



International Technology Experts 2025

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the views and experiences of international professionals in the field of technology, as a follow-up to the 2024 survey. The trade unions TEK and Insinööriliitto represent those highly educated in the increasingly international fields of technology and ICT, and in the survey, conducted during March 2025, international members were asked for their employment situation, perceived feelings of equality and integration, and their general views of Finland.

Respondents represented over 70 nationalities, with just over half coming from outside the EU and EEA countries. Most had lived in Finland for several years, with an average stay of just over 7 years. Three-quarters hold at least a master's degree, and almost half had studied their highest degree in Finland.

72 % respondents were in permanent employment. While the overall employment situation was positive, it had worsened since 2024, particularly career prospect related opinions. Personal networks were considered the most useful tool in job hunting, with Finnish language difficulties and a lack of available jobs and networks seen as the biggest barriers. Personal language skills were the most frequently mentioned factor reducing Finland's attractiveness.

Feelings of equality with Finnish employees in the workplace were more positive than when job seeking, with 52% compared to 17% feeling mostly or always equal. Good work life integration was also perceived as being more common than social integration, with just under half (47%) considered overall integrated in both.

As in 2024, the views of Finland were rather negative, with high worries present over immigration policy and the future. Fewer than half of the respondents would recommend Finland or consider it as having a good reputation for international experts. These proportions were slightly lower than in 2024.

This survey presents a valuable opportunity to hear from international technology experts, and for their voices to be heard in the public discussion. It displays the need in Finland for measures to tackle labour market inequality, increase social integration and change the narrative around the immigration debate to prevent a further drop in reputation and attractiveness.

Tiivistelmä

Tässä tutkimuksessa haluttiin selvittää kansainvälisten tekniikan alan osaajien näkemyksiä ja kokemuksia toisintona vuoden 2024 kyselylle. TEK ja Insinööriliitto edustavat korkeasti koulutettuja ja teknologian ja ICT:n yhä kansainvälisemmällä aloilla, ja maaliskuussa 2025 toteutetussa kyselyssä kartoitettiin kansainvälisten jäsenten työtilannetta, kokemusta tasa-arvosta ja integroitumisesta sekä yleisiä näkemyksiä Suomesta.

Kyselyn vastaajat edustivat yli 70 kansallisuutta, ja reilu puolet vastaajista tuli EU- ja ETA-maiden ulkopuolella. Enemmistä vastaajista oli asunut Suomessa vuosia ja keskimääräinen oleskeluaika oli reilut 7 vuotta. Vastaajista kolme neljästä oli suorittanut vähintään maisterintutkinnon, ja lähes puolet oli opiskellut korkeimman tutkintonsa Suomessa.

Vastaajista 72 % oli vakituksessa työsuhteessa. Vaikka työllisyystilanne oli yleisesti ottaen positiivinen, se oli heikentynyt vuodesta 2024, erityisesti uranäkymien osalta. Henkilökohtaiset verkostot ajateltiin olevan hyödyllisin työllistymistä edistävä tekijä, kun taas suomen kieli sekä työpaikkojen ja verkostojen puute olivat suurimpia esteitä. Kielitaito mainittiinkin useimmin Suomen vetovoimaa vähentäväksi tekijäksi.

Tasa-arvon tunne suomalaisiin työntekijöihin verrattuna oli työpaikalla myönteisempi kuin työnhaussa: 52 % koki olevansa useimmiten tai aina tasa-arvoinen työpaikalla, kun taas työnhaussa vastaava luku oli 17 %. Työelämäänsä integroitumisen koettiin yleisemmäksi kuin sosiaalinen integroituminen, ja vajaa puolet (47 %) koki olevansa kokonaisuudessaan integroitunut molempiin.

Näkemykset Suomesta olivat melko kielteisiä vuoden 2024 tavoin, ja erityisesti maahanmuuttopoliittikka ja tulevaisuus herättivät suurta huolta. Vain alle puolet vastaajista suosittelisi Suomea ja näki Suomen hyvämaineisena kansainvälisille asiantuntijoille. Osuudet olivat hieman matalammat kuin vuonna 2024.

Toteutettu kysely tarjoaa arvokkaan mahdollisuuden kuulla kansainvälisten tekniikan alojen asiantuntijoiden näkemyksiä. Se osoittaa tarpeen puuttua työmarkkinoiden epätasa-arvoon, lisätä sosiaalista integroitumista ja muuttaa maahanmuuttokeskustelun sävyä, jotta Suomen maine ja vetovoima eivät heikkenisi entisestään.

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Introduction

Finland's need for foreign talent is clear. With a birthrate too low to maintain the working age population, coupled with over a decade of stagnant growth fuelled by a lack of innovation, Finland's ability to attract and retain talent is a crucial part of its future. This makes immigration related topics now a common one amongst both academics and policy makers, while in institutions across the country, integration and attraction strategies and practices are developed and put into place.

The group that is most impacted by these actions and decisions are often the group not able to be at the table, their voices unheard or underappreciated. International people, those who have chosen to build a life in Finland, are often left feeling that their voice is not heard by those who claim to wish to help them. This is especially damaging in a political environment that many see as hostile, strongly impacting also those wondering whether Finland could be their next home.

The members of the Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland, TEK, and The Union of Professional Engineers in Finland (Insinööriliitto) are all highly educated, representing those with a higher education degree in engineering, technology, architecture, ICT and related STEM fields. The membership of both trade unions is also increasingly international, representing the growing reliance of the technology industry on experts born outside Finland.

As trade unions, TEK and Insinööriliitto have a responsibility to turn individual voices into collective strength. This is especially important for those who struggle to be heard, as is the case for our international members. Hence, for the second year running, we have together organised and ran this survey, aimed at bringing the voices of our international members to the wider public and to policy makers.

The first survey showcased the need for such research. Despite largely considering themselves well integrated and with a job matching their skills well, only half would have recommended Finland to international experts. In addition, almost 90% said the immigration policy debate worries them and only 12% saw a better future for migrants in Finland in five years' time. Discrimination was also evident, with over 40% feeling they had experienced some form during the job hunt. These are facts that must be considered in policy planning and integration work if we wish to improve.

