



WORK REPORT OF THE FINNISH EXPATRIATE PARLIAMENT ON THE PROGRESS IN 2017–2021 OF THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE 9th SESSION

The 9th session of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament (FEP) was held at the University of Helsinki on June 15–16, 2017. As in previous years, a summary of the resolutions adopted in the session was sent to the Finnish Prime Minister in different languages. From the Prime Minister's Office, the resolutions were circulated to different ministries for comment. The resolutions were delivered to State Secretary Paula Lehtomäki who was acting on behalf of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä. Ministries submitted their comments electronically.

This work report describes the progress made in respect of the FEP's 2017 resolutions. The work report is available on the FEP's website usp.fi in the section pertaining to the 10th session. It will be presented to the FEP's 10th session for approval. The 56 resolutions covered in this work report are available on the website at usp.fi > FEP session > Resolutions.

RESOLUTION 1. The impact of Brexit on Finns

The Finland Society continues to monitor the situation of Finns living in the United Kingdom and their families. The Finnish authorities and government have disseminated information about the UK's withdrawal from the European Union, also known as Brexit. The Finland Society and the FEP Speakers' Council have discussed the views of Finns living in the UK with the Unit for Consular Assistance of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Brexit took place on January 31, 2020, and since February 1, 2020, it is no longer an EU member state. This marked the beginning of preparations for the post-Brexit era. This so-called transition period came to an end on December 31, 2020. Starting from January 1, 2021, only the agreements negotiated during the transition period are in force. The Brexit agreement secures the rights, based on EU law, of EU nationals living in the UK to reside, work, and receive social security in the UK for their lifetime, if they had started living in the country before January 1, 2021. These rights are the same as they were on December 31, 2020. A British spouse who moved to Finland before December 31, 2020, will be given a right of residence based on family relations. Finns who wish to stay in the UK must apply to the EU Settlement Scheme by the summer of 2021. Those who moved into the country before the end of 2020 are entitled to apply. A successful application gives them the legal right to reside in the country. Some changes already took place during the transition period, such as restrictions on the services offered by banks operating in Finland.

Reliable information about Brexit is available from the Europe Information website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (eurooppatiedotus.fi). The website of the Finnish embassy in the UK is also regularly updated with new information. The Finnish Church in London has been helping Finns apply in time to the new EU Settlement Scheme which is intended for EU nationals living in the UK. The Finland Society regularly provides information about the progress of the Brexit agreement in its e-newsletter such as [news bulletin was published on April 14, 2021](#), in social media (Facebook) and on its website.

2. Postal voting for expatriate Finns

(Earlier resolutions 50/2007, 3/2010, 6/2012, 2/2015, 2/2017)



On November 21, 2017, the Finnish Parliament passed a law establishing the right to postal voting for expatriate Finns and others who are abroad at the time of elections. The Finland Society prepared for the elections together with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Population Register Centre (now called the Digital and Population Data Services Agency) by preparing a brochure about postal voting in different languages. The Ministry of Justice published it on the vaalit.fi website. The Finland Society distributed the brochure via its electronic communication channels, in a colour print version, and as an appendix to the *Finland Bridge magazine* (4/2018). A video recording was made of a *Postal Voting Seminar* that was organized together with network partners on October 10, 2018. The seminar was opened by Minister of the Interior, Mr. Kai Mykkänen. The management of the Ministry of Justice and the Population Register Centre as well as experts from the University of Helsinki and the Migration Institute of Finland explained postal voting and described the situation of expatriate Finns. A total of 254,000 expatriate Finns with the right to vote were represented by guests participating remotely from Dubai, Germany, and the United States. The 109,000 persons in Sweden who have the right to vote in Finnish elections were represented by a young expatriate Finn from Sweden. In the autumn of 2018, the Finland Society's network of expatriate Finns participated in a global test of the system of ordering and returning the postal voting documents, organized by the Ministry of Justice. Election and voting data was coordinated in the *FinnVote* network together with scholars and experts. Research projects are presented at Finnvote.fi. Scholars from the University of Helsinki set up the website ulkosuomalaisetvaaleissa.fi. An election debate was organized on January 25, 2019, together with the European Parliament's office in Finland under the heading *An election spring of all times: 100 good reasons why you should vote*. Questions were asked by the debate host Kari Lumikero and the Speakers' Council and answered by a panel consisting of candidates running for seats in the Finnish Parliament and in the European Parliament.

The Finland Society published unique press releases about the two first elections in Finland in 2019 where postal voting was possible (on April 18 for the parliamentary elections and on June 6 for the EU elections). They included statistics on advance and postal voting obtained from the Ministry of Justice, the Legal Register Centre, Statistics Finland, and the Population Register Centre.

In [Finland Bridge 2/2020](#) there is an article about research on the impact of the elections. The University of Helsinki carried out two research projects with an extensive post-election survey which attracted responses from more than 4000 Finnish citizens in more than 50 different countries. The projects "Facilitating Electoral Participation from Abroad" ([FACE](#) and "Politiskt beteende i den finlandssvenska diasporan" (Political behavior in the Swedish-speaking Finnish diaspora) survey the societal values as well as political identity and participation of Finns living abroad and look into ways in which flexible voting methods could promote the political representation of expatriate Finns. Respondents were encouraged to tell the FACE research group about solutions that would increase their trust in the postal voting method. In the magazine [Finland Bridge 3/2020](#) there is an article about the research results. [Finland Bridge 1/2021](#) and e-newsletter 4-2021 contain information about postal voting in the municipal elections of 2021.

3. Joint Nordic embassy buildings

No action taken. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasizes the importance of Nordic co-operation.



4. A parallel bilateral survey of the language situation in Finland and Sweden

No action taken. The matter does not fall within the mandate of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament.

