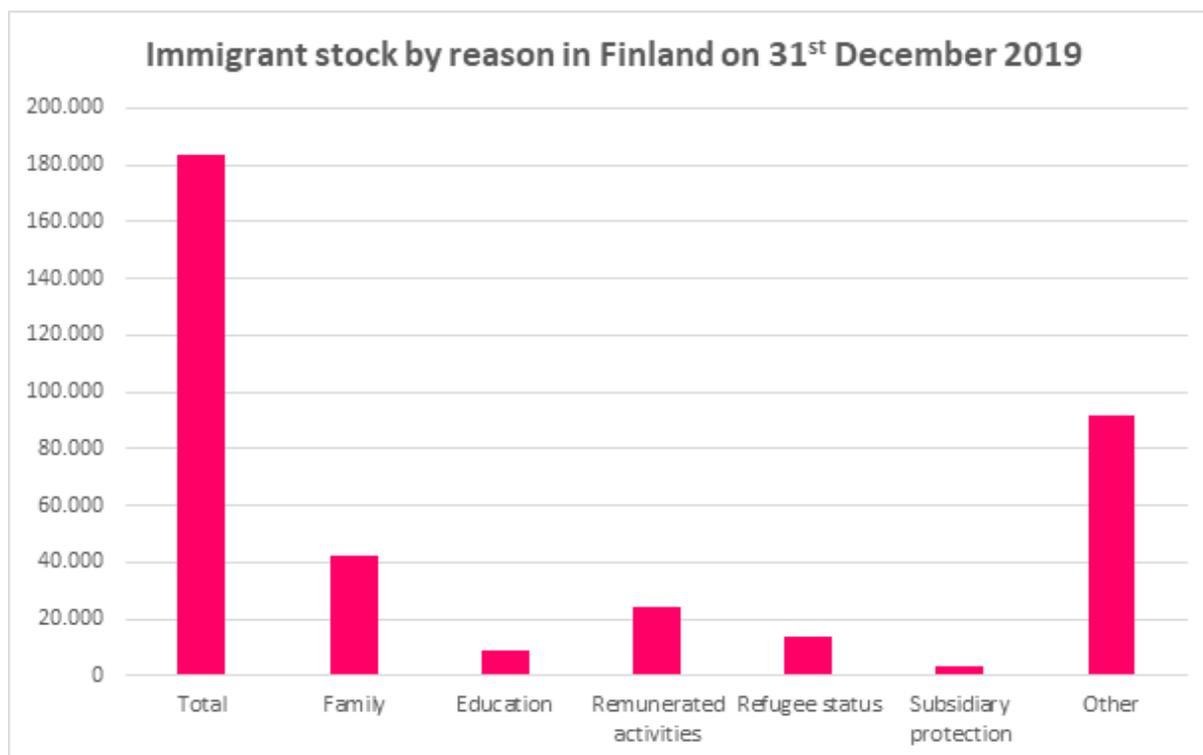
The third graph shows where most of the immigrants in Finland come from. The first distinction is between people from EU countries and people from non-EU countries. Indeed, the stock of immigrants is divided in 122.301 “Europeans” and 271.254 “non-Europeans”. Leaving aside people with an unknown origin, it is interesting to note that the majority of immigrants come from Estonia, Sweden and Russia. Then, also other parts of the world are considered. First of all, it is important to underline that the graph reports only countries where more than 10.000 people come from, secondly that the light blue columns represent individual States, and the dark blue ones represent groups of States. Therefore, it clearly stands out that also Asia is an important origin continent, in particular countries like China (that includes Hong Kong), Thailand and Iraq.



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_pop3ctb]

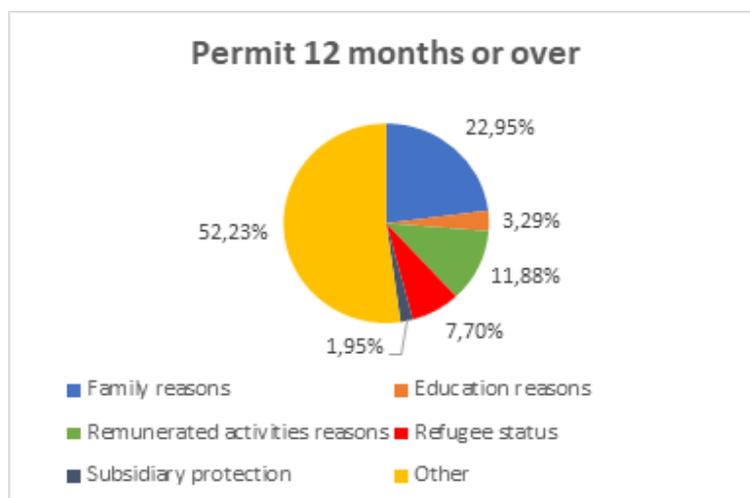
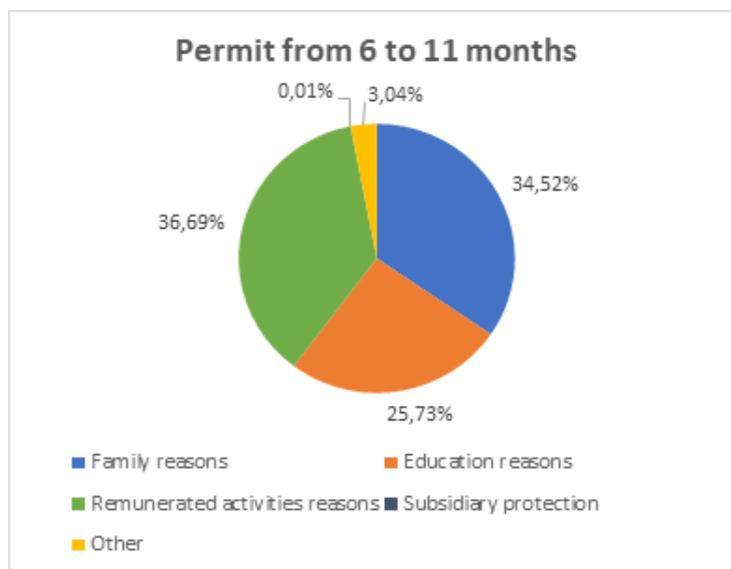
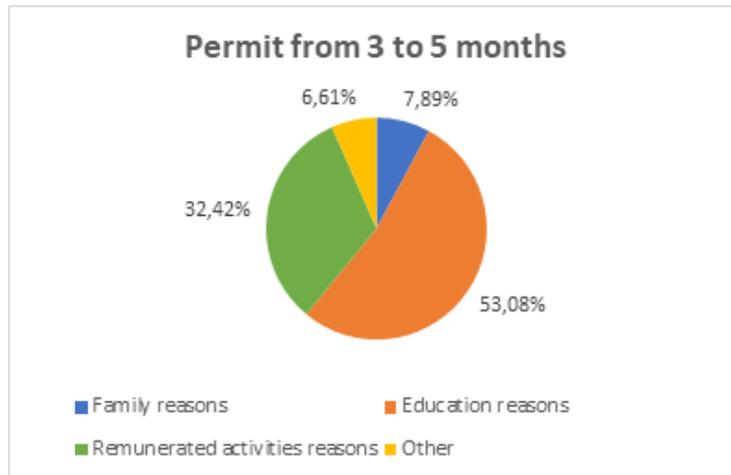


The fourth category is the reason for migration. In this case the label [migr\_resvalid] is used and the stock considered is the one on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019, because for now there is no data for the year 2020. The graph below shows that out of a total of 183.918 people whose we know the reasons why they have moved, 42.656 people moved because of family reunification, 8.715 because of education reasons, 24.015 for remunerated activities, 13.455 are refugees, 3.415 for obtaining the subsidiary protection and 91.662 moved for other reasons.



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_resvalid]

In particular, the above-mentioned data are divided in accordance with the number of months of permit that these people obtained or required. Specifically, the permit from 3 to 5 months pie chart shows that 53,08% of immigrants moved to Finland because of education reasons, 32,42% for remunerated activities, versus just 7,89% of people who moved for family reasons. Indeed, family reunification seems to be a more long-term reason. From the permit from 6 to 11 months pie chart stands out that 34,52% of immigrants moved for family reasons, 36,69% for remunerated activities and 25,73% for education reasons. As far as the permit of 12 months or over is concerned, percentages of family, remunerated activities and education reasons decrease, and emerge 7,70% of refugees and 1,95% of immigrants who require the subsidiarity protection.