The answers also gave crucial guidance on how as unions we ourselves can develop and suit our members better, as our membership continues to become more international. These questions were increased in number this year, and although their results are not shown in this report, they will again be closely studied.

Finland needs international technology experts, but more than that, international technology experts who have chosen to live in Finland deserve to be heard. We hope this survey helps to achieve that.

Owain Hopeaketo

Project Manager

International Experts

TEK

Methodology

The core of the survey was built around the previous survey performed in 2024, titled the “Survey of International Experts”. In 2025, questions were additionally added which aimed to focus on integration and the experiences of discrimination or equality in Finland. The wider experiences of international experts working and living in Finland were still studied, as were their future prospects and views of Finland.

The survey was conducted in March 2025. Invitations were sent to all English-speaking members of TEK and Insinööriliitto. As done in the previous survey, members were also encouraged to share the survey invitation with their colleagues and acquaintances with an international background.

The survey primarily consisted of traditional multiple-choice questions and Likert scale statements. The data was analysed mainly using quantitative methods, particularly cross-tabulation. Pearson’s chi-squared test (χ^2) was used to assess statistical significance, with the threshold set at 0.05. Differences between the 2025 and 2024 results were not tested for statistical significance. In some Likert scale statements, responses were categorized into three groups. Respondents who selected ‘Cannot Say’ were excluded from the analysis. Open-ended responses were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Background information of respondents

In total, the survey received 756 respondents, slightly fewer than in the previous year (2024, $n = 1044$). Of the respondents, 68 % identified as male. The mean age was 36.4 years, with approximately half of the respondents between 30 and 39 years old, a quarter 40-49 years old and one fifth under 30.

The survey respondents represented over 70 different nationalities, with the most common nationalities being Russian, Indian and Chinese. 17 % of respondents were dual citizens, with Finnish the most common second citizenship amongst these.

The analysis focused on similarities and differences by nationality, with a three-category variable: EU/EEA countries, other European countries, and non-European countries (see Figure 1). Finnish was included as an EU/EEA country, while dual citizens were categorized based on their more distant country of origin.

Among those from other European countries, the most common nationalities were Russian and British. For those from outside Europe, Asia was the most represented region, with in total nearly one-third of all respondents. There were no statistically significant differences in nationality between men and women.

39 % of respondents mentioned belonging to a minority group, the majority of which were those identifying as an ethnic or racialized minority (23 %). The second most frequently mentioned minority group were religious minorities (10 %). Respondents from outside the EU/EEA countries were more likely to report belonging to a minority group, with 48 % and 41 % identifying as being from at least one minority group when coming from outside Europe or from other European countries respectively.

Time and status in Finland

More than half of the respondents lived outside the Helsinki region, an increase from 2024. However, the capital area was still the most common place of residence, with 46 % of respondents, followed by 20 % residing in Tavastia and the Tampere region. The third most common region was Southwest Finland, including Turku, with 8 % of respondents. Those who came from other European countries lived more often in the Helsinki region than others: 60 % of them lived in the capital area, compared to 41 % of non-Europeans and 47 % of those from EU/EEA countries ($p < 0.001$).

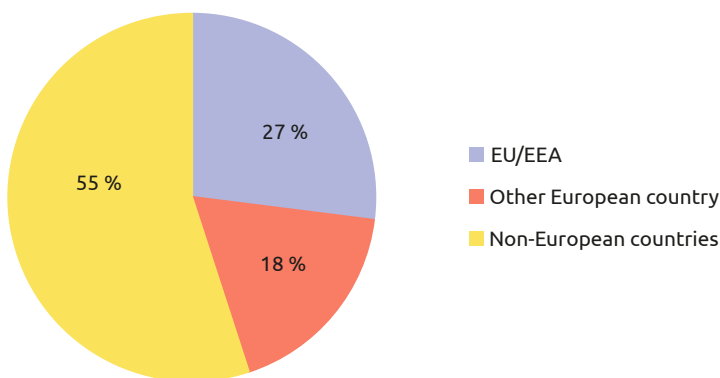


Figure 1: Respondent nationalities

Most of the respondents had lived in Finland for several years, with the average duration of living being 7.6 years. The shortest reported stay was a few months, while the longest exceeded 25 years. Nine percent had lived in Finland for less than two years, and 40 % for 2–5 years. One in four respondents had resided in Finland for more than 10 years. The distribution of years of residence was very similar to the previous survey.

Differences by nationality were present, with respondents from EU/EEA countries having more often lived in Finland for over 10 years (Figure 2).

Most of the respondents lived in Finland with a spouse and/or children. Overall, 35 % lived with a spouse and 32 % lived with both a spouse and children, while around one in four lived alone. Only 2 % reported that their spouse and/or children lived abroad. In total, the family situation of the respondents was also very similar than in 2024.

When examining family situation by nationality, it was found that more than half of respondents from other European countries lived with a spouse, and

they were slightly less likely than others to have children. In contrast, living alone was somewhat more common among respondents from non-European countries ($p < 0,001$). Gender differences were also observed, with a higher proportion of men having children compared to women ($p < 0.001$).

As in the previous year, most of the respondents either held a permanent residence permit (28%) or did not require a permit due to their citizenship (32 %). 13 % of respondents had a specialist permit, 9 % had the permit for an employed person, and 7 % held a student resident permit. Among those who had lived in Finland for 6–10 years or more than 10 years, nearly 85% held a permanent residence permit or had EU citizenship.