5. Long-term visas to Finland also to be granted on the basis of recommendations from Finnish expatriate communities

The aim of the resolution was not achieved. The Speakers' Council discussed the criteria for granting *long-term* visas between Finland and Russia with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The criteria are in compliance with the Schengen Visa Code. A letter of recommendation cannot be used to change the application of the criteria. The maximum validity period of a continuous multiple-entry visa to the Schengen area is now 5 years. A short-term visa is a permission to enter the Schengen area for a temporary stay of a maximum of 90 days. A residence permit is needed for a stay in Finland that exceeds 90 days, even if it is temporary.

6. Free and unlimited visas for close relatives of Finnish citizens – Бесплатные и бессрочные визы для близких родственников гражданина Финляндии

The aim of the resolution was not achieved. The Speakers' Council also discussed the criteria for granting long-term visas between Finland and Russia with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *with regard to siblings*. When applying the EU-Russia visa facilitation agreement, siblings of Finnish citizens are not considered close relatives. The close relative living in Finland must be a Russian citizen. In the Agreement between the European Community and the Russian Federation on the facilitation of the issuance of visas, it is stated (Article 6) that the categories of close relatives for whom fees for processing the visa application are waived include visiting spouses, children (including adopted and without age limit), parents or custodians, grandparents and grandchildren of citizens of the European Union or of the Russian Federation legally residing in the territory of the Russian Federation or the EU Member States.

Russian citizens may be issued a visa free of charge if the purpose of their travel is, for example, research co-operation, a study visit related to their own studies, participation in an official exchange program between twin cities, or a visit to a close relative residing in Finland. Written evidence of the purpose of the trip and possible family relationship with a Finnish citizen must be provided. The wish expressed by the Speakers' Council to lower the price of visas in order to support young people and Ingrian Finnish cultural co-operation met with little response from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

In September 2019, Finland started, in compliance with the Schengen Agreement, to require Russian tourists and independent travellers to present data on their income and wealth as well as a travel plan when applying for a visa to Finland. The possibility of granting visas free of charge was preserved on the basis of the EU-Russia visa facilitation agreement that is in compliance with the Schengen Code.

7. Authorizing and obligating Finnish embassies and diplomatic representations abroad to receive and forward notifications regarding changes in the marital status, birth of children, and citizenship of Finnish citizens

The aim of the resolution was achieved. According to the current practice in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finnish embassies abroad receive notifications to the population information



system from Finnish citizens in order to forward them to the Local Register Offices. Based on an amendment of the decree on service fees given by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs on September 1, 2020, the embassies' service of forwarding modifications of personal data to the Digital and Population Data Services Agency became subject to a service fee. Citizens are encouraged to send any foreign documents concerning the birth, marriage or death of Finnish citizens abroad directly to the Local Register Office. As of the beginning of 2020, they can freely choose the Local Register Office they wish to turn to. In the beginning of 2020, the Population Register Centre, which maintains the population information system, and the Local Register Offices were merged to form the Digital and Population Data Services Agency (dvv.fi – how to report changes in personal data as an expatriate Finn: <https://dvv.fi/ulkomailla-asuminen>). It is important to keep one's personal data up to date in the population information system. For example, the preparation of the voting rights register as well as contacts with authorities in matters such as pensions and military service depend on this. Citizens have a legal obligation to report any changes in their personal data.

8. Mobile passport unit to be established in Central Europe (Frankfurt)

(Earlier resolutions 7-8/2015)

The aim of the resolution was achieved when a mobile passport unit was established in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany.

9. Increasing the efficiency of use of the mobile passport unit

(Earlier resolutions 54/2007, 5/2010, 7-8/2015, 8-9/2017)

So far, the aim of the resolution has not been achieved. It has been requested that Finnish embassies which have mobile passport units be given sufficient resources to make efficient use of the units so that they would travel around in their entire area on a regular basis, visiting different cities/neighbouring countries for longer than one day at a time. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs monitors and aims to optimize the use of the mobile passport units, taking into consideration the tasks of the embassies and the available resources.

10. Renewing passports and adding the unused months remaining in the old passport

(Earlier resolutions 13/2015, 10/2017)

The proposal of adding the unused time in an existing passport (6 months at a maximum) into the validity period of a new passport has not been implemented. According to the Ministry of the Interior's Police Department it is possible to apply for a new passport at any time, for example, if a passport is lost or destroyed. Normally, a passport application is handled as soon as it has been submitted. The handling time for an electronic application is predictable, between 1 and 3 days.

11. Extending the validity period of passports to 10 years

(Earlier resolutions 4/2010, 9/2012, 12/2015)

So far, the aim of the resolution has not been achieved. According to the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior, the situation has not changed since the previous discussion on the matter. Reasons include keeping the data security of the chip up to date, maintaining the security of the passport, securing the possibility of both visual and electronic identification on the basis of the



passport photo, and preventing various forms of fraud. As biometric identification becomes increasingly common in border controls, the quality of biometric identifiers also becomes increasingly important. When passports have a shorter validity period, new anti-fraud technologies and security features can be added more quickly. The current chip supplier guarantees the functioning (data security) of the chip only up to about seven years.

12. A fee payable to the Finnish Immigration Service for determining citizenship status

No action taken. According to the website of the Finnish Immigration Service, an authority (the police, a Local Register Office, a diplomatic representation) shall request for determination of citizenship status if the information of a person's citizenship in the population information system is suspected to be incorrect or not up to date.

13. Apostille

The aim of the resolution was not achieved. Finnish embassies and honorary consulates abroad cannot be authorized to certify original official documents and to forward them to Finnish authorities. In order to enter a piece of data into the population information system, the relevant document must, under the Act on the population information system and authentication services (661/2009), have been legalized or be accompanied by a certificate, issued by a competent authority of the country in question, stating its origin, unless otherwise provided in an international agreement which is binding on Finland. Therefore, if a Finnish citizen submits a foreign document concerning a birth, marriage or death abroad to a Finnish diplomatic representation to be forwarded to a Local Register Office, the diplomatic representation must verify that the foreign document in question has been appropriately legalized or is accompanied by an apostille.

