



OUTCAN Info Sheet 2020

Helsinki, Finland

LOCATION

Country: Finland

Town: Helsinki (Capital City)

Entry/Exit requirements: Blue; Green Passport, NATO Travel orders (NTO). No more SOFA stamp, but the members should have a SOFA certificate letter.

Other info to Consider:

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

POPULATION

Size: 631,695 (2016)

Ethnicity: Majority are Finnish

LANGUAGE(S)

Official language: Finnish and Swedish

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

COST OF LIVING

Exchange rate to consider: Euro

QUALITY OF LIFE

Climate and potential for severe weather, natural disasters:

- Severe cold weather and deep snow cover occur in winter.

Laws and Culture:

- You must be at least 18 years of age to drive a car in Finland.
- You should carry an international driving permit.
- 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.
- There is a threat of terrorism in Europe. Further attacks in Europe are likely to happen again.

Level of isolation:

- There is only one Canadian family posted to this location.
- It is considered remote, level of isolation is high.
- French-speaking spouses may feel very isolated if they don't speak English at all.

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, language barrier.
- There are very limited employment opportunities available through CFMWS, so families should plan to be single income for the duration of the posting.

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, incl. wait times.
- English services are widely available, French is very limited.
- All bills associated with the care of dependents are the member's personal responsibility and are to be claimed through PSHCP.

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

- Schooling is typically at the International School of Helsinki (IB) for grades JK-12, The English School for grades JK-8, or École Française Jules Verne Helsinki for grades JK-12.

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 public transportation.

RESOURCES AND AMENITIES

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

- No, under MFS(E) Riga & Remote.

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 (2019)**
https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-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/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pl.html>
- **Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)**
<https://www.gov.uk/topic/help-british-nationals-overseas/europe>
- **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**
<https://data.imf.org/?sk=4FFB52B2-3653-409A-B471-D47B46D904B5>

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

- **MFS(E) Social Worker :** Chebat.Myriam@cfmws.com or Myriam.Chebat@Forces.gc.ca
- **CAF Social Worker:** Martin.Laferrieresimard@forces.gc.ca
- **MFS(E) Riga Remote:** + 371 231 16 869, MFSE.Rigaremote@cfmws.com
- **MFS(E) Regional Office:** +49 (0) 2451-717-173, MFS.Europe@cfmws.com