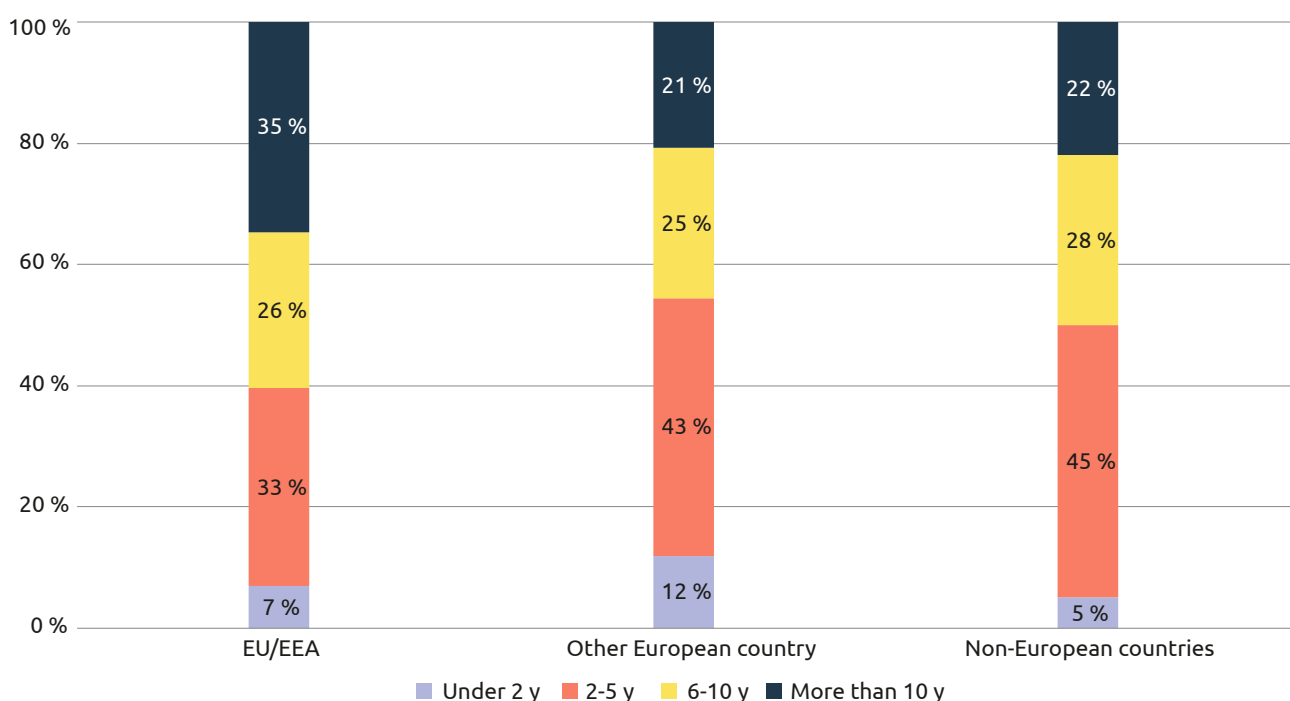


Figure 2: Time living in Finland by nationality

Educational background

Over half of the respondents had a master's degree as their highest-level degree (59 %), with 18% having in addition a licentiate or doctoral degree, a share higher than in the previous survey. The highest degree was a bachelor's degree for a further 19% of respondents.

Almost half of respondents had obtained their highest degree in Finland, with variation based on nationality shown by more than half of the respondents from non-European countries having earned their highest degree in Finland. For the others, obtaining the highest degree abroad was more common ($p < 0,001$). Completing additional degrees in Finland was relatively uncommon among those

who had obtained their highest degree abroad. In total, only nine percent of them reported having completed another degree in Finland after their highest degree.

The time since completing the most recent degree varied among respondents. 31 % had completed their degree 10 or more years ago, an equal proportion to those who had done so 1–4 years ago. One in four respondents had completed their degree 5–9 years ago, while the remaining respondents had done so less than a year ago. Completing a degree within the past year was most common among non-European respondents: nearly one in five had graduated recently. The key background data of the survey respondents can be seen summarized in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Background information summary

Employment and job hunting

Work situation

As in 2024, more than 70 % of respondents had a permanent employment relationship. However, the unemployment percentage had more than doubled, with 7 % unemployed compared to 3 % in 2024. 9 % had a fixed-term contract, 1 % were furloughed, and 10 % were students, two-thirds of whom were also working. In the analyses, those with permanent employment were compared to all others.

It was found that (72 %) respondents from outside Europe had less permanent employment relationships: only about two out of three had a permanent position, compared to approximately 80% among others ($p < 0.001$). Among men, three out of four had a permanent job, compared to 64% of women. The length of residence in Finland was also significant: among those who had lived in Finland for less than two years, only one in three had a permanent job.

On average, the respondents had accumulated 6.3 years of work experience in Finland and had been employed by two different companies or organizations. One quarter of the respondents had worked in Finland for no more than two years, whereas one fifth reported at least 10 years of work experience. The maximum number of employers reported by an individual was 11, and overall, 30% of respondents had worked for at least three different companies or organizations

Most of the respondents were currently working or had most recently worked in expert roles, rather than in managerial positions. Specifically, 40% held expert-level positions, 26% were in demanding expert roles, and 11% in very demanding expert roles. Only 6% of respondents worked or had recently worked in management or higher middle management, while 14% were in lower middle management.

The most common employers were the same as in the previous survey: most frequently mentioned were IT service sector companies (29%), engineering, design, or consulting firms (22%), and industrial companies primarily operating in the export market (21%).

The recent employment situation of respondents was positive, although slightly weaker than in the previous year's survey. In total, 71% reported that they had not been unemployed in Finland during the past three years, compared to 77% the year before. Of those who had been unemployed, almost two-thirds had faced at least one unemployment period lasting over six months, with 36% having experienced at least one unemployment period lasting between three and six months. Only a small amount had experienced exclusively short unemployment periods of less than three months.

Support and barriers when job hunting

As a method of finding their current or most recent job, personal networks were by far the most common, representing 41 % of respondents. This includes for example friends, colleagues and LinkedIn networks. The second most common method was through company websites or advertisements (30 %), with 10 % continuing from work done as a student. Other methods included head-hunters or recruitment contacts, as well as internal transfers within companies. These can be seen in Figure 4.

General perceived usefulness and applicability of different services when job-hunting and career planning can be seen in Figure 5. The applicability represents in general how used the service was.

Three quarters of respondents considered personal networks as at least quite useful, with the most frequently mentioned tool being LinkedIn. Overall, 80% considered personal networks as applicable to them, making it the most commonly applicable answer. Nearly two thirds considered past or current employer help as applicable, with over half

finding the help useful. In addition, educational institutions were in general regarded as useful.