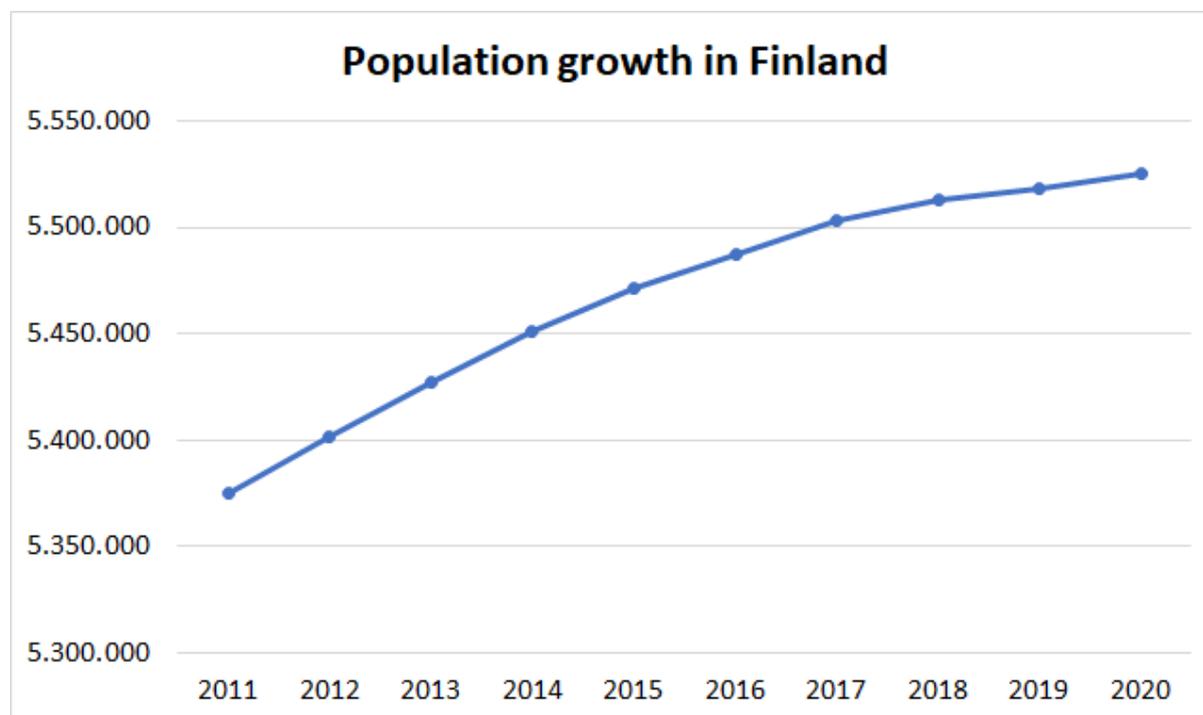


Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_resvalid]



#### 4. Population growth

The population growth registered in Finland from 2019 to 2020 was 0,1%<sup>6</sup>.



Source: EUROSTAT [demo\_pjan]

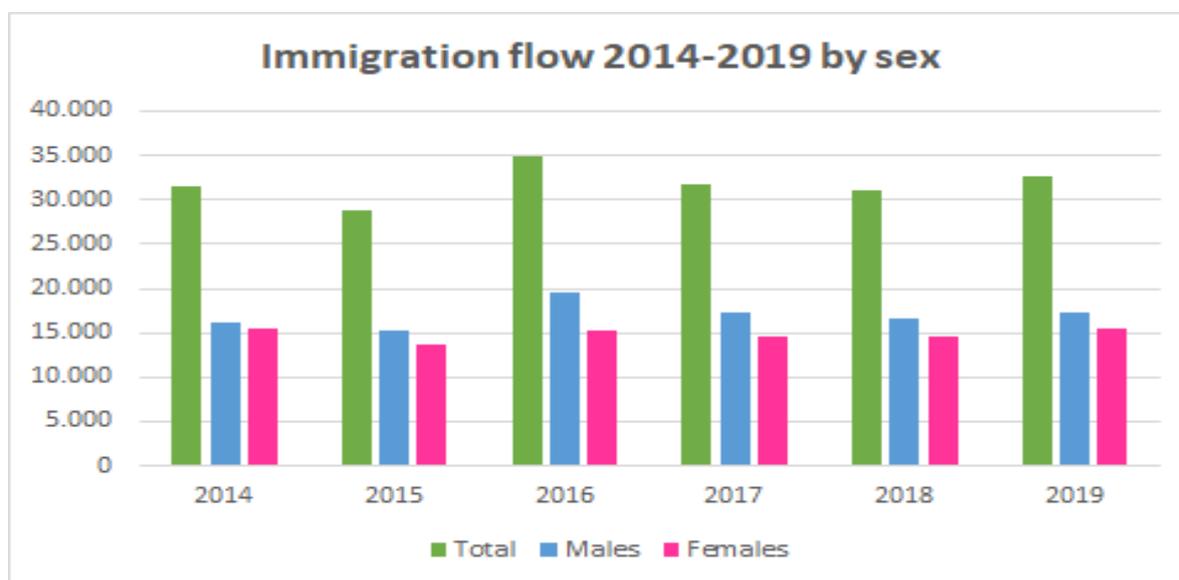
<sup>6</sup> Finland population growth, Datacommons.  
([https://datacommons.org/place/country/FIN?utm\\_medium=explore&mprop=count&popt=Person&hl=it](https://datacommons.org/place/country/FIN?utm_medium=explore&mprop=count&popt=Person&hl=it))

## 5. Immigration flow in Finland from 2014 to 2019 by sex, age group, country of birth and reason for migration

In this section we will present the dynamics of the immigration flows in Finland from 2014 to 2019<sup>7</sup>. In addition, we will pay attention to the last year available in Eurostat's database (2019) to observe some interesting details of our analysis.

### 5.1 Sex

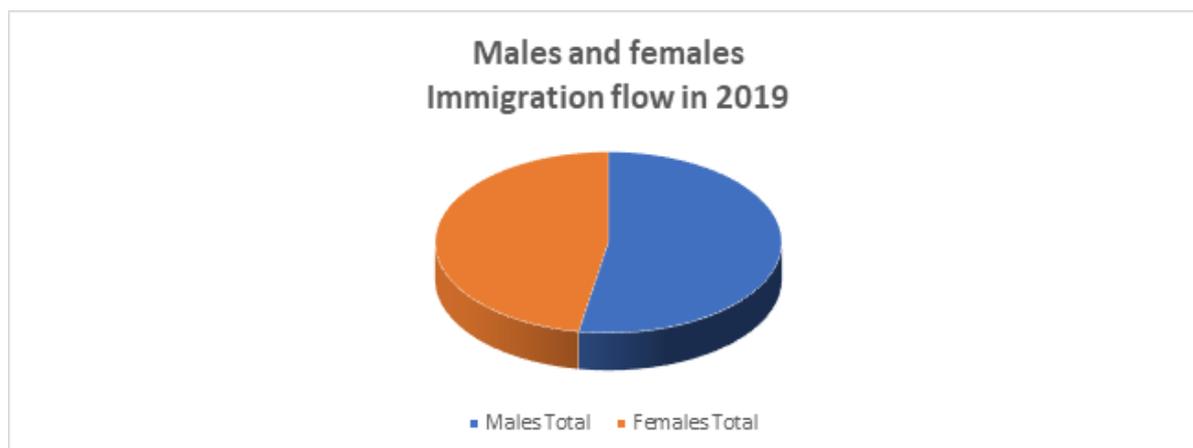
The first histogram shows a total number of immigrants in Finland per year distributed then by sex. The largest number of people immigrated to Finland was registered in 2016 and the smallest one in 2015. In any case, the flows of immigration in these years do not have big differences between them. It can be also mentioned that the number of male immigrants is always slightly higher (with no big differences) than the number of female immigrants.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm3ctb]

In fact, also in 2019 the distribution by sex is quite even, represented by a prevalence of only 1.802 male immigrants over the female ones.

