

INSTRUCTIONS ON RELAYING INFORMATION ABOUT EXPATRIATE FINNS TO THE POPULATION INFORMATION SYSTEM

Why do I need to keep my personal details up to date in the Population Information System even if I am living abroad? Does country of residence matter?

Information about the address and personal circumstances of Finnish nationals residing abroad only stays up to date if persons report any changes in such information. Notifications may be made to the local register office of the municipality of most recent residence or to the nearest Finnish Embassy or Consulate in the current country of residence. Information to be notified includes information about marriage and divorce, birth of children and address. Current information in the Population Information System expedites e.g. the issuance of Finnish passports.

Many rights and responsibilities are determined on the basis of information contained in the Population Information System. For example the voting register is based on this information. If the address in the Population Information System is incorrect, documents posted by the authorities (notification of right to vote, matters relating to conscription) may not reach the recipient.

The Population Information System is the fundamental basic register in our society, and the correctness of its data is highly important to many authorities. For example KELA requires comprehensive personal histories in order to prepare its decisions, particularly in matters involving pensions.

Finnish nationals residing in Nordic countries other than Sweden must notify of changes in their personal information. Finnish nationals residing in Norway, Denmark or Iceland must personally notify of changes in their personal information, meaning that they should send to an Embassy or Consulate or the local register office an extract from the population register of the country of residence in which the changed information appears.

Changes in personal information are forwarded from Sweden through official channels to the Population Information System of Finland under an agreement between Finland and Sweden.

Moving abroad

Finnish nationals may move abroad either temporarily or permanently (temporary refers to residence for no longer than a year for e.g. work, study or a similar reason).

In cases of temporary moves, the person remains registered in the Population Information System among the permanent population of the municipality where he or she was resident at the time of the move. All rights and obligations relating to residence remain unchanged.

Notifications of move must be given in writing no later than one week after the move. Notification must also be made on temporary residence lasting over three months. The relevant form is available in the "Lomakkeita" section (in Finnish only).

If the move abroad is permanent, i.e. the person will remain permanently resident abroad, he or she is entered in the absentee population in the Population Information System. The

most recent municipality of residence is the municipality from which the move abroad took place. Certain rights and obligations relating to municipality of residence are severed when moving abroad, such as the right to vote in municipal elections and other municipal rights tied to municipality of residence.

Finnish citizens resident abroad have different rights and obligations with regard to different types of matters. It is therefore important that persons moving abroad contact e.g. the tax authorities and KELA well before their move to determine how the move affects them with regard to the various authorities and to determine their obligations to notify the authorities. Contact information and email addresses can be found e.g. on the websites of various authorities:

www.kela.fi,
www.vero.fi,
www.formin.fi ,
www.puolustuvoimat.fi,
www.uvi.fi
www.suomi-seura.fi
www.hallonorden.org

Marriage

In order for information on marriage to be entered in the Population Information System in Finland, the original marriage certificate duly authenticated in the country of residence or a certified copy thereof must be submitted to the nearest Finnish Embassy or Consulate (www.formin.fi) or sent to the local register office of the municipality where the person was most recently resident in Finland. Since marriage certificates are usually drafted in the language of the issuing country, they must be translated into Finnish or Swedish by an authorized translator.

If the marriage certificate is submitted to a Finnish Embassy or Consulate, the form "Ilmoitus ulkomailla vihitystä Suomen kansalaisesta" (Notification of Finnish national married abroad) must be filled in and appended to the certificate. At present, the form is only available at Embassies and Consulates, which forward the documents to Finland through official channels.

If a person's surname has changed through marriage and the marriage certificate is sent directly to the local register office, the form "Sukunimen valinta vihkimisen yhteydessä" (Choice of surname in connection with marriage) should be appended to the certificate. The form is available in the "Lomakkeita" section (in Finnish only).

Birth of child

In order for the birth of a child to be entered in the Population Information System in Finland, the original birth certificate duly authenticated in the country of residence or a certified copy thereof must be submitted to the nearest Finnish Embassy or Consulate (www.formin.fi) or sent to the local register office of the municipality where the person was most recently resident in Finland. Since birth certificates are usually drafted in the language of the issuing country, they must be translated into Finnish or Swedish by an authorized translator.

If the birth certificate is submitted to an Embassy or Consulate, the form " Ilmoitus ulkomailla syntyneestä Suomen kansalaisesta" (Notification of Finnish national born abroad) must be filled in and appended to the original certificate. At present, the form is only available at Embassies and Consulates, which forward the documents to Finland through official channels. Both parents are usually entered on a birth certificate. If the parents are married, the child is automatically considered born in wedlock.

If the parents of the child are not married, the paternity of the child must be confirmed before paternity can be registered in Finland.

Recognition of a foreign paternity decision

Under Section 51 of the Paternity Act a decision on paternity issued in a foreign state can be recognised in Finland without separate verification if the decision is valid in the issuing state. In such cases the acknowledgement and establishment of paternity in Finland will not be required.

Decision on paternity

Decision on paternity refers to a decision by a court of law or other authority and the confirmation or registration of a legal act that establishes the relation between the child and man as one of paternity in the state in which the registration or other act took place. Documents (e.g. birth certificate) in which the identity of the father is based solely on the notification of the interested parties do not constitute such a decision. Where necessary, the interested parties are required to submit an account of the legislation of the state in question indicating that the document is sufficient proof in that state for establishing paternity and the obligation to provide maintenance. It is further required that the interested parties have been resident or domiciled in the state in question or citizens of that state.