In contrast, public unemployment services and job fairs were seen as not very helpful, despite a relatively high usage rate by respondents of 43% and 53% respectively. One in three respondents considered trade unions as an applicable service, and of these just under a quarter found them useful.

The importance of networks was also highlighted when respondents were asked about factors that had hindered their employment.

"Some job ads are open for someone that would be joining but the employer needs to follow an internal process (job announcement, selection process etc.), therefore better use the network."

The most mentioned barriers were insufficient Finnish language skills, a lack of suitable job opportunities, and a lack of networks. These were also the most frequently cited factors in 2024. Other reasons included the unequal position of international professionals, the existence of hidden job

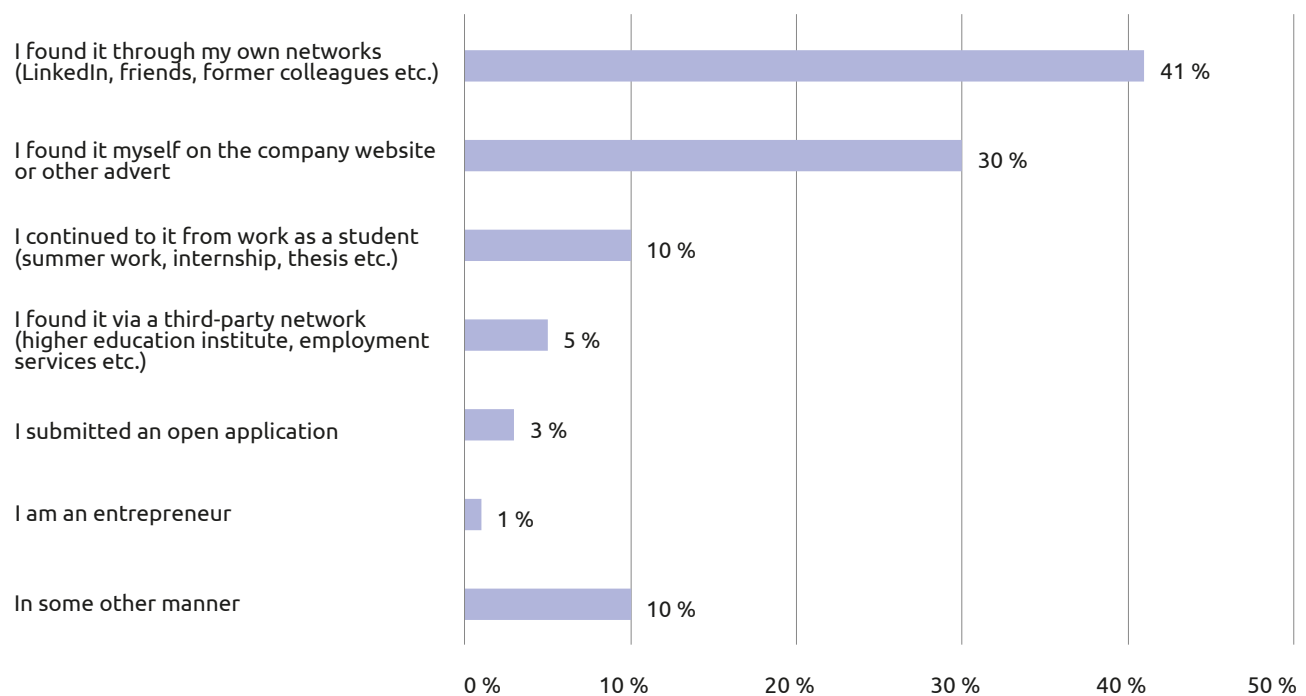


Figure 4: Ways to find current or most recent job

markets, challenges in the recruitment process, and the weak economic situation. The least hindering factors were English language skills, difficulties

with the application process, and differences in cultural or soft skills (Figure 6).

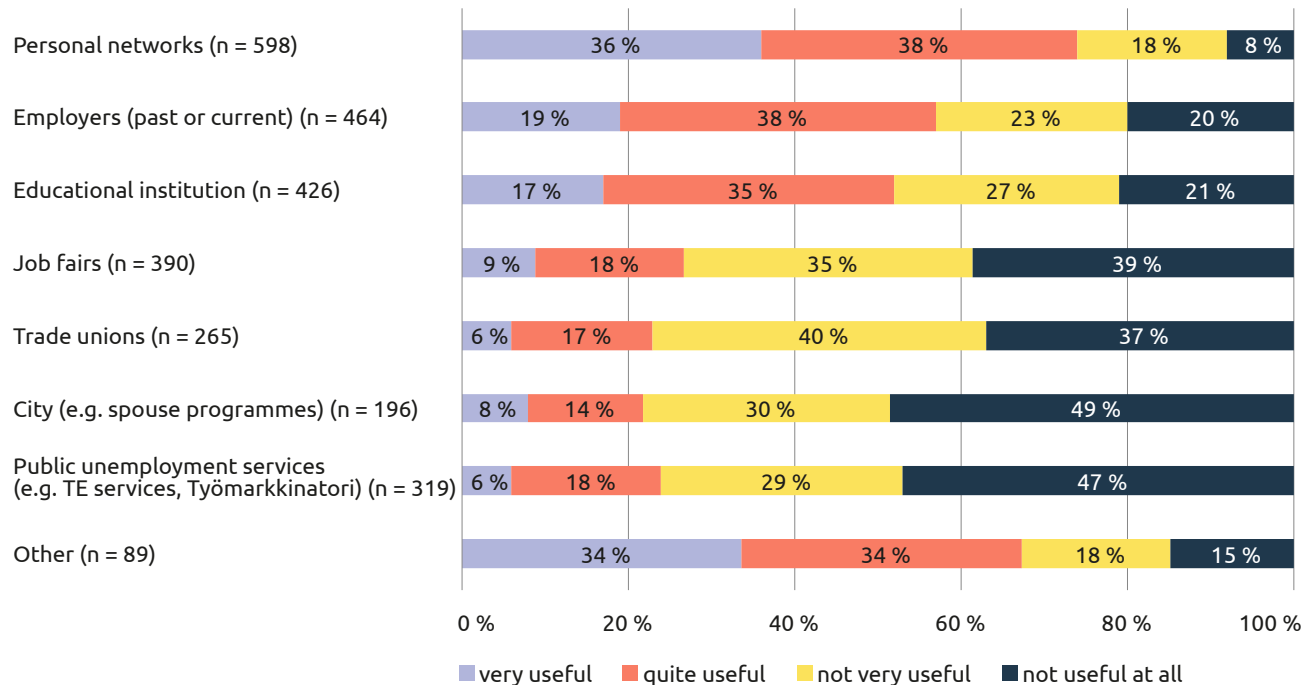


Figure 5: Usefulness of the tools in aiding job search, gaining employment or planning career, removing answers given as "Not applicable"