14. The criteria for Finnish citizenship of expatriate Finns

(Earlier resolution 10/2012)

The resolution was not successful in effecting an amendment of the Nationality Act so that native Finnish citizens, who are also citizens of another country, could automatically retain their Finnish citizenship. They still have to prove that they have sufficient connection with Finland and notify the Finnish authorities by the age of 22 years that they wish to retain their Finnish citizenship. Even though the Nationality Act is positive about multiple nationalities, it is not considered appropriate that citizenship is retained without a real connection to Finland. Finnish citizens who have had their domicile in Finland for less than seven years are notified by the Finnish Immigration Service of the threat of losing their citizenship and the possibility of retaining it. Each year, such a notification is sent to persons who will reach the age of 18 that year and whose address is available in the population information system. The recipient will then have time, at the age from 18 to 21, to notify their wish to retain their citizenship on the basis of a sufficient connection with Finland to a Finnish diplomatic representation or the Finnish police, the Defence Command Finland, or the Lapinjärvi educational center for non-military service. These authorities have an obligation to automatically report such notifications to the Local Register Office. There are different ways to prove a sufficient connection with Finland. If Finnish citizenship has been lost at the age of 22 due to a lack of sufficient connection with Finland, it can be re-acquired by declaration, subject to a fee.



15. Finnish citizenship to be granted to the children of former Finnish citizens as well as their children under 18 years of age by declaration

(Earlier resolutions 2/2007, 4/2007, 15/2010)

The resolution has not yet been successful in effecting an amendment of the Nationality Act so that the grown-up children (18 years or older) of both former and present native Finnish citizens and their children under 18 years of age would be granted Finnish citizenship by declaration. This possibility was included in Section 60 of the Nationality Act that entered into force in 2003 as a transitional provision on declarations for the acquisition of citizenship to be made within a fixed period of time by former Finnish citizens. It was in force from June 1, 2003 to May 31, 2008. A person who had lost his/her Finnish citizenship upon acquiring the citizenship of another state could reacquire Finnish citizenship by declaration without having to live in Finland. This possibility also concerned the children of former and present Finnish citizens even if these children had never been Finnish citizens before. After the transition period, former Finnish citizens can re-acquire their Finnish citizenship by declaration. Children under 18 years of age in their custody will also obtain Finnish citizenship if they are included as co-applicants in the declaration.

16. A care home for expatriate Finns to be established in the Helsinki area and the help needs of Finnish senior citizens to be co-ordinated

(Earlier resolution 12/2012)

The aim of the resolution was partly achieved. The Finland Society's [senior advice website](#) contains information about international situations, specifically targeted to expatriate senior citizens. The information is also available in the guide for senior citizens returning to Finland, which can be ordered free of charge from the Finland Society's counseling service. The guide can be viewed in the senior advice section of the Finland Society's website and ordered either by using the feedback form in the senior advice section or by sending e-mail to info@suomi-seura.fi.

Returning senior citizens will be covered by the social services of their municipality of residence when they live permanently in Finland. As the social services/services for senior citizens are the responsibility of municipalities, the public sector cannot prioritize returnees in their choice of housing services or care homes. They are on an equal footing with other residents of the municipality. Private and third sector plans and projects regarding a care home specifically intended for returnees have not been realized due to a lack of project funding. Expatriate Finnish senior citizens can seek themselves to private care homes just like people living in Finland. In the Helsinki area, returnees have indeed often sought themselves to private care homes which already had other returnees as residents.

17. Student and employee exchange in elderly and dementia care

The aim of the resolution was partly achieved. For twenty years already, it has been possible for care homes and rest homes intended for expatriate Finnish senior citizens to recruit Finnish-speaking trainees via trainee exchange programs. In EU member states and EEA countries, trainee exchange takes place via EU's own trainee exchange programs, mostly the Erasmus program. In countries outside the EU, students and recent graduates in the social welfare and health care fields can



apply as trainees in Finnish care homes in Australia and Canada via EDUFI, the Finnish National Agency for Education. The Finnish care homes offer housing, care and services in Finnish for aging expatriate Finns all over the world. As the social welfare and health care sector is highly regulated, employee exchange is limited due to the different qualification requirements in different countries. Social welfare and health care professionals must, as a general rule, apply for their qualifications to be approved under the law of the other country before they can start practicing their profession. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is open to the possibility of co-operating with the relevant sectoral authorities to establish whether the trainee exchange for social welfare and health care students can be extended to include students in secondary education (this is mentioned in [the Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2017-2021](#), p. 45).

18. A person's last will

The aim of the resolution was achieved. On the Finland Society's [senior advice website](#), senior expatriate Finns in particular have been informed about the importance of preparing a last will and testament, a lasting power of attorney, and an advance decision regarding one's care, as well as about the importance of the legality of documents in international situations. The information is also available in the guide for senior citizens returning to Finland, which can be ordered free of charge from the Finland Society's counseling service. The guide can be viewed in the senior advice section of the Finland Society's website and ordered either by using the feedback form in the senior advice section or by sending e-mail to info@suomi-seura.fi.

19. Collecting health insurance contributions from retired expatriate Finns who live permanently abroad

No action taken. The Finnish tax authorities only collect health insurance contributions from those retired expatriate Finns whose health care expenses Finland is liable to cover.

20. Supporting senior expatriate Finns

The resolution did not express an opinion. The Finland Society already co-operates with bodies working with expatriate and repatriated Finnish senior citizens and advocates for their interests on the basis of earlier resolutions. The Finland Society's [senior advice website](#) contains information about international situations, specifically targeted to expatriate senior citizens. A guide for senior citizens returning to Finland can be ordered free of charge from the Finland Society's counseling service. The guide can be viewed in the senior advice section of the Finland Society's website and ordered either by using the feedback form in the senior advice section or by sending e-mail to info@suomi-seura.fi.