<sup>7</sup>The analysis of previous years was not possible due to the missing information in the Eurostat database.

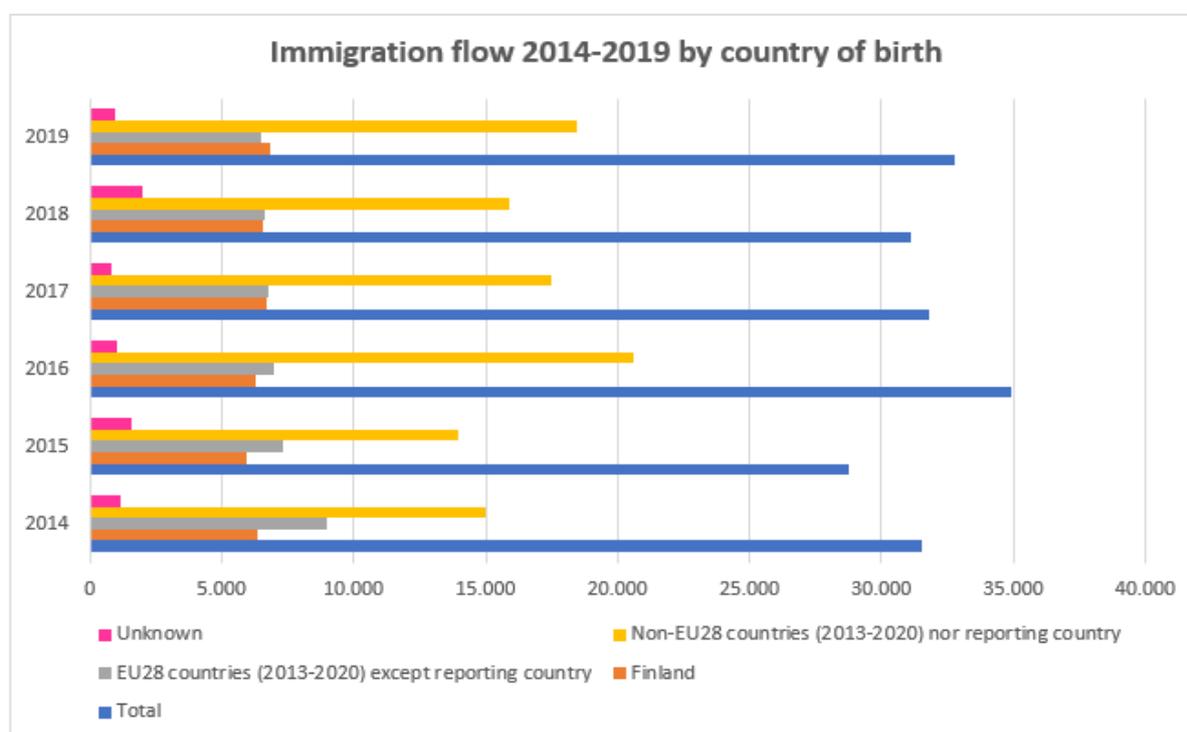


Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm3ctb]

## 5.2 Country of birth

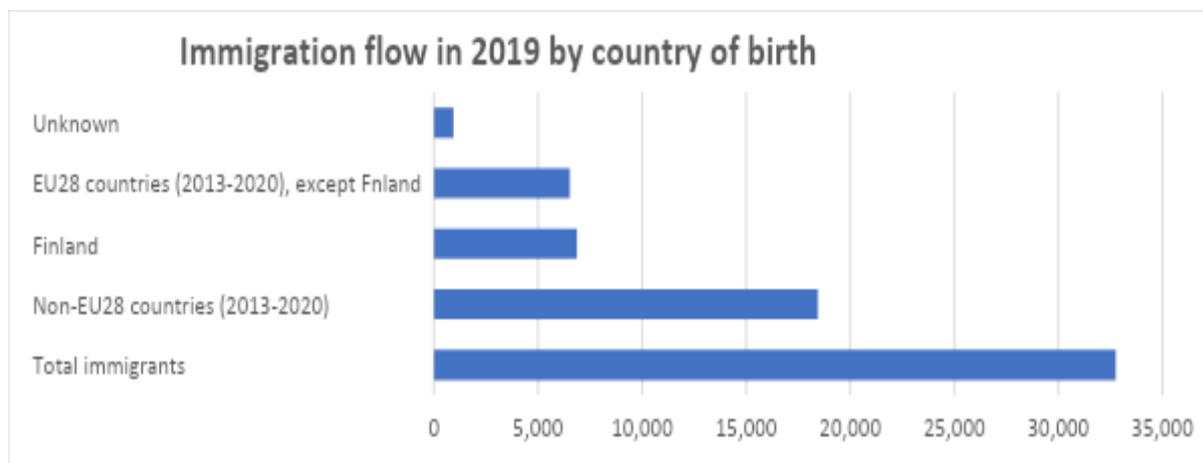
We proceed with analysing the immigration flows by country of birth. The following considerations can be made:

1. Immigrants born in non-EU countries have a dominant position in their weight on total immigration and in the last 4 years (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019) this weight has exceeded 50% of total number of immigrants.
2. Starting from 2016 the difference between the immigrants born in Finland and the ones born in other EU countries becomes quite insignificant. Until 2019 the immigrants born in other EU countries prevailed the ones born in Finland



Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm3ctb]

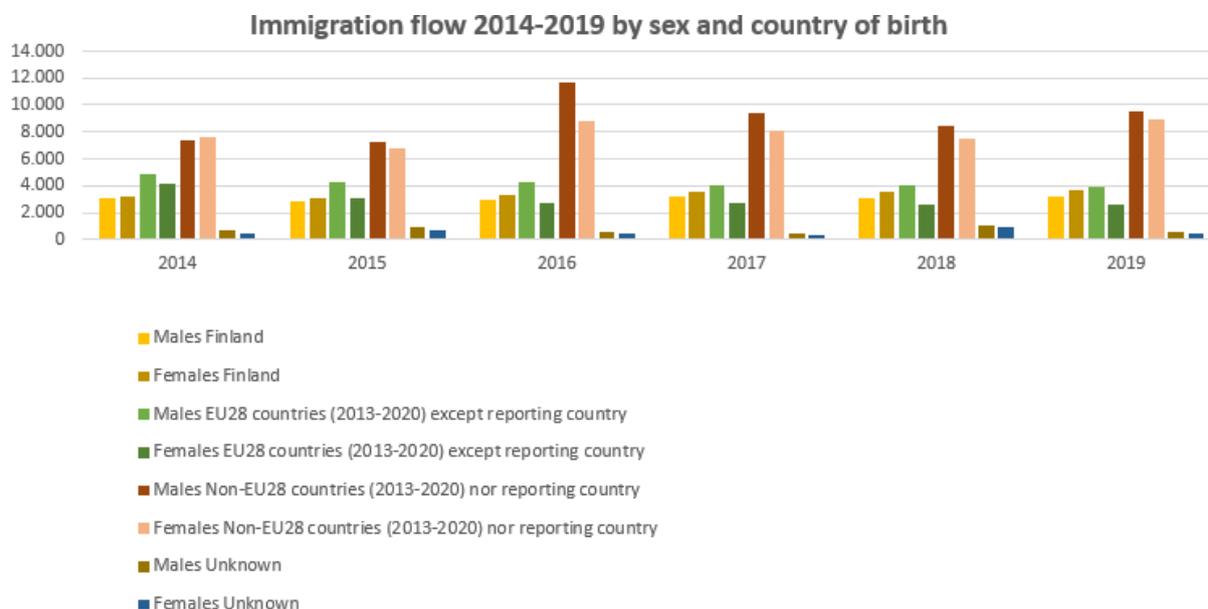
Let us look closer to 2019. More than half of the people (18.441) immigrated to Finland in 2019 were born in non-EU countries, while the number of immigrants born in Finland for the first time in the last 6 years overcomes the number of immigrants born in other EU countries (6.864 and 6.520 respectively).



Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm3ctb]

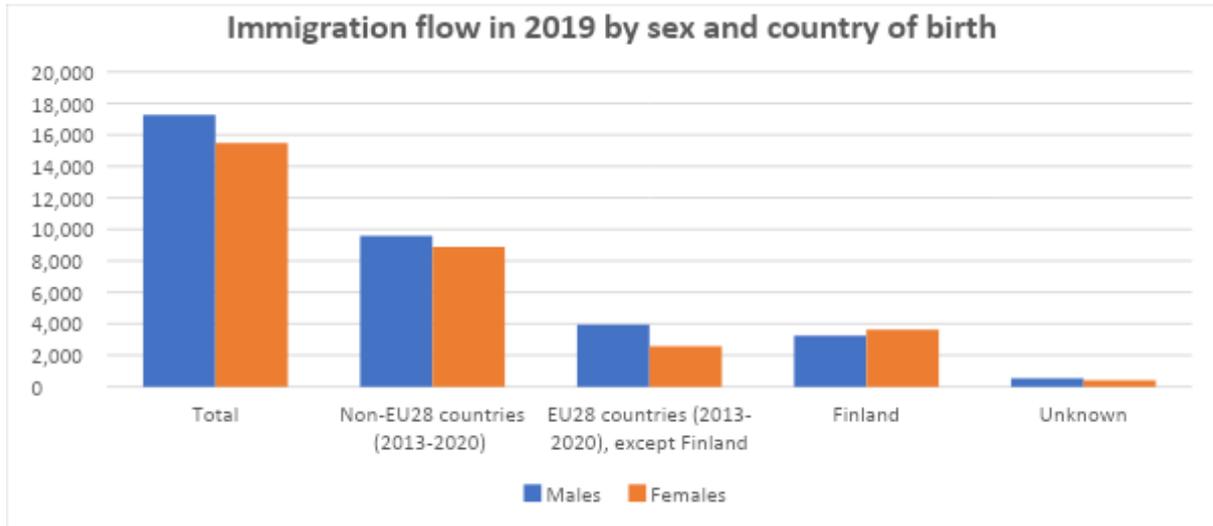
### 5.3 Sex + country of birth

When comparing males and females by country of birth, a similar tendency can be found: many males and females immigrated to Finland from 2014 to 2019 were born in non-EU countries. Despite this tendency, a small difference can be evidenced: while **male** immigrants born in the other EU countries always prevail the ones born in Finland, **female** immigrants born in Finland prevail the ones born in the other EU countries with an exception in 2014.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm3ctb]

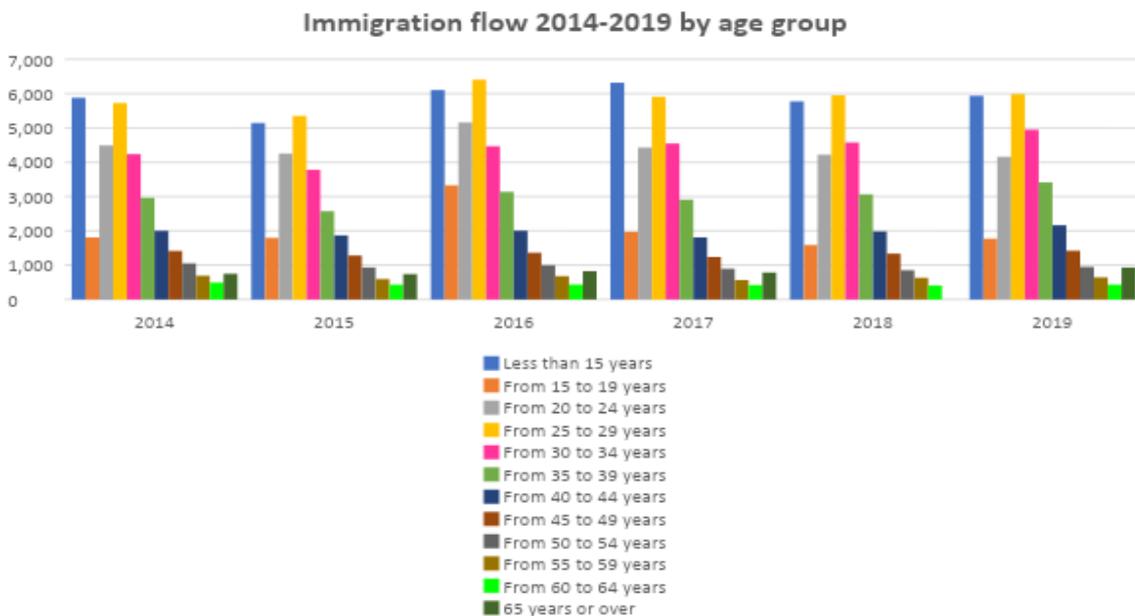
Below can be found a histogram of the immigration flow in Finland in 2019 with a closer observation of these conclusions.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm3ctb]

### 5.4 Age group

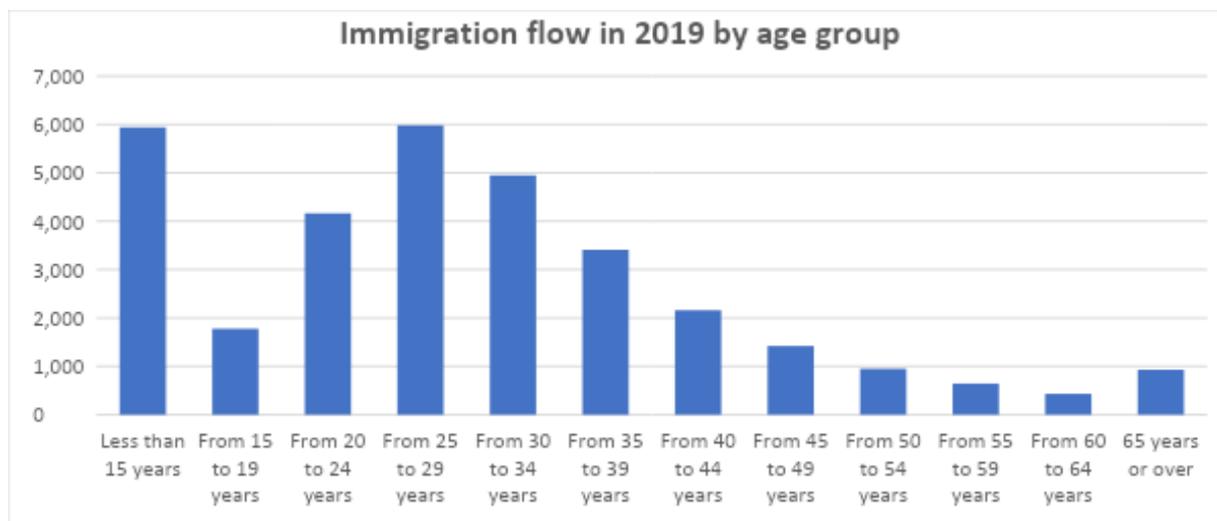
In most cases the data presented below shows a clear domination of the yellow column which represents the immigrants of a group age from 25 to 29 years. This column does not stay far from the light blue column (less than 15 years old immigrants) which overpasses the yellow column in 2014 and 2017. Thus, younger generations are more represented than the older ones.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm3ctb]



In fact, when we look at 2019, we see that most immigrants reached Finland in 2019 were young people aged from 25 to 29 years, followed by the minors aged less than 15 years and young people aged from 30 to 34 years. Adults from 60 to 64 years have the smallest weight on total number of immigrants reached Finland in 2019.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm3ctb]