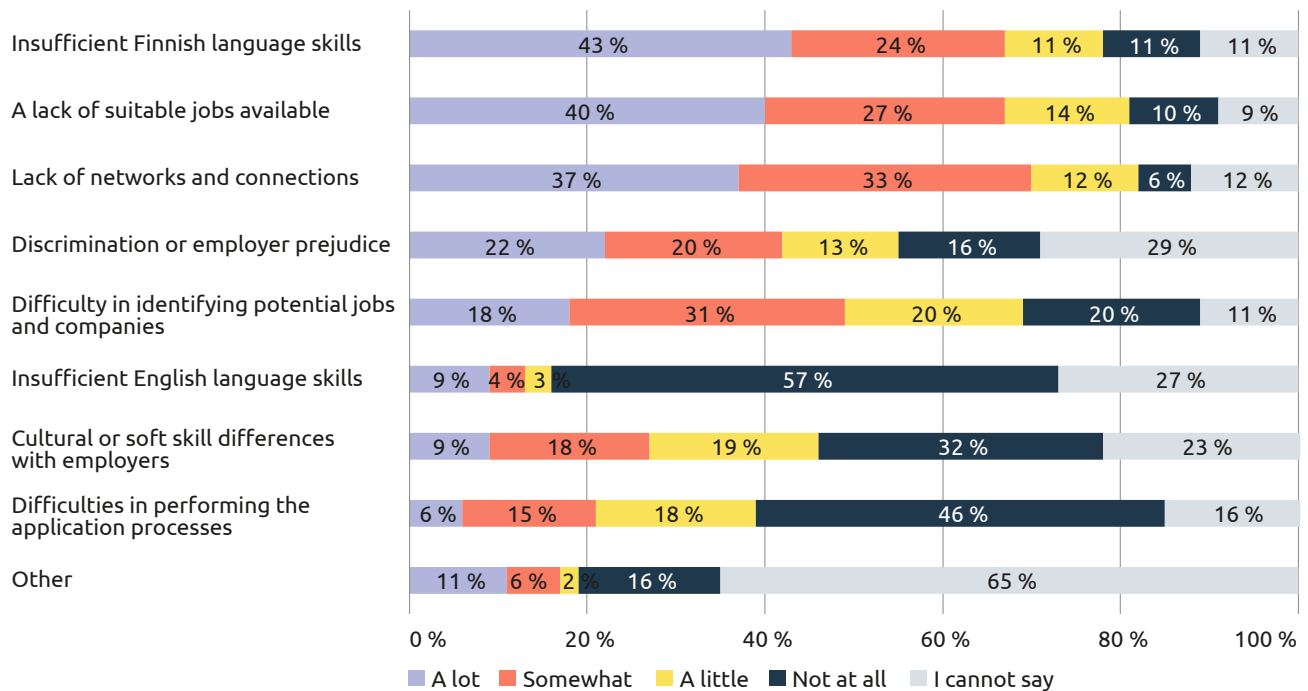


Figure 6: Factors hindering Employment

Integration and equality

Experience of equality and ways to improve the position of international experts

As in the previous year, most respondents felt they were equal when at work compared to employees born in Finland. However, the proportion was lower this year: while 64% felt at least mostly equal in 2024, the corresponding figure this year was 52%. Overall, one in four respondents reported feeling rarely or never equal at work.

Notably, fewer still respondents felt equal in the job searching process than in the workplace. When it came to job seeking, only 17% felt at least mostly equal to native-born Finns, with just 3 % reporting always or almost always feeling equal. More than half reported feeling rarely or never equal when applying for jobs. (See Figure 7.)

When examining the experience of equality using a three-level variable (at least mostly, sometimes,

at most rarely), neither citizenship nor length of stay in Finland produced statistically significant differences between respondents.

However, there was a clear association between perceived equality in job seeking and in the work. Those who felt equal during the job search were more likely to feel equal at work as well, and vice versa—those who felt equal at work also tended to feel equal when looking for a job ($p < 0,001$).

In the open-ended answers, inequality was evident and particularly linked in working life to attitudes and the discrimination of foreign employees and job seekers. Language and cultural factors were also highlighted in the responses, and overall, the open-ended answers revealed very similar issues as in the 2024 survey.

Many respondents reported that Finns receive better pay, have more career advancement opportunities, and generally enjoy more favourable conditions in the labour market despite having the same skills. Networks also play a role, especially in the job application process.