21. Extending the time limit for adjustment of taxation back to five years

No action taken. According to the Ministry of Finance, any double taxation is eliminated under the provisions of the tax treaty preventing double taxation. If a taxpayer is of the opinion that their taxation is not in compliance with the tax treaty, they may file a claim for adjustment. If a taxpayer thinks that another country has made a tax decision contrary to the treaty, they shall file a complaint to the country in question. The general appeal period of three years from the beginning of the calendar year following the tax year is considered sufficient for filing a claim for adjustment in situations where the taxpayers think that their taxes have not been correctly assessed in



Finland. If an appeal procedure or tax assessment is still ongoing in another country, the Finnish Assessment Adjustment Board may postpone the handling of the claim for adjustment in case a decision taken in another country could affect taxation in Finland.

22. A permanent social worker's post to be established in Costa del Sol, Spain

(Earlier resolution 20/2015)

The aim of the resolution was temporarily achieved. In 2020, the Finland Society's partner, the Finnish Seamen's Mission, received funding from the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA) for the implementation of a three-year social work project in Costa del Sol. The aim of the project was to promote the well-being of Finns living or travelling in the area who need special support and assistance and to support voluntary activities locally. The need and possibilities to offer permanent social work will be investigated. Until the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, an increasing number of employees of Finnish companies relocated to Costa del Sol with their families, and tourism was increasing. During the winter season, some 20,000 to 30,000 Finns live in the area. Students in basic and upper secondary education at the Finnish School in Costa del Sol, as well as their families, must keep their Finnish domicile and their entitlement to Finnish social security in order to be able to study in the school.

23. Health care expenses in Finland of expatriate Finns living in certain countries

No action taken. Finnish citizens who live in countries which do not have a social security agreement with Finland, and who pay their taxes in Finland, cannot have the right to use Finnish health care services during their visits to Finland at the same cost as persons residing in countries with which Finland has a reciprocal health care agreement. This concerns the health care entitlements of Finns living outside EU/EEA member states or Switzerland, Australia, or the province of Quebec in Canada. Finns residing in these areas are entitled to receive health care services in Finland on the same conditions as persons residing in Finland. In the EU area, this is based on EU law. Under bilateral health care agreements, costs are not reimbursed between the State Parties. Instead, the agreements are based on reciprocity. Finland has not concluded any bilateral health care agreements since 1992. Instead, Finland has only striven for and concluded such social security agreements which concern the security of pension rights and the avoidance of double social security contributions. The provisions of bilateral agreements are well-established and based on either reciprocity or the mutual reimbursement of costs between the countries, and the entitlement to receive health care services on the same conditions as the local people is not linked to paying one's taxes to a particular country.

24. Registering a vehicle in Finland for an expatriate Finn

The aim of the resolution was achieved. In 2019, it became easier for expatriate Finns to register a vehicle in Finland. [A vehicle tax demand note can now be sent to a foreign address, even on paper by regular mail](#). After the reform, the owner of a vehicle is liable to pay tax even if his/her permanent address is outside Finland. However, if, in addition to the owner, the vehicle also has a holder in Finland, the holder is liable to pay tax. [In Traficom's online service](#), clients must authenticate themselves by strong electronic identification. The forms are also available in the Finnish government's Suomi.fi service (information about the Suomi.fi service: <https://dvv.fi/henkiloasiakkaat>).



25. Reducing the fee for registering a divorce at a District Court in Finland in the case of a marriage between a Finn and a non-EU citizen

No action taken.

26. Kela card to be issued to Finnish citizens living abroad

No action taken.

27. Increasing the state subsidy for the Kulkuri School of Distance Education

So far, the aim of the resolution has not been achieved. [The Kulkuri School of Distance Education](#) is a school for Finnish children and young people living abroad, offering distance and online education in the Finnish language and literature as well as all other subjects included in the curriculum of the Finnish comprehensive school, regardless of where the students are located. The annual state subsidy has been 140,000 euro since 2008. In the years from 2012 to 2016, the Parliament took annual decisions to increase the subsidy. The state subsidy does not vary according to changes in the number of students or courses completed, or other changes in costs. When there is an increase in the number of students or in the level of other costs, the operation starts making a loss. For the operation with online teaching to break even, the discretionary state subsidy would have to be at least 200,000€ (the state budget heading for general education activities organized by NGOs).

28. The state subsidy granted to the Summer High School Association for organizing summer camps for Finnish expatriate children and young people to be secured in the future

(Earlier resolutions 18/2007, 2015)

So far, the aim of the resolution has not been achieved. Since the 1970s, the Summer High School Association organized courses for Finnish expatriate children and young people in the ages from 7 to 18 years. In 2015, the courses had to be discontinued due to cuts to the state subsidy and annual fluctuations in its amount. The Board of the Summer High School Association decided not to organize any Finnish language courses for Finnish expatriate children and young people in the summer of 2017, due to cuts in the state subsidy. Since 2011, there have been cuts to the state subsidy paid to the Summer High School Association within the Ministry of Education and Culture's budget heading reserved for NGOs. The state subsidy would have to be increased at least to the level of 2013 for the summer camp activities to be started again. In 2019 and 2020, the amount of state subsidy was only sufficient for organizing summer high schools.

29. Funding of Finnish language schools

(Earlier resolutions 26/2012, 27/2015, 28/2015)

So far, the aim of the resolution has not been achieved. Actions are ongoing. The National Board of Education grants annual state subsidies to NGOs. They are used to promote the operations and development of Finnish language schools and of the Support Association of the Finnish Language Schools Abroad as well as to facilitate the operations of the Finnish language schools. The Finnish language schools have a separate heading in the state budget (headings 29.10.51 and 52). Generally speaking, the Ministry of Education and Culture is striving to reduce the number of



budget headings and does not consider the proposal of a separate heading for Finnish language schools appropriate. The Ministry of Education and Culture has not increased the proposed annual amount allocated to the Finnish language schools. The Finnish Parliament has been taking this into consideration since 2011, granting the schools additional funds. For 2020 and 2021, the additional sum of 300,000€ represented a 70% increase to the sum of 429,000€ proposed by the Ministry. For 2021, the Finance Committee of the Finnish Parliament made the following comment in its report:

“The Committee finds it necessary to make the funding of the operations sustainable in the long term. The Committee also takes note of the need to secure the activities of the *Support Association of the Finnish Language Schools Abroad*. The Support Association of the Finnish Language Schools Abroad has been tasked with the pedagogical development of and support for Finnish language schools. It also prepares learning materials and organizes continuing education for teachers of the Finnish language schools. For the most part, the Association operates on a voluntary basis without paid employees, which, according to the information received, means that the resources are not sufficient to develop the operations.”