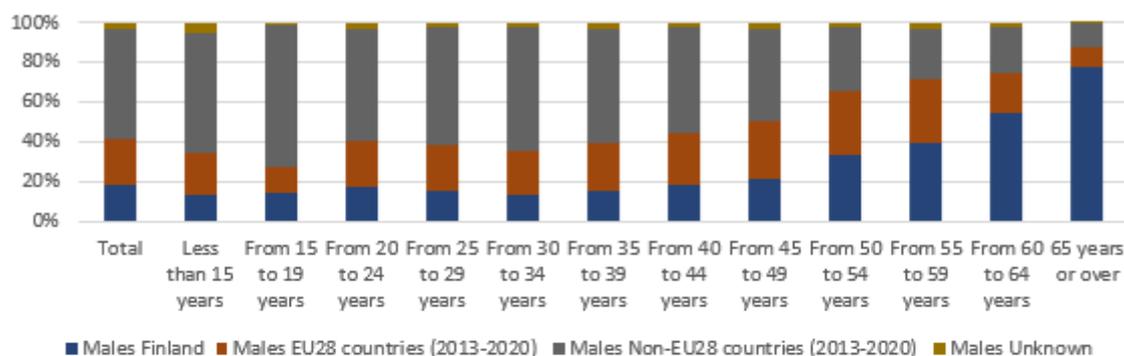
### 5.5 Age group + sex + country of birth

A more detailed observation can be reached by adding to the above presented data not only the distribution by age group but also by sex and by country of birth. This can be useful to build a more precise portrait of the people who immigrated to Finland in 2019. The main considerations are:

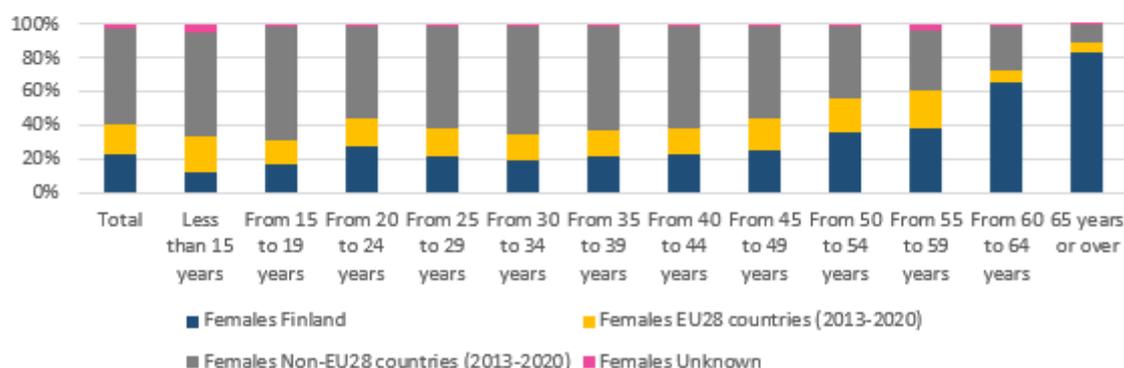
1. The older the immigrants born in Finland are (blue column in both histograms), the higher is their weight on total immigrant number, thus in the group age of 55 years and over Finland becomes the dominant country of origin amongst all the immigrants reached Finland in 2019.
2. The youngest generations of immigrants generally come from the non-EU countries. These countries of birth prevail in all the groups of age younger than 55 years.
3. As was mentioned previously, **female** immigrants born in Finland prevailed the ones born in other EU countries. This diagram approves it but provides us a small specification (exception): only in the group of age “less than 15 years” the number of the females born in other EU countries exceeds the number of the females born in Finland.
4. The similar observation can be done regarding the **male** immigrants: the diagram approves that the number of male immigrants born in EU countries prevail the number of ones born in Finland, except for the group of age “from 15 to 19 years” and for the groups of age over 50 years (as was described in point 1 of this list).



Males by age group and country of birth  
Immigration flow in 2019



Females by group age and country of birth  
Immigration flow in 2019

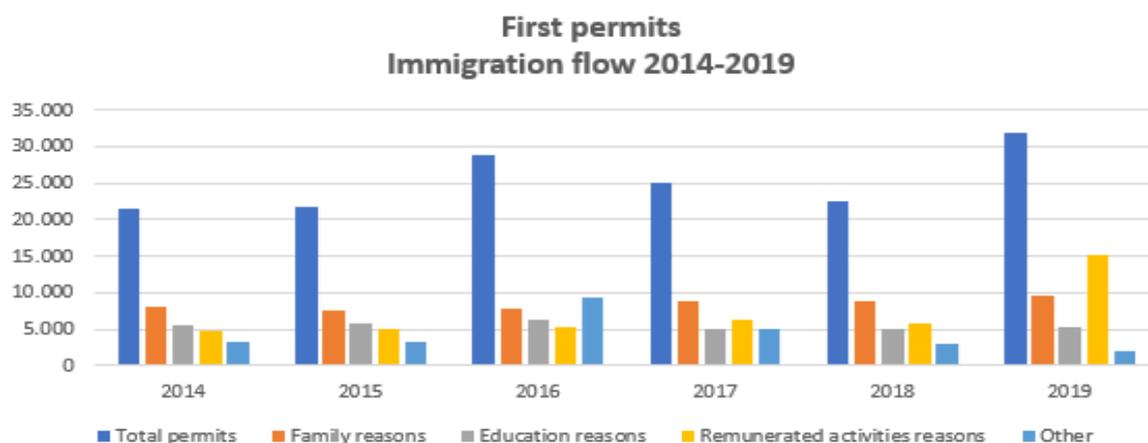


Source: Eurostat [migr\_imm3ctb]

## 5.6 First permit by reason

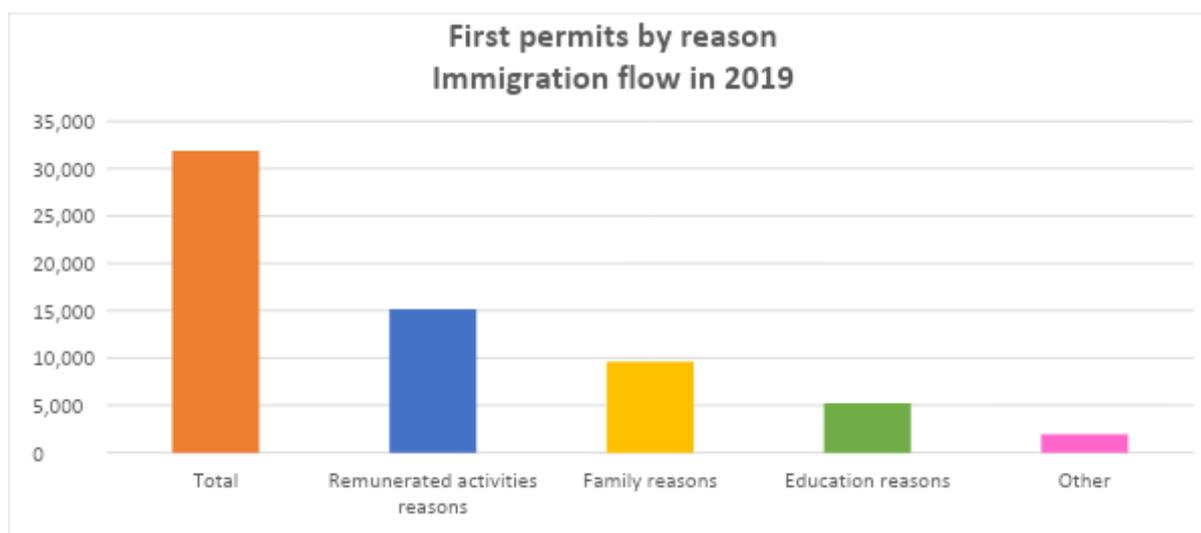
The following considerations can be done:

1. The largest number of first permits was issued in 2019 and the smallest one in 2014.
2. Out of 6 years taken in consideration in 4 of them (2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018) first permits issued for family reasons prevail over all other reasons.
3. In 2016 there was a significant “jump” and dominance of the category of “other reasons” in issuing a first permit.
4. In 2019 the first permits issued for remunerated activities reasons make even more significant “jump”. Below can be found more detailed information regarding this year.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_resfirst]