Competent local register office

Provided that the requirements are met, the competent local register office, which is determined on the basis of the last known domicile of the interested parties, may enter the information on paternity in the population information system on the basis of the decision issued in a foreign state. The decision needs to be duly legalized and presented in the original or as an officially certified copy. A Finnish, Swedish or English translation of the decision is also required.

Where necessary, the [Court of Appeal of Helsinki](#) may confirm, by application, whether a decision on paternity issued in a foreign state is recognised in Finland.

Divorce

Divorces granted within the EU after 1 March 2001 are valid as such in Finland if a certificate as required by EU legislation indicating the validity of the divorce is appended to the documents. This certificate is available from the authority that issues the divorce decree. Such divorce decrees may be submitted to Finnish Embassies and Consulates for

forwarding to Finland. It is often necessary to have the decree translated into Finnish or Swedish for the divorce to be entered in the Population Information System in Finland.

In order to be valid in Finland, divorces granted to a Finnish national outside the EU and divorces granted within the EU prior to 1 March 2001 must be confirmed by Helsinki Court of Appeal. Further instructions are available at the Helsinki Court of Appeal. Divorce decrees requiring confirmation cannot be submitted to Embassies or Consulates for forwarding to the relevant authorities; the party involved must submit the decree and related documents to the Helsinki Court of Appeal.

Name change

In order for a change of name (not including name changes by virtue of marriage) to be entered in the Population Information System in Finland, the original document of change of name duly authenticated in the country of residence or a certified copy thereof must be submitted to the nearest Finnish Embassy or Consulate (www.formin.fi) or sent to the local register office of the municipality where the person was most recently resident in Finland.

Since such decisions are usually drafted in the language of the issuing country, they must be translated into Finnish or Swedish by an authorized translator.

Finnish nationals domiciled in a nation other than Finland, Denmark, Norway or Sweden are entitled to request that Finnish law apply to the determination of surname. Forms relating to change of name are available in the "Lomakkeita" section (in Finnish only) and may be submitted to an Embassy or Consulate or the local register office of the municipality of most recent residence in Finland.

Change of nationality

In order for a change of nationality to be entered in the Population Information System, the original decision about nationality duly authenticated in the country of residence or a certified copy thereof must be submitted to the nearest Finnish Embassy or Consulate (www.formin.fi) or sent to the local register office of the municipality where the person was most recently resident in Finland. Since such decisions are usually drafted in the language of the issuing country, they must be translated into Finnish or Swedish by authorized translator. For more information about dual citizenship, please consult the website of the Directorate of Immigration (www.uvi.fi).

Death certificate

In order for a death to be registered in the Population Information System in Finland, an original death certificate duly authenticated in the country of residence or a certified copy thereof must be submitted to the nearest Finnish Embassy or Consulate (www.formin.fi) or sent to the local register office of the municipality where the decedent was most recently resident in Finland. Since death certificates are usually drafted in the language of the issuing country, they must be translated into Finnish or Swedish by an authorized translator.

If a death certificate is submitted to an Embassy or Consulate, the form "Ilmoitus ulkomailta kuolleesta Suomen kansalaisesta" (Notification of a Finnish national deceased abroad) must be filled in and appended to the certificate. At present, the form is only

available at Embassies and Consulates, which forward the documents to Finland.

Death certificates must be issued by a physician qualified under the laws of the relevant nation to issue such certificates. The party authenticating the certificate is responsible for the death certificate having been issued according to relevant legislation.

Change of address abroad

Finnish nationals residing abroad should also keep their address information up to date. Persons may notify of changes of address abroad either directly to the local register office of the municipality where they were last resident in Finland or to an Embassy or Consulate. Up-to-date information about addresses ensures Finnish nationals can be delivered information about using their right to vote in parliamentary, presidential and EU elections. A current address also guarantees persons can be easily located in matters involving them. The change of address form is available in the “Lomakkeita” section (in Finnish only).

Legalization – Apostille Certificate

In order for a document issued abroad by a foreign authority to have the intended legal effect in Finland, it must be legalized.

The legalization of a document is a measure relating to the client’s legal protection, ensuring that the party issuing the certificate is entitled to do so under the laws of the issuing country and that the issued document contains the appropriate information and is valid in the country where it has been issued. For example with regard to marriage certificates, it is important that the officiating party is entitled to marry couples under the legislation of the country where the marriage has taken place.

Legalization takes place by two different means depending on whether the relevant country is a signatory to the Hague Convention of 1961. Documents supplied by countries that have ratified the Hague Convention are legalized by the issuance of an Apostille Certificate (stamp or paper certificate). Documents issued by other countries are legalized through the Grand Legalization procedure.

Apostille

The Apostille Certificate (stamp or paper certificate) is necessary if the document has been issued by the authorities of a country that has ratified the Hague Convention of 1961. Information on the Hague Convention as well as an English language list of its member states can be found at www.hcch.net (Convention of 5 October 1961 Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents), which also provides information about the authorities issuing Apostille Certificates in the various countries.

“Grand Legalisation”

If the country issuing a document is not a signatory of the Hague Convention, a document is legalized by the foreign ministry of the issuing country certifying it has been issued by the proper authority, after which a competent Finnish Embassy or Consulate of that country legalizes the document by attaching a certificate of the competence of that foreign

ministry official to issue such certificates. Additionally, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs may be requested to certify the competence of the Embassy or Consulate official to issue such certificates.