



## OUTCAN Guide | Life in Helsinki, Finland

### LOCATION

**Country:** Finland

**Town:** Helsinki (Capital City)

**Other info to Consider:**

- Family (non-dependants) can visit and stay 90 days **without visa**.

### POPULATION

**Size:** 1,338,000

**Ethnicity:** The majority are Finnish.

### LANGUAGE(S)

**Official language:** Finnish and Swedish

**Prevalence of French or English speaking:** English is widely spoken, limited to no French.

### COST OF LIVING

**Exchange rate to consider:** Euro. 1 EUR = 1.47652 CAD (March 2024).

### QUALITY OF LIFE

**Climate and potential for severe weather, natural disasters:**

- Severe cold weather and deep snow coverage occurs in winter.

**Laws and Culture:**

- You must be at least 18 years of age to drive a car in Finland.
- It is recommended to carry an international driving permit (IDP).
- Penalties for drinking and driving are severe. The legal blood alcohol limit for drivers is 0.05%. Drivers who register this level or above may be arrested immediately.
- Penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe. Convicted offenders can expect a jail sentence and a heavy fine.
- If you are a Canadian citizen, but also a citizen of Finland, ability to offer you consular services may be limited while you're there.

**Safety and Security:**

- The crime rate is low; however, petty crime (pickpocketing and purse snatching) occurs.
- Be especially vigilant when using ATMs at Helsinki's railway station, metro and Esplanade, and on trams.

**Level of isolation:**

- There is only 1 Canadian family posted to this location,
- It is considered remote, the level of isolation is high.
- French-Speaking spouses may feel very isolated if they do not speak English fluently.

### HOUSING

- It is recommended that you ask your sponsor, during your HHT for a list of all the points of contact at CFSU(E) in Geilenkirchen so you can call if you encounter any support issues as you transition to your rental property.

## **EMPLOYMENT**

**Are there employment opportunities for spouses?** Due to tax and legal implications, spousal employment on the economy is not a realistic option.

- Limited due to language barrier.
- There are very limited employment opportunities available through CFMWS, families should plan to be single income for the duration of the posting.
- Employment is extremely limited. Families should plan to be a single-income family for the duration of the posting. **CFMWS | MFS | OUTCAN Europe | CFMWS**

**Op Tempo:** The op tempo will vary greatly depending on position. TD is possible.

## **HEALTH CARE**

**Access:** Finland scores overall very high on different rankings in health care performances worldwide.

- Highly accessible via private clinic (almost no wait times), public access very similar to Canada, including wait times.
- English services are widely available, French is very limited.
- The Canadian Medical Clinic in Geilenkirchen is responsible for the healthcare of all Canadian military members in Europe and can be accessed.
- All bills associated with the care of dependents are the member's personal responsibility and are to be claimed through PSHCP. **PSHCP Member Portal (pshcp-msh.ca)**

### **Special needs:**

- Depending on language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed.
- It may be a wait before finding an appropriate match and at times may not be possible based on availability of English/French speaking providers or resources.
- It is highly advised that the family consult with Medical Screening Officer in Canada and / or the Canadian Element to ensure that the required services are readily available in either English or French before accepting a posting.

**Consideration for pregnancy / birth:** Health care for pregnancy and birth is available on the economy, private care.

**Dental:** Dental care can be accessed in town. You are required to pay up front, and you can then claim your expenses.

## **SCHOOLING**

- For an approved list of schools, please contact Children's Education Management at:  
**CEMGEE@forces.gc.ca**
- **Children's Education Management - Canada.ca**
- **Gestion de l'éducation des enfants - Canada.ca**

### **Curriculum vs. Canadian curriculum:**

- The Curriculum varies depending on choice of school.
- None of them offers Canadian history or geography.

### **Resources for special need children:**

- Access to Special needs services is depending on the choice of school, language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed, it may be very limited.
- Consult with CEM and school prior to any commitments.

## **CHILDCARE**

### **Things to Consider:**

- Local childcare is available.
- When choosing local childcare there is no guarantee that staff will be English or French-speaking.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Things to Consider:** Airport: Helsinki-Vaataa (HEL)

- Very accessible via public transportation.

## **RESOURCES AND AMENITIES**

### **Is there a Military Family Services centre available in that location?**

- No physical centre. Families in Finland are supported by the Remote Team:

**MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com**

### **Psychosocial / Mental Health Resources:**

- Not at post, MFS(E) SW for dependants only, CAF SW/Mental Health Team for member and family are located in Geilenkirchen, Germany. Padre is located in the UK.

**Communications (e.g. Quality of Internet connection):** Very good service & very reasonable prices.

## **ACTIVITIES**

**Access to sports or other leisure activities:** Yes

**Availability of playgrounds:** Yes

## **RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER**

**Are common law relationships recognized?** Yes

**Are same sex couples recognized?** Yes

### **Medications that are illegal in the country:**

- Cannabis is illegal.
- You are only allowed to bring in medicinal, homeopathic and anthroposophical products for personal use and only under certain conditions. Requirements for imports are determined by the Finnish customs authority and may differ depending on the country from which you are arriving

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

- **European Commission Country Reports (2023)**  
[https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2023-european-semester-country-reports\\_en](https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/publications/2023-european-semester-country-reports_en)
- **Canadian Travel Advisories**  
<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- **CIA World Factbooks (One Pagers from US)**  
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/finland/travel-facts/>
- **Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)**  
<https://www.gov.uk/world/finland>

## **For more comprehensive information, please feel free to reach out to the resources below**

- MFS(E) Social Worker: **MFSSocialWork@cfmws.com**
- CAF Social Worker: **GKMedicalClinic@forces.gc.ca**
- MFS(E) Team: **MFSE.Remotes@cfmws.com**
- MFS(E) Regional Office: **+49 (0) 2451 717 173, MFS.Europe@cfmws.com**