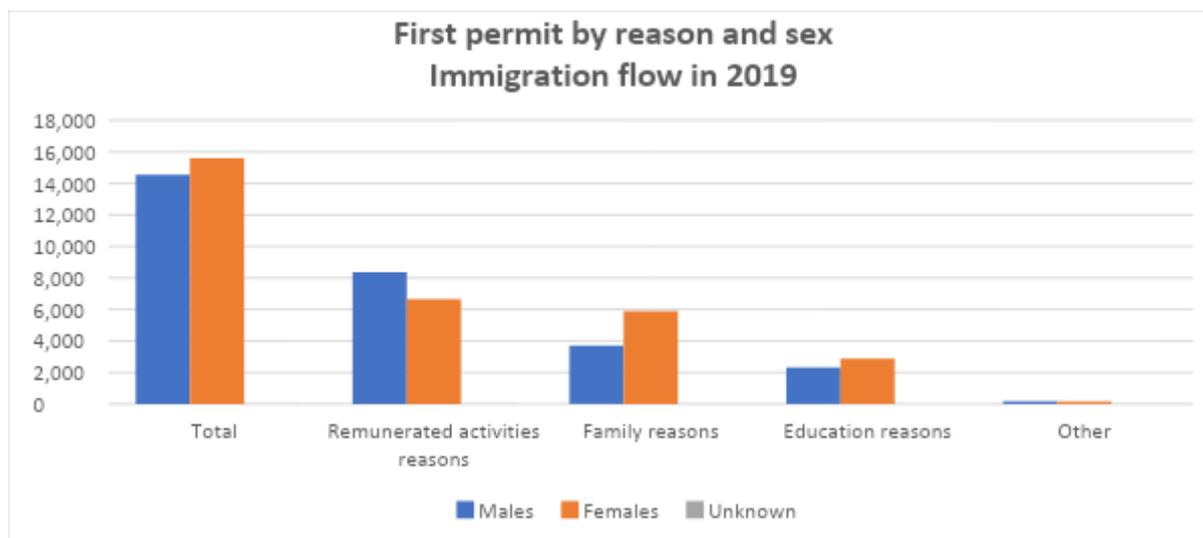
This histogram demonstrates that in 2019 in Finland there were issued 31.868 first permits, out of which almost half of them (15.137) were issued for remunerated activities reasons. The first permits issued for family reasons take almost the third of total permits, followed by education reasons which take the sixth part of all the first permits issued in 2019.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_resfirst]

### 5.7 First permit by reason + sex

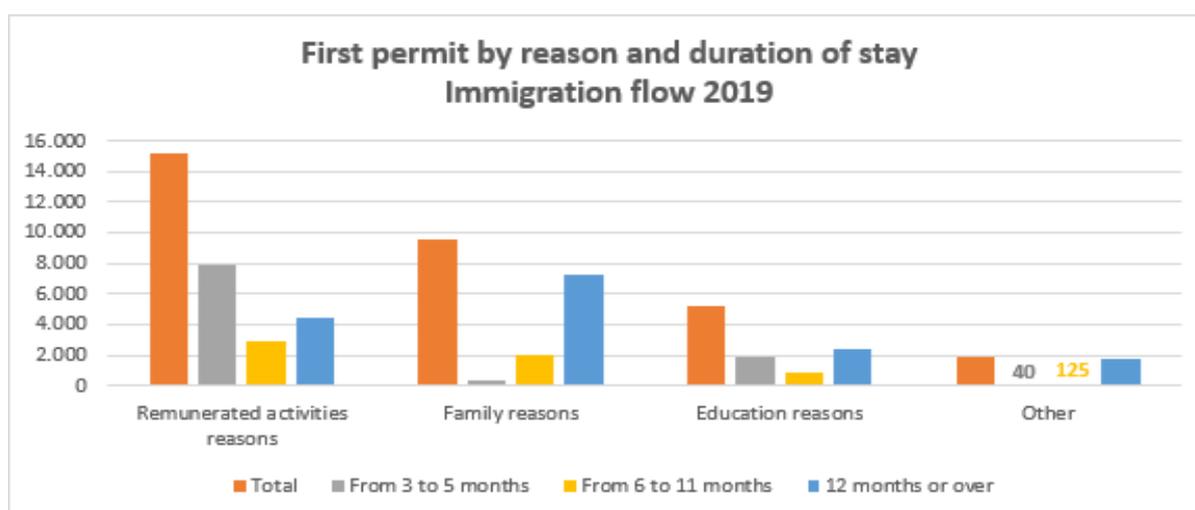
A more detailed analysis shows that in 2019 females received the slightly higher number of first permissions than males did. The main reason for issuing first permission remains “remunerated activities”, but the proportion with other reasons is different for male and for female immigrants. Thus, while in 2019 male immigrants had a meaningful drop between remunerated activities reasons (8.372 first permits) and family reasons (3.705 first permits), female immigrants had less difference between these two reasons reaching almost the same number of first permits for each of them (6.658 and 5.896 respectively). The section “total unknown” (grey color) remains invisible in the graphic as there were only 10 “unknown” people (that is people who did not mention any sex) which received a first permit in 2019.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_resfas]

### 5.8 First permit by reason + duration of stay

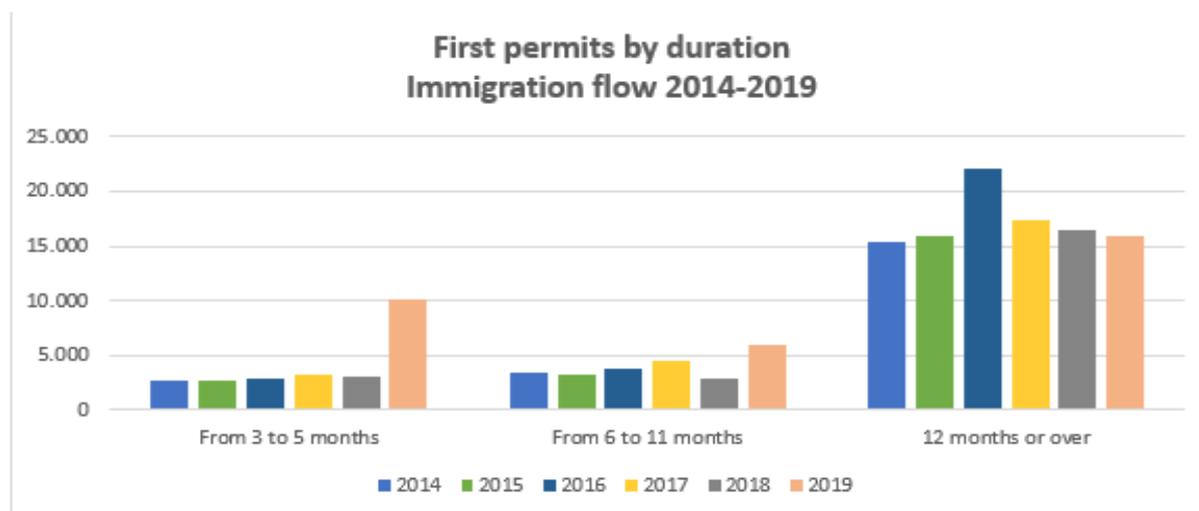
This histogram provides some new details regarding the duration of an issued permit. Thus, the largest number of first permits for the remunerated activities (predominant reason for the acquisition of a first permit) were issued for the period of 3 to 5 months, while the permits for family reasons generally were issued for the period of 12 months and over.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_resfirst]

If we look at the overview of the last 6 years available in the database of Eurostat, we can see that the largest number of first permits issued for a long period (more than 12 months) were registered in 2016, while the largest number of the first permits issued for the shorter duration were registered in 2019<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> As was demonstrated above, the remuneration activities reason in 2019 was the dominant reason for issuing a first permit and most of them were issued for the period of 3-5 months.