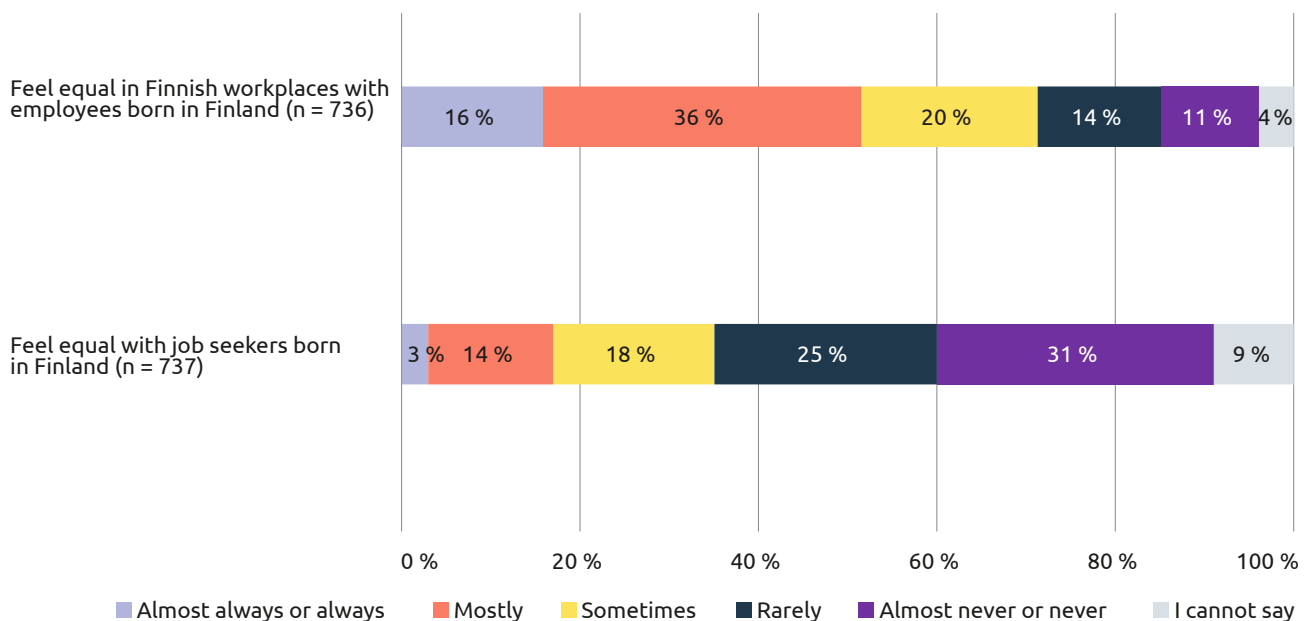


Figure 7: *Feeling of equality with job seekers/employees born in Finland*

"I feel equal because I know I'm a top talent in my area. I regularly get appealing offers from abroad. However when it comes to hiring pipelines in Finland, I know it doesn't matter how much value I can bring. There is always someone's school friend who will get the job."

Some respondents expressed a desire for support in building professional networks.

There was also a hope for changing attitudes, as many respondents reported encountering prejudice and racism when applying for jobs or working in Finland. Unequal treatment was evident, for example, in the preference for hiring Finnish candidates over those with foreign backgrounds. Foreign workers were not seen as equally trustworthy as Finnish ones.

"I feel always misunderstood and never given the benefit of the doubt compared to my Finnish colleagues. The cultural homogeneity of the Finnish workplace makes any differences I come with highly irregular and borderline unacceptable. We are put on a harsher pedestal and judged more than our native peers. And racism does exist in workplaces, unfortunately. I've been told many times, 'you are going to go back to your country,' which leads me to feel I would never belong here, I will always be viewed as an outsider, and I will never be seen as a Finn, even if I am a citizen."

Experiences of inequality were tied to cultural background, and even Finnish citizenship was not always seen as making one Finnish as the above quote illustrates. Responses highlighted how having a name perceived as non-Finnish could reduce chances in recruitment, even when the applicant was fully qualified.

"Also feels like having a Finnish name could help to pass the initial application filter."

To improve fairness, anonymous recruitment was suggested.

In addition to biases, language skills – especially unfair language requirements – undermined the sense of equality among international professionals

both in job applications and in the workplace. Many felt that Finnish language requirements were set too high, and even in English-speaking organizations, Finnish was often used in social situations and communication. Finnish-only job postings also limited opportunities to apply.

"Finnish language is mandatory even in most of international companies with branch in Finland even if it's not mentioned in the job description."

"Technically, I feel equal. I've worked hard to be technically excellent. My lack of language skills leaves me left out of many – at times almost all – conversations."

Many respondents identified improving their Finnish skills as key to improving their position, and hoped employers would support this, for example by allowing study during working hours. Employer support was seen as important, as studying after work was not always feasible due to family responsibilities or limited course offerings.

"Support from my employer in acquiring Finnish language skills would be hugely helpful. For example, allowing time to take classes as part of my professional development for my job, or even holding classes onsite (I work for a multinational corporation with a large number of non-Finnish-speaking staff)."

"In most places there are likely to be far more opportunities (e.g. evening courses) for non-native speakers to learn German or French than there is for them to learn Finnish; and so there is much more need for people moving to the country for employment to learn the language after moving than there is in Germany or France. But Finnish society does not seem willing to accept this 'inequality' between the official languages of the EU."

In addition to Finnish language studies, many hoped for increased use of English in workplaces. This along with more international environments, could help respondents feel like equal, professional members of the team.

Opinion of own integration

Most respondents felt they were quite well integrated into Finnish society, although many believed the situation could be improved. Work-life integration was achieved more often than social integration, with 65% considering their work-life integration to be good or quite good, compared to the 53% who viewed their social integration similarly. (See Figure 8.)

There were no significant differences in integration experiences based on nationality or family status, the latter representing a different result as found in 2024. Individuals who had lived in Finland for over 10 years were better integrated both professionally and socially than those in Finland for lower amounts of time ($p < 0,05$ & $p < 0,001$).

There was also a clear correlation between work-life and social integration. Those who were well integrated into working life were also more likely to be socially well integrated, whereas individuals with weak work life integration often struggled socially. Among those poorly integrated into working life, over 80 % reported poor or very poor social

integration. The connection was also evident in the opposite direction: respondents who were socially poorly integrated were significantly less integrated into working life ($p < 0,001$).