Year	Ministry of Education and Culture	Finnish Parliament	Total
2009	450,000 €	-	450,000 €
2010	450,000 €	-	450,000 €
2011	450,000 €	200,000 € 44.4%	650,000 €
2012	450,000 €	150,000 € 33.3%	600,000 €
2013	450,000 €	150,000 € -"-	600,000 €
2014	450,000 €	150,000 € -"-	600,000 €
2015	450,000 €	150,000 € -"-	600,000 €
2016	390,000 € (decrease 13.4%)	200,000 € 51.3%	590,000 €
2017	424,000 €	230,000 € 54.2%	654,000 €
2018	429,000 €	150,000 € 35%	579,000 €
2019	429,000 €	250,000 € 58.3%	679,000 €
2020	429,000 €	300,000 € 70%	729,000 €
2021	429,000 €	300,000 € 70%	729,000 €

The preconditions for the operations of the Finnish language schools were discussed in 2018-2019 in a task force under the name [The situation and future of schools abroad](#), set up by the Ministry of Education and Culture, in which the Finland Society was represented. In its [memorandum \(of June 26, 2019\)](#) it is proposed that

- a sufficient level of state subsidy be secured for the Finnish language schools abroad;
- the operations be developed to also reach students in grades 7-9;
- online teaching be developed;
- A quantitative and qualitative survey be made of the school-specific curricula of the Finnish language schools, on the basis of which the impact and quality of the schools can be enhanced;
- The decision by the Finnish National Agency for Education in 2001 regarding the criteria of state subsidy for Finnish language schools be updated, and
- in the context of the update, the criteria of forming a group of students be reviewed,



focusing on a reduction of the group size required for state subsidy and the possibility of including children under 3 years of age within the scope of the state subsidy.

30. Children under 3 years of age to be covered by the state subsidy for Suomi Schools

(Earlier resolutions 1/2005, 16/2007, 22/2010, 26/2015)

The aim of the resolution has not yet been achieved. The aim is to extend the state subsidy, granted by the Ministry of Education and Culture to activities offered in the Finnish language schools, to children under 3 years of age so that the Ministry makes a corresponding increase in the funding of the Finnish language schools. Today, the funding concerns students from 3 to 18 years of age. The proposal is also included in the memorandum of The Situation and Future of Schools Abroad task force set up by the Ministry of Education and Culture (see Resolution 29).

31. Reducing the group size in Finnish language schools

(Earlier resolutions 1/2005, 24/2010, 24/2015)

The aim of the resolution has not yet been achieved. Actions are ongoing. By reducing the group size required for state subsidy from six to four students, the high-quality teaching of students with different levels of language skills could be secured in the Finnish language schools. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish language schools can determine their group sizes for themselves, and it is a matter of informal club activities. The state subsidy criterion of groups of six students is related to the subsidy paid towards the salaries of teachers. Reducing the group size would lead to an increasing number of groups and thereby increasing salary costs for teachers. The proposal is included in the memorandum of The Situation and Future of Schools Abroad task force set up by the Ministry of Education and Culture (see Resolution 29).

32. Traineeship subsidy for university students

The aim of the resolution was achieved. The Finnish National Agency for Education disseminates information about international traineeships and working abroad, international exchange programs and grants. Information about grants and other funding opportunities available in Finland, such as support systems to fund traineeship periods in Finland, is thus made available both to students studying abroad and to those studying in Finland.

33. Act amending the Act on Liberal Adult Education 1765/2009. To be added: The authorization may also be granted for education provided abroad.

The aim of the resolution was not achieved. The Act amending the Act on Liberal Adult Education (1765/2009) has not been amended by inserting the following into Section 4: "The authorization may also be granted for education provided abroad". The Ministry of Education and Culture can only allocate state subsidies intended for liberal adult education to teaching in education and training; these funds are not available to finance hobbies, such as leisure activities in Finnish for senior expatriate Finns. The support association for the Sofia Adult Education Centre receives annual state subsidies. Heading 29.10.51 in the state budget (state subsidy to NGOs) includes an appropriation for the educational activities organized for expatriate Finns by the Sofia Adult Education Centre. According to the Ministry, the scope of the funding can be extended to Finns living in other countries if the Finnish Parliament allocates the necessary funding into the budget



heading. The government funding of adult education centres was cut as an austerity measure in 2012-2016, resulting in a reduced number of classes offered by the centres. More funding would be needed in order to increase the number of licences.

34. Lack of space and remedial teaching in European Schools

(Earlier resolutions 7/2005, 19/2007, 27/2010, 33/2015)

The aim of the resolution was not yet achieved. Educational authorities were asked to take measures to survey the issues that Finnish students have, such as learning difficulties, and to organize support funding for students in need of other kinds of support in order to secure a safe and healthy learning environment. Support services for learning and studying (student welfare services) and the relevant staff resources should be secured in the manner required by Finnish law. An investigation was also requested to establish whether European Schools could issue a proof of education corresponding to the Finnish comprehensive school leaving certificate to those students who do not complete the European Baccalaureate.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, teachers constitute the largest cost item in the schools' budgets. The system of European Schools is governed by a Board of Governors consisting of representatives of member states and the European Commission. The members of the two committees assisting the Board of Governors are appointed by the member states. One of them, the Joint Teaching Committee, is responsible for verifying the quality and pedagogical development of teaching. The bodies consist of representatives of staff, students, and parents' associations. The Board of Governors is also assisted by the Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools in Brussels, which is responsible for the central administration of the schools. It is having discussions with the European Commission, so efforts can be made at different levels to find a solution.