Source: Eurostat [migr\_resfirst]

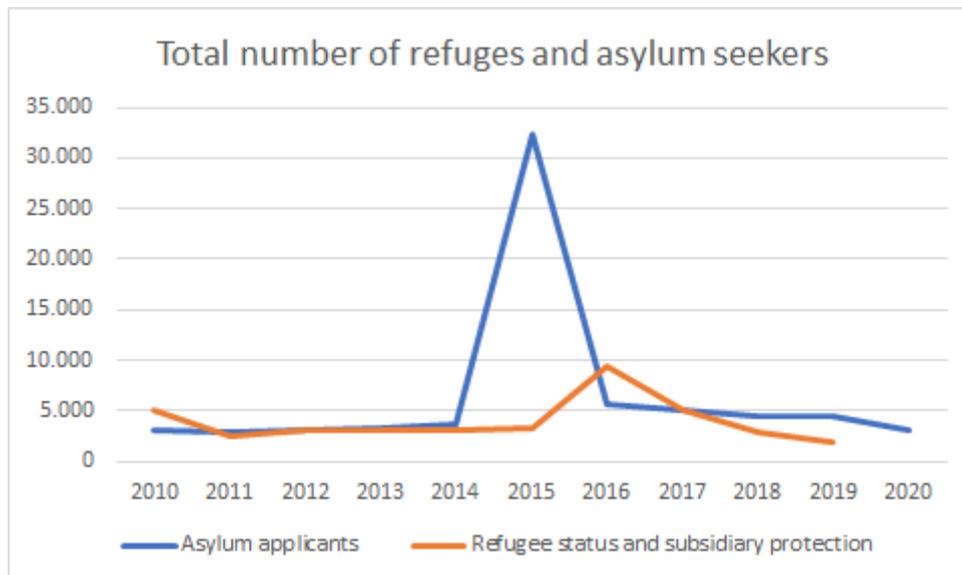
## 6. Total number of refugees (asylum seekers, sex, age)

In this section, we will analyse more in depth the category of asylum seekers in Finland. Despite the term asylum seekers being often used interchangeably with that of refugees, the latter identifies a narrower category, which is that of asylum seekers who have successfully seen their refugee status recognised from the host country. This first distinction will be illustrated in the first graph. The following charts instead will focus on the sex ratio and on the age distribution in the asylum seeker population.

### Asylum seekers and refugees

In the following graph we put together data about asylum applicants and about permits issued for refugee status and subsidiary protection to find the number of refugees over the total number of asylum seekers. Asylum applications seem to be rather stable, peaking in 2015, which is also known as the year of Europe's refugee crisis<sup>9</sup>. Consequently, in the following year there has been an increase in the number of permits issued for refugee status and subsidiary protection, although not as relevant as the increase in asylum applications. Unfortunately, data on the number of permits issued in 2020 are not yet available on EUROSTAT.

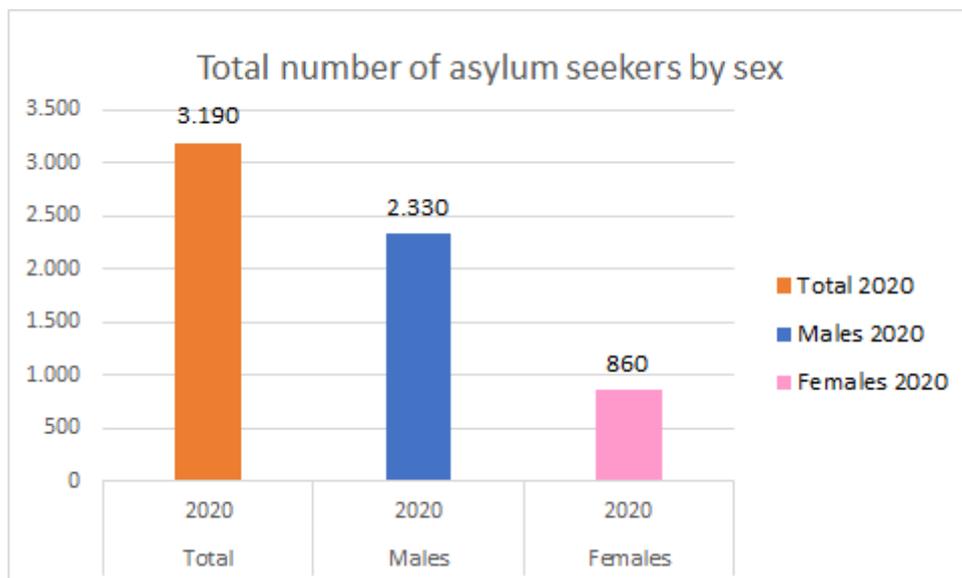
<sup>9</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2015/12/56ec1ebde/2015-year-europes-refugee-crisis.html>



Sources : EUROSTAT [migr\_asyappctza], [migr\_resoth].

### Asylum seekers by sex

Considering the sex ratio of asylum seekers, from the following chart we can see that in 2020 the number of female asylum seekers in Finland is much smaller than the number of their male counterparts. This result is partially in contrast with what we found in section 2, as we did not record a huge sex imbalance among the total immigrant population.

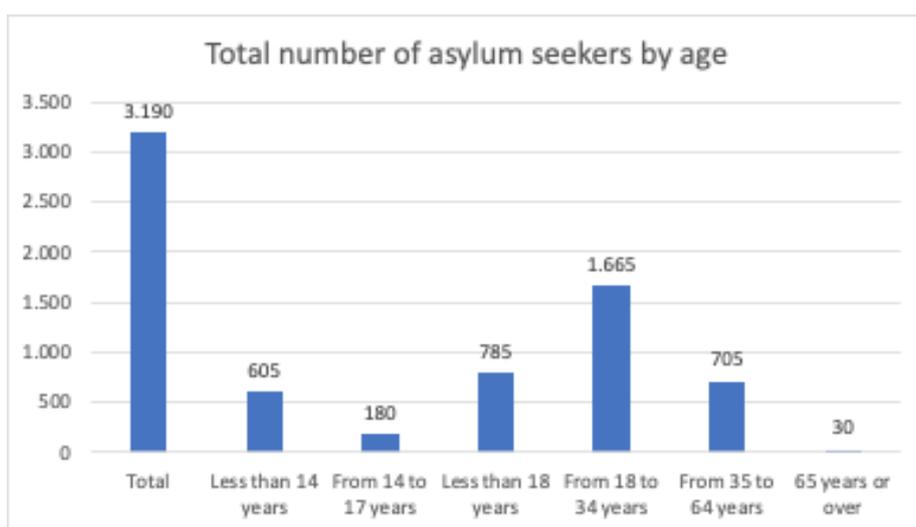


Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_asyappctza]



### Asylum seekers by age

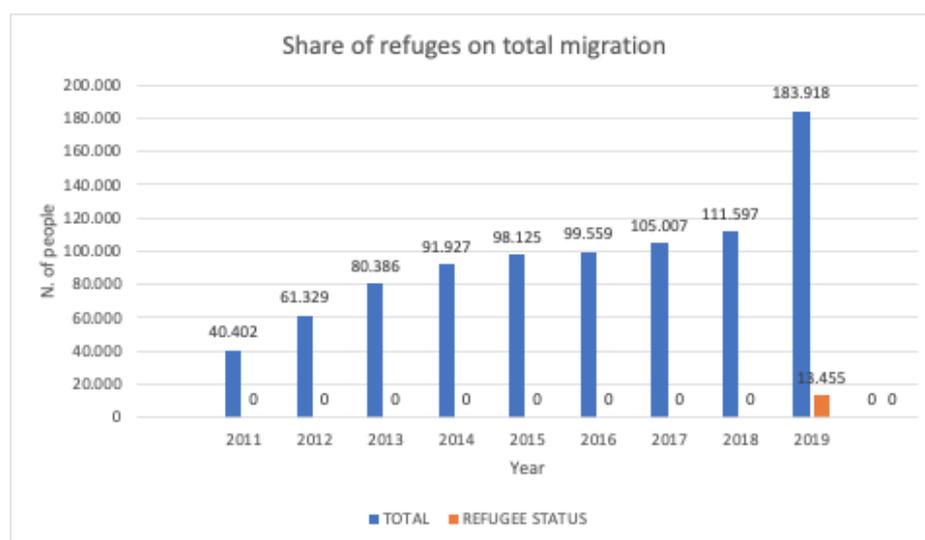
In the following chart, it is possible to observe the distribution of asylum seekers under six age groups and the total amount of them, during the year 2020. Observing it, the fact that most of the asylum seekers belong to the age group “From 18 to 34 years” stands out. This age group is immediately followed by “Less than 18 years”, which clearly suggests that most of the Finnish population, which concerns Asylum seekers, is made up by young people, namely students and young workers.