Using the results, respondents were categorized into four integration groups based on their self-assessed integration into Finnish working life and social life:

- Well integrated: At least quite well integrated in both areas
- Socially integrated: At least quite well integrated socially, but poorly or very poorly in working life
- Integrated at work: At least quite well integrated in working life, but poorly or very poorly socially
- Poorly integrated: Poor or very poor integration in both areas

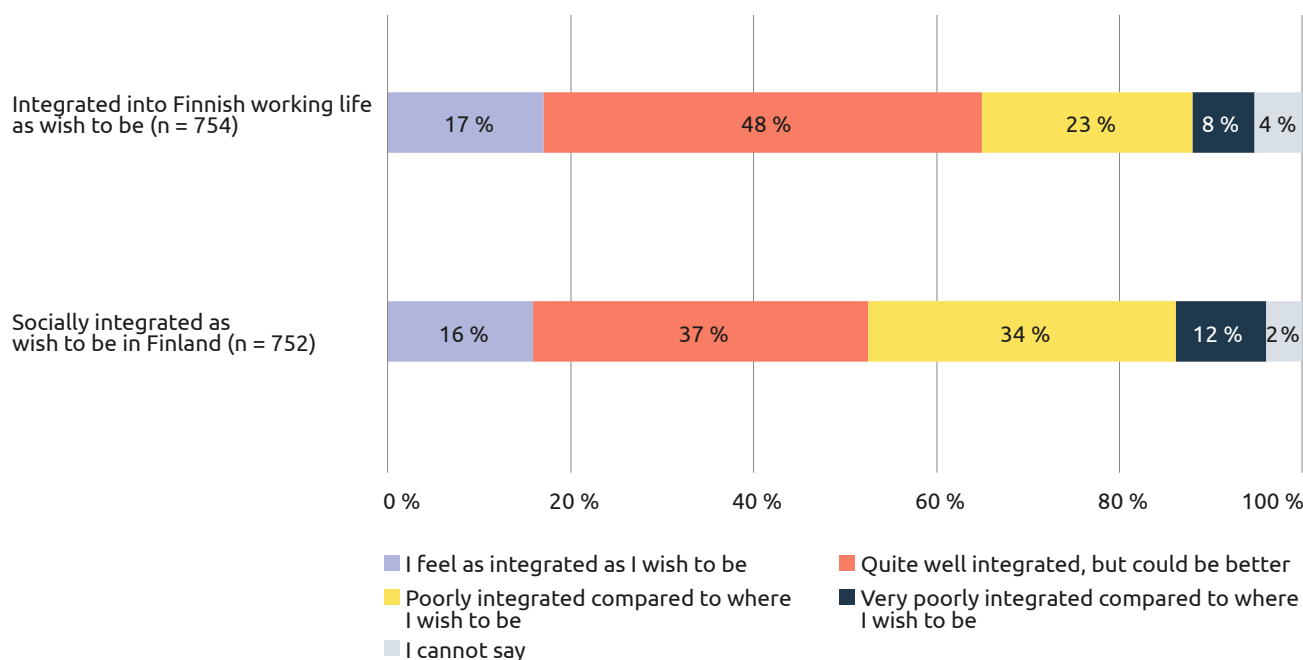


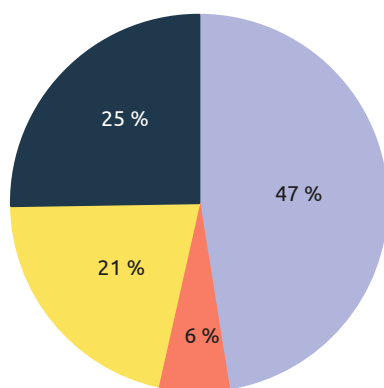
Figure 8: *Integration into Finnish working life and social life*

As shown in Figure 9, almost half of the respondents were well integrated. Gender differences in integration also emerged, which were not visible when examining individual questions. A higher proportion of women were categorised as socially integrated compared to men (12 % vs. 3 %), whereas men were slightly more likely to be integrated at work (23 % vs. 19 %). Poor integration was also more common among men than women (27 % vs. 22 %) ($p < 0.001$).

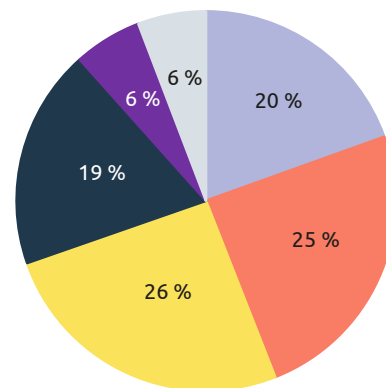
Employers and integration support

Only one fifth of the respondents reported receiving very little or no support from their employers in terms of integration (see Figure 10). In 2024, the question was phrased differently, but at that time a larger proportion - 38% - felt that their employer had not supported their integration.

Analyses using a four-category variable showed that among those poorly integrated into working life, the majority reported not having received support from their employer. In contrast, the experience of support received from employers to integration was not associated with citizenship, gender, length of residence in Finland, or having a permanent employment contract.



■ well integrated
■ socially integrated
■ integrated at work
■ poorly integrated



■ As much or more as I would have needed
■ A lot of help, but I could have had more
■ Little help, and I could have had a lot more
■ None or very little help
■ I cannot say
■ Not applicable

Figure 9: Types of work-life and social integration

Figure 10: Employer supported integration

When asked about effective ways to support integration, respondents emphasized that services are helpful if they are available (see Figure 11). Almost all respondents had experienced workplace social events, while at the other end of the spectrum, less than half had received relocation services or assistance in finding housing. Buddy/mentor systems were also among the least available forms of support.