An appeal could be made to the Finnish National Agency for Education that they provide funding for recruiting learning support assistants in those Suomi Schools, foreign schools and European Schools where there is a specific need for individualized teaching.

35. Completing a National Certificate of Language Proficiency outside Finland

(Earlier resolutions 9/2005, 24/2012, 25/2015)

The aim of the resolution was not yet achieved. In order to support the teaching of the official languages of Finland and to encourage the students, it was requested that the law on National Certificates of Language Proficiency be amended to make it possible to take the general language proficiency tests in the official languages of Finland even outside Finland.

The Finnish authorities have been tasked with approving language exams under Finnish national law. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, preparations of a law on organizing National Certificate of Language Proficiency tests abroad would have to take into account the geographical scope of Finnish law, the costs of organizing the tests abroad, potential disputes regarding the contracts on the organization of tests, and the legal protection of candidates. The arrangements are partly funded by the government, partly by fees collected from candidates.

36. Specifying and amending the authorizations to provide education of existing Finnish expatriate schools



(Earlier resolution 30/2015)

The aim of the resolution was not yet achieved. Action is ongoing. It was proposed that the Ministry of Education and Culture renegotiate the content of the authorizations of the existing Finnish schools abroad so as to safeguard the possibility of Finnish citizens to flexibly receive education within the Finnish educational system in Finnish. There are five schools abroad providing basic education in line with the Finnish national curriculum: in Estonia (Tartu, Tallinn), in Russia (St. Petersburg, Moscow), and in Fuengirola in Costa del Sol, Spain (basic education and upper secondary school). The Finnish schools abroad made an appeal to the Ministry (February 2, 2018) to secure their continued operation. The Finnish Parliament demanded (VaVM 22/2017 vp) that the need for and the operating conditions and sustainable funding of Finnish schools abroad must be evaluated. At the end of 2018, the Finance Committee of the Finnish Parliament asked for monitoring to be started, and the Ministry of Education and Culture set up a task force on [the situation and future of schools abroad](#) from 2018 to 2019. The representatives of the Finnish schools abroad and the Finland Society had their dissenting opinion recorded concerning the proposal for development of Finnish schools abroad that was included in the final [memorandum \(June 26, 2019\)](#) of the task force. The dissenting opinion concerned the proposal to limit the state subsidy to a period of three years per student, after which families would have to pay the full price of tuition (in other words, the state subsidy for each student would cease after three years of study in the Finnish school abroad). The opinion of the Finnish schools abroad is that their student enrolment should be based on Finnish citizenship in the same way as in the other Nordic countries.

37. Obstacles to the freedom of movement for foreign students to be eliminated

The aim of the resolution was partly achieved. Finnish educational institutions were urged to accept the grades of applicants from outside Finland, adjusted to the Finnish grading system, so that their possibilities to apply for admission into Finnish educational institutions would be the same as those of Finnish applicants.

Under the Act on Vocational Education and Training (531/2017), any person shall have the right to freely apply for the vocational qualifications or vocational education and training (VET) referred to in the Act. Applicants may be admitted as a student if they have completed the basic education syllabus or a corresponding syllabus, or if the VET provider deems them otherwise sufficiently capable of acquiring the competence or completing the qualification that is the goal of the education and training. Equal grounds shall be applied in student admissions. VET providers decide on the criteria for their student admissions and on entrance examinations and aptitude tests. In the rolling application process, the VET provider decides on the application periods and procedures. However, national application procedures may be employed for student admissions to vocational education and training for initial vocational qualifications or to preparatory education and training. National application procedures are issued by government decree. However, provisions on the student admissions criteria, entrance examinations and aptitude tests to be applied in this applications procedure may be issued by a decree of the Ministry of Education and Culture. It is the duty of the VET provider to examine and identify the student's prior learning on the basis of documents and other reports presented by the student as well as to recognize the student's relevant prior learning.

In the [Studyinfo.fi portal](#) run by the Finnish National Agency for Education, it is possible to search for information about vocational education and training and the admission



criteria. This portal contains up-to-date information given by Finnish educational institutions about the education and training they offer. The service is available in Finnish, Swedish and English.

38. Finns in Oregon, United States, need a permanent Finnish pastor

(Earlier resolution 17/2012)

The aim of the resolution has not yet been achieved. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland's Unit for Ministry to Finns Abroad has been requested to co-operate with the Finnish parishes in Oregon and Washington in order to employ a shared Finnish pastor in the area. Portland does not have the funds to employ a full-time pastor. The parishes have negotiated the possibility of employing a shared pastor, based on the report made by the director of the Unit for Ministry to Finns Abroad. The matter is being taken care of by the Unit for Ministry to Finns Abroad.

39. A Week of Positive Talk to be organized November 20-26

No action taken. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament rejected the initiative and proposed that those behind the initiative use other channels to promote their purpose.

40. Cultural tourism between Italy and Finland

No action taken. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament could not express an opinion on the initiative because it was still in its early stages. It was proposed that those behind the initiative develop a cooperation network model, especially since the initiative is based on the knowledge of expatriate Finns about the local culture and business.

41. Finnish Expatriate Parliament's recognition of the Finnish Room Committee of the University of Pittsburgh, within the University of Pittsburgh's Nationality Rooms

The aim of the resolution was achieved. Information about the Finnish Room project of the Finnish Room Committee at the University of Pittsburgh will be disseminated via, for example, the Finland Society's virtual event Suomi-kylä. In addition, expatriate Finns are encouraged to disseminate information about this project in their social media groups and channels. More information: www.nationalityrooms.pitt.edu (links Resources, New Rooms) and www.pittsburghfinns.net

42. A database on expatriate Finns to be established for smart networking

The aim of the resolution has been partly achieved. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament concluded that similar registers, as the one proposed in the initiative, already exist or are being planned. Expatriate Finnish experts and enterprises may contact the bodies who maintain such registers if they wish to be included in such networks. The Finnish Expatriate Parliament emphasized that networks must be open and that information about them should be disseminated effectively.