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_asyapptctza]

## 7. Asylum seekers on total migration

In the following chart we can observe the share of asylum seekers on the number of the total migration in the last 10 years. It is interesting to notice that the only available data for refugees can be found in the year 2019. Furthermore, we have no evidence of migration for the year 2020, probably due to the burst of CoronaVirus (Covid-19) pandemic and because of some changings in the policy of immigration of Finland (Migri, the Finnish Immigration service), which since 2019 started a process of increase in the banishment of immigrants<sup>10</sup>.



Source: EUROSTAT [migr\_resvalid]

## 8. Migrant's integration indicators

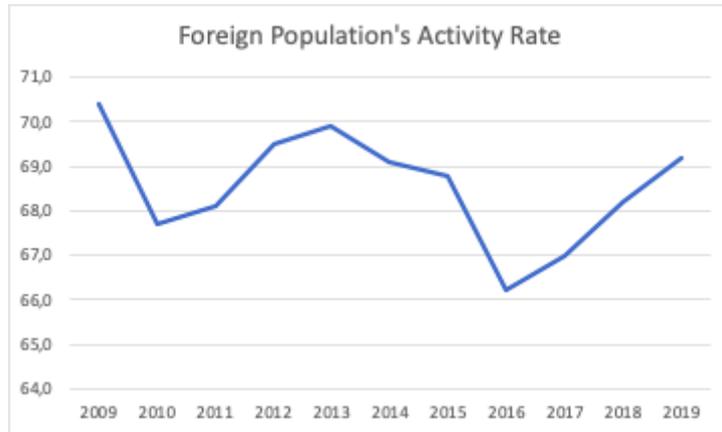
In the following section, we will analyse more specifically the migrant's integration. We will do it thanks to indicators which unfold, in a statistical sense, the trend of two phenomenon correlated with the immigrant's labour market integration in the time of the last ten years: activity and unemployment.

Subsequently, in order to investigate deeper into the most affected categories, we related the two rates found (activity rate and unemployment rate) with the additional variables of sex and country of origin: the first, depending on whether men or women were taken as reference and the second, depending on whether we were referring to foreigners coming from an EU-28 country of origin or a non EU-28 country of origin. Furthermore, we were forced to consider the decade 2009-2019 because the 2020 data, with the correlated covid-pandemic effects, were still not available on the Eurostat Dataset.

<sup>10</sup> See more: <https://it.sputniknews.com/mondo/202002138719521-espulsioni-immigrati-dalla-finlandia-incrementano-dell80/>



### Foreign Population's Activity Rate



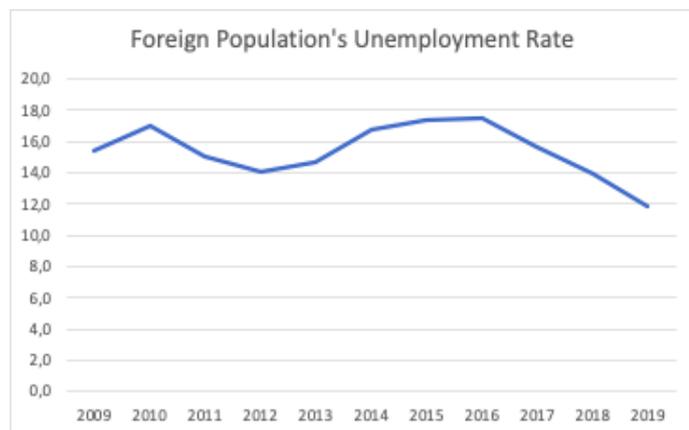
Source: EUROSTAT [lfsa\_argacob]

In the chart above, as we anticipated in the introduction of this paragraph, we can have a quick and intuitive frame about the activity trend of people with foreign origin in the decade 2009-2019. The activity rate (in percentage, %), which includes all people of working age without distinction between employed and unemployed, starts from the 70,4% of 2009 to the slightly different 69,2% of the 2019's one. During the decade there were some lows like in 2010 and 2016 (correspondingly 67,7 % and 66,2 %) and a peak in 2013 with the percentage of 69,9%.

### Foreign Population's Unemployment Rate

Next, we moved to study the unemployment portion of the immigrant's activity rate and we discovered that it consistently decreased in the decade of reference and especially in the last years, (2016 onwards) we could observe an ongoing drop.

In 2009 the foreign population's unemployment rate was 15,4% and now it decreased at 11,9%, one of the lowest in Europe without any doubt.



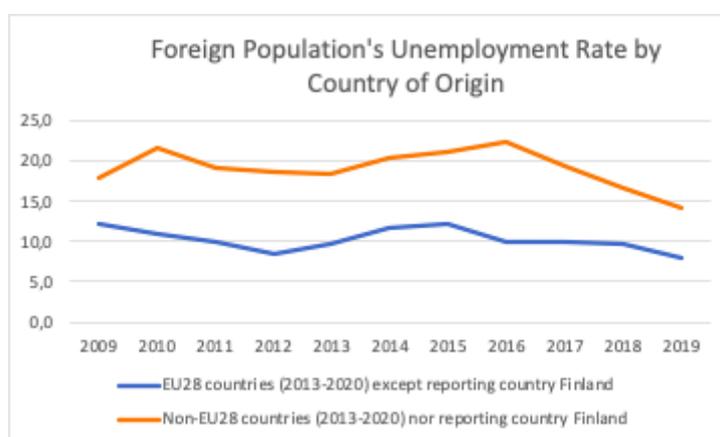
Source: EUROSTAT [lfsa\_urgacob]

However, there were years in which the immigrant's unemployment rate was quite high like in 2016 with the percentage of 17,5%.

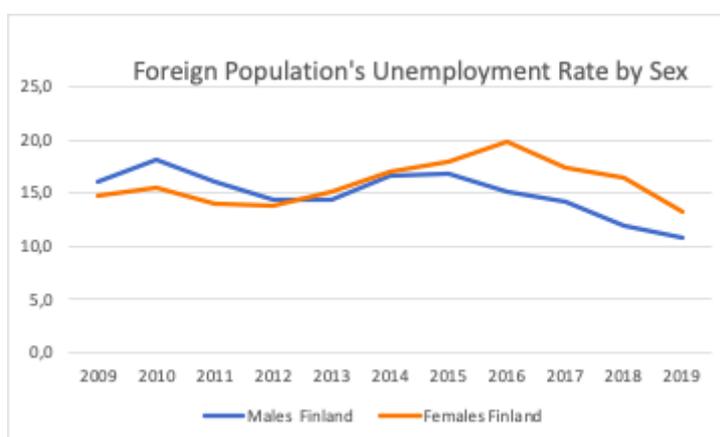
## Foreign Population’s Unemployment Rate by Country of Origin and Sex

For the successful outcome of our paper, we crossed the immigrant’s unemployment rate with the two other variables “country of origin” and “sex”, to better understand on which sub-category of the foreigners this phenomenon applies the most. As we could foresee, the unemployment problem affects more the immigrants with a country of origin different from the ones of European Union (EU28). During the referred period there were years in which the difference between the two categories was massive and substantial (like for example in between 2010 and 2016 with an approx. average difference of almost 10 percentage points) but in the biennium 2018-2019 the values became less disproportional, reaching 8,0% for the EU28 countries of origin and 14,1% for the non EU28 countries of origin.

In spite of everything, the lowest gap between one group and the other was in 2009 with roughly 5 percentage points (12,1% EU28 and 17,3% non EU28).



Source: EUROSTAT [lsfa\_argacob]



Source: EUROSTAT [lsfa\_argacob]



Completely different scenario as regard to categorization by gender. In the chart above we can surprisingly see that the immigrants' unemployment rate in Finland is not showing a considerable gender gap. Before the intersection in 2012-2013, were the unemployment rate for males and females was identical ( $\approx 14\%$ ), the male immigrants had a higher unemployment rate (16% males, 14,8% females). Nowadays the situation changed a bit especially since 2016 with the highest gap of  $\approx 5$  percentage points in disfavour of females, but if we refer to the 2019 both have decreased substantially as well as the gender gap in between each other.

Finally, we wanted to conclude with a further intersection of variables, combining both "country of origin" and "sex" but the data on Eurostat were not very reliable (for website's admission) and for this reason not statistically significant in the sense that they may not unfold the reality of situation.