43. Following Finnish television and radio programs abroad

(Earlier resolutions 61/2002, 60-64/2010, 36-37/2015)

The aim of the resolution was partly achieved. Yle (the Finnish Broadcasting Company) was urged to continue negotiating copyrights with the relevant stakeholders so that their program offering could be made more extensively available outside the geographical area of Finland. According to



Yle, about 80% of audio and video content in Yle Areena is available abroad. The Regulation on the portability of online content, which entered into force in April 2018, made 100% of Yle's programming portable for persons domiciled in, i.e. living in Finland when they are temporarily present in another member state in the EU area. To do this, they have to create an account with Yle, although otherwise such an account is not compulsory. The reform is not linked to citizenship and is not available to Finns living outside the EU.

In the same spring, the Finland Society received feedback from abroad regarding experiences with restricted availability of Yle's programs. In order to meet its commitments to foreign copyright holders regarding the geographical area in which the procured content may be made available (Finland), Yle uses a piece of software that detects whether the viewer's computer has a VPN software which hides its geographical location. If this software is detected in the viewer's computer, the downloading of Yle's content is interrupted. The problem can be solved by removing the VPN software from the computer and from the web browser. Using a VPN software in itself is legal and common, offering the protection of privacy needed in some countries. Expatriate Finns' specific needs for information have been discussed with Yle, encouraging them to produce programs specifically targeted to children and young people abroad to support their skills in the Finnish language and culture. The topic of increasing Yle's programming for Finns abroad is on the agenda for the ongoing work towards the government's strategy for expatriate Finns for 2022–2026.

44. Updating the communication methods of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and Finland Society

The resolution is being implemented. The duties of the Finland Society, an expert and service organization for Finns living abroad, include (by-laws, article 2):

- 1) strengthening the contacts of expatriate Finns with Finland and Finnishness;
- 2) strengthening the ties of Finland to expatriate Finns and promoting the image of Finland abroad;
- 3) promoting a Finnish identity and the Finnish culture abroad;
- 4) advocating for expatriate Finns;
- 5) improving the social and educational conditions of expatriate Finns;
- 6) promoting research on Finnish expatriatism.

To achieve its purpose, the society (by-laws, article 3):

- 1) promotes interaction between expatriate Finns and Finns living in Finland;
- 2) organizes and supports events for expatriate Finns both in Finland and abroad;
- 3) advocates for expatriate Finns in Finland;
- 4) supports activities that promote the social and educational conditions of expatriate Finns;
- 5) gives advice and guidance to Finns living or moving overseas or returning to Finland;
- 6) engages in communications and publishing related to its field;
- 7) organizes sessions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, meetings, lectures, training events and the like;
- 8) maintains contact with the authorities as well as different institutions and associations.

The Finland Society uses the following communication channels:

-
-



- [Finland Bridge](#) magazine (Suomen Silta, Finlandsbron), published four times a year. An electronic version is available online free of charge. The electronic magazine contains translations.
- A monthly general electronic *newsletter* with content relevant to members is [available for subscription free of charge on the Finland Society's website](#). It gives the highlights of the FEP's activities and is also e-mailed to the contact addresses of FEP-affiliated communities. *The newsletter for Finnish communities abroad* is a new publication targeting the communities, published four times a year since October 2020.
- The Finland Society's website [suomi-seura.fi](#). The website [usp.fi](#) contains information about the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and supports the work of the representatives of its regions (the Deputy Speakers, members of the Speakers' Council). In the East Europe section, it is possible to use the Cyrillic alphabet.
- Easily accessible and understandable information is available to target groups via e-mail, phone and chat and, since fall 2020, on the websites for [families](#), [youth](#), and [senior citizens](#) abroad.
- The Finland Society is present in the following social media: Facebook: [Suomi-Seura ry](#), Twitter: [@SuomiSeuraryFI](#), Instagram and YouTube: [Suomi-Seura ry \(Helsinki\)](#). [An event page](#) and [a group](#) for the 10th session are linked to the Facebook page [Ulkosuomalaisparlamentti](#).
- In its session in 2017, the Finnish Expatriate Parliament resolved to update its Standing Order to the effect that session documents are sent by e-mail and registrations to the session are done electronically. Ordinary mail is used when necessary.

45. Support to Finnish expatriate electronic media

The aim of the resolution was partly achieved. The role of Finnish expatriate media (printed newspapers and magazines, radio stations, online media) grew in importance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The need for information increased at the same time as the advertising income of media collapsed. The number of direct analogue listeners of radio stations may reach tens of thousands per month, while the number of visitors in their online services may reach hundreds of thousands per month. The demand for Finnish expatriate radio services has increased, for example, in Sweden, Estonia, Spain, the United States, and Australia.

The Finland Society encouraged the Finnish government to take Finnish expatriate media into consideration when promoting state subsidies for the production of editorial content ([statement on the state subsidy for promoting editorial content](#), July 31, 2020). In the context of handling the supplementary state budget in the early summer of 2020, the Finnish Parliament expressed its opinion about the scope of media support. In October, however, the working group investigating the topic decided to exclude Finnish expatriate media from the scope of the decree; according to the government bill, Covid-related aid only concerns enterprises operating in Finland.

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, the annual appropriation for the Finland Society may also be distributed as subsidies to Finnish expatriate media. These must be prioritized internally to take into account the needs of electronic media. Every year, the Finland Society uses the funds received from the Ministry of Education and Culture to give out small grants to Finnish expatriate communities and media. The deadline for applications to such grants is February 28, and decisions on the applications are made by the Finland Society's board



(<https://suomi-seura.fi/avustukset-ulkosuomalaisyhteisoille-ja-medialle-2020/>). In 2021, grants were allocated to digital projects and to supporting Finnish expatriate media.

46. An electronic archive to be established for Ingrian Finnish cultural co-operation

(Earlier resolution 28/2012)

The aim of the resolution was achieved. The efforts of Ingrian Finns to establish an electronic archive and database are supported, and an appeal was made to the Finnish government that it would allocate resources to establishing an online network on a web platform in order to collect scattered information and bring together actors with an interest in Ingrian Finnish culture and history. The focus of the reply from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018) was on collecting information about forms of co-operation and resources;

“the materials of Ingrian Finns are important for research and cultural heritage. It would make sense to digitize them and make them available through a shared website/portal. The material in the National Archives of Finland have not been digitized, but the National Archives of Finland has discussed the establishment of a shared website with several stakeholders, if the National Archives of Finland receives external funding for the project. [-] When implementing the project, it is important to comply with common standards of digitizing cultural heritage materials, thus making it possible to manage, combine and preserve these materials and to make them accessible. The Ministry of Education and Culture is not able to allocate suitable resources for this purpose.”

In 2018, the Finnish Literature Society received a grant of EUR 30,000 from the Wihuri Foundation to implement a project on archiving and memory organization (Maiju Putkonen: [Ingria and Ingrians – Recording histories, preserving memories](#)). In addition to collecting materials, funds are needed to put them on display and prepare exhibitions and publications. The matter was discussed in the Ingrian festival organized in the Finlandia Hall on October 5, 2019, in which the Finland Society participated. The exhibition [Ingrians – the Forgotten Finns](#) (January–July 2020, script: Lea Pakkanen and Santeri Pakkanen, photographs: Meeri Koutaniemi) was promoted in the Finland Society’s social media channels. The exhibition told a story about identity and the importance of collective memory: how it feels to be silent, and how silence turns into forgetting.

47. Accounts and budget of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

So far, the aim of the resolution has not been achieved. Part of the funds granted to the Finland Society by the Ministry of Education and Culture are used to finance the operations and sessions of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. The Ministry of Education and Culture has made efforts to secure the operations of the Finland Society. The appropriation has remained more or less the same even though there have been cuts in the support for NGOs. It has been communicated to the Ministry of Education and Culture many times, that the extended scope of activities of the Finland Society has not been taken into consideration in the state subsidy. According to the [Government Policy Programme for Expatriate Finns for 2017–2021](#), the operations of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament under the Finland Society shall be guaranteed. At the moment, a new government policy program for expatriate Finns is being drafted for the years 2022–2026 with the aim of securing sufficient resources for the Finland Society to develop the operations of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament. In the coming years, there will be challenges related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on national economy.



**48. The website of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament and its forms to be available in Russian –
Создание сайта www.usp.fi и регистрационных форм на русском языке**

No action taken. According to Article 9 of the By-laws of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, the languages used by the parliament are Finnish, Swedish, English, and Russian. In the founding session in 1997, it was jointly agreed that those who need interpretation from and into Russian during the session shall arrange for the interpretation and translations for themselves. This practice has functioned well, and no amendments in this regard have been proposed to the By-laws or Standing Order of the FEP. At the moment, there are no resources to translate the forms into Russian. The FEP website usp.fi was built in WordPress which is compatible with the Cyrillic alphabet.

49. A badge of merit system for the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

No action taken. The FEP is part of and supported by the Finland Society. The criteria for awarding badges of merit can also be applied to persons active within the FEP.

50. Removal of a ratified organization from a registry of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament after inactivity

No action taken. [Resolution 25/2005](#) makes it possible to remove a community from the FEP's register, if three session terms have lapsed since its contact details were last updated. There is no reason to make this rule any stricter. In practice, a confirmation from the representative of the respective region is needed to cancel the ratification.

51. The status of observers in the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

The aim of the resolution was achieved. The status of observers appointed by Finnish expatriate communities was strengthened when the observers were added to articles 3 and 4 of the Standing Order. Regarding observers in the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, the Speakers' Council has stated that the presence of observers in the session and its committees increases participation and improves the flow of information by complementing the typical presence of only one delegate per community; that the cost of observers' participation in the session are the same as that of delegates; that observers are often new or young members whom the communities wish to support; and that if all participants follow the guidelines regarding the registration procedure, the organizer can allocate suitable committee rooms and interpreter resources as needed.

52. Social media groups in the activities of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

The resolution was rejected.

53. Putting forward initiatives in the name of a region of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament to be made possible by decision of the regional meeting

The aim of the resolution was achieved. The procedure of putting forward initiatives was made smoother so that the communities of a region can put forward a joint initiative officially signed by only one FEP community. Other communities supporting the initiative can announce their support by e-mail sent by their chairperson or other member who has the right to sign for the community.



54. Possibilities of young people to influence the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

The goal was partly reached. The Finland Society, together with the FEP's Speakers' Council and young expatriate Finns, prepared the *FEP's program on Finnish youth abroad* that looks into the situation of and opportunities for young expatriate Finns and sets guidelines for development. The implementation of the program will be monitored in the FEP's Youth Committee. In order to engage young people in society, the Finland Society organized a Youth Forum on May 6, 2021, in co-operation with the Aalto University's Design for Government project. Experiences of and messages from this forum will be shared with the 10th session. The model of consulting expatriate Finns is being developed as a part of the government's strategy for expatriate Finns.

55. Sending session documents by e-mail

The aim of the resolution was achieved. As provided in the amended articles 2 and 4 of the Standing Order of the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, an invitation to the 10th session, to be held in 2020, was sent to all FEP communities in December 2019 primarily by e-mail. As the session was postponed to 2021, a new invitation was sent electronically in December 2020. Everyone who had registered for the session received the session documents one month prior to the session primarily by e-mail. The minutes of the session will be sent to them and to all FEP communities primarily by e-mail within three months of the session.

56. A working group to be established to create a cultural political program for the Finnish Expatriate Parliament

The aim of the resolution was achieved. The Speakers' Council investigated the possibility of establishing a working group on cultural policy, and asked the Board of the Finland Society to discuss the matter. The mission of the Finland Society (since 1927) is to promote the Finnish language and culture abroad. The Board decided not to start preparing a separate cultural political program. The Board expressed its opinion on project proposals that help fulfil the Finland Society's task of promoting a Finnish identity and the Finnish culture abroad.

(*)