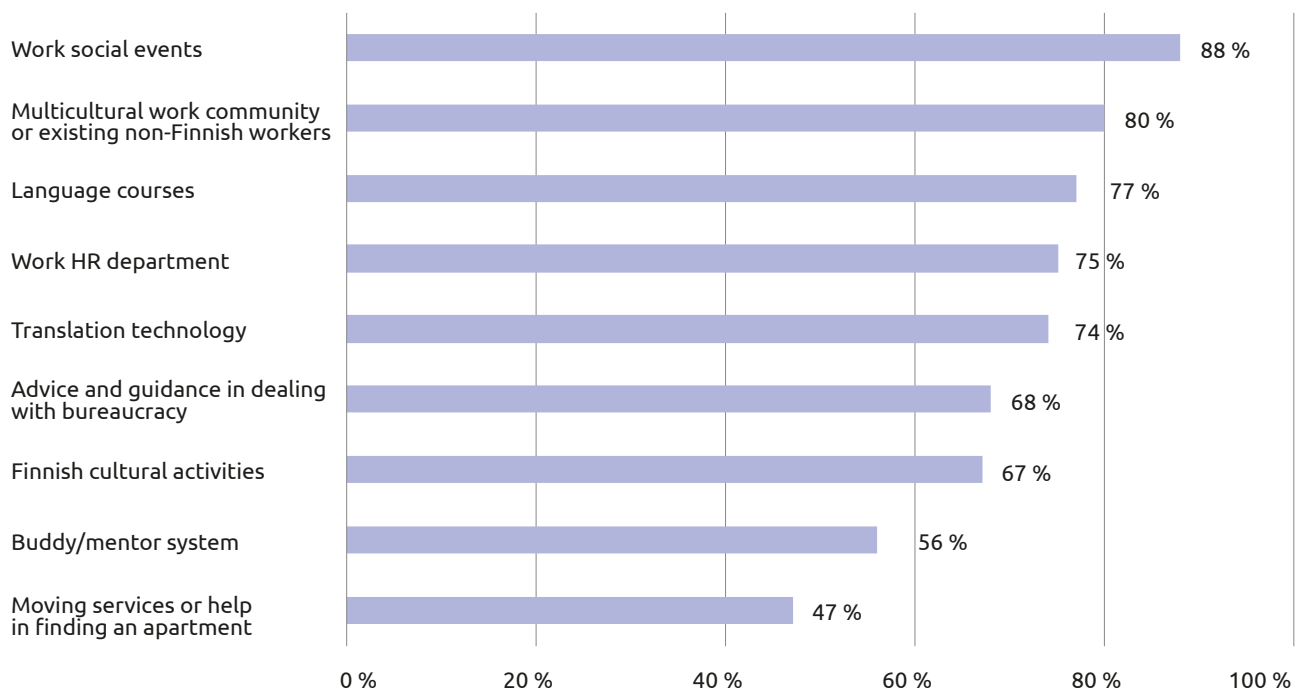


Figure 11: *Forms of support to integration, percentage that found applicable*

The most useful forms of support were translation technologies and multicultural work environments or the presence of other non-Finnish employees. Nearly two-thirds of respondents considered Finnish language courses useful of those who had received them, the lowest percentage of any of the suggested forms of support. (See Figure 12.)

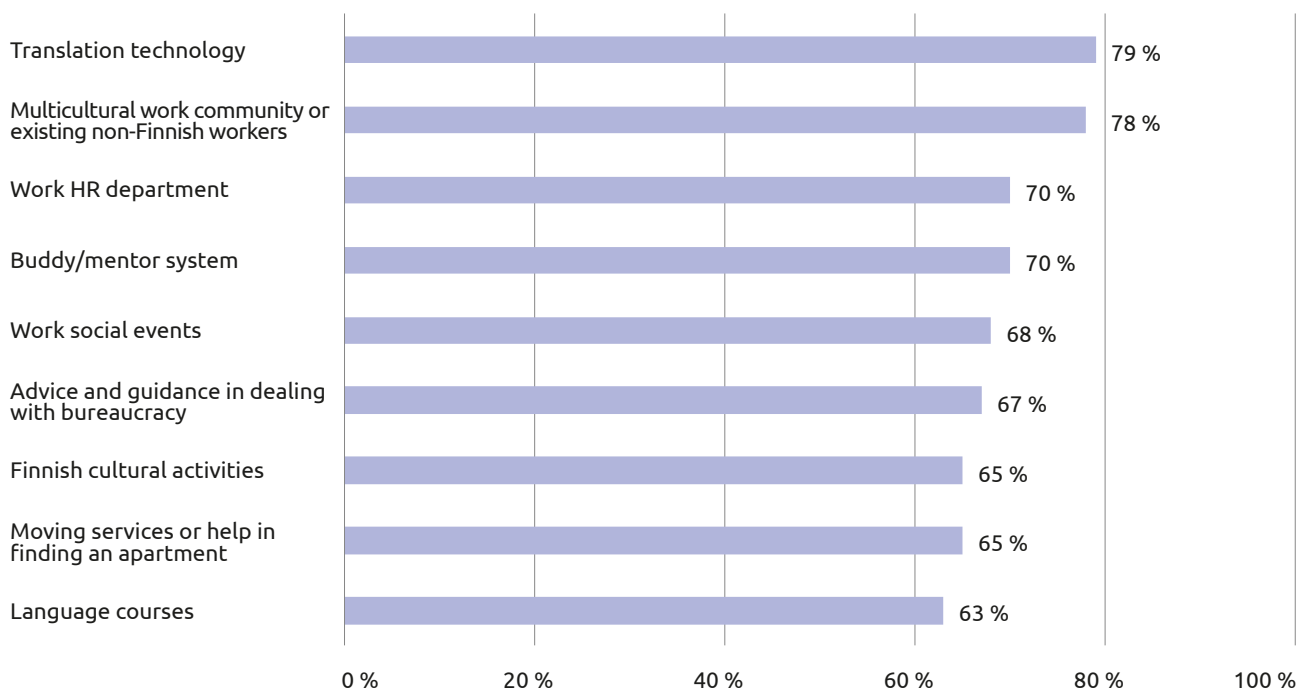


Figure 12: *Perceived usefulness of integration support, if applicable*

Opinions on Finnish working life, society and future

In addition to themes related to employment, integration, and equality, the survey aimed to explore international professionals' views on Finnish working life and society more broadly, as well as their perspectives on the future.

Finnish working life and personal situation

Most international technology experts were concerned about their own situation (see Figure 13). Four out of five agree or somewhat agree that the employment situation in their field in Finland is worrying, while less than half believed that the situation at their own workplace would remain stable.

70% of respondents from EU/EEA countries agree or somewhat agree that they could build an interesting career path in Finland. In contrast, only 54% of those from other parts of Europe shared this view. Among respondents from outside Europe, 65% expressed a similar belief. These differences were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). For the other statements examined, no statistically significant differences were found based on nationality, length of stay in Finland, or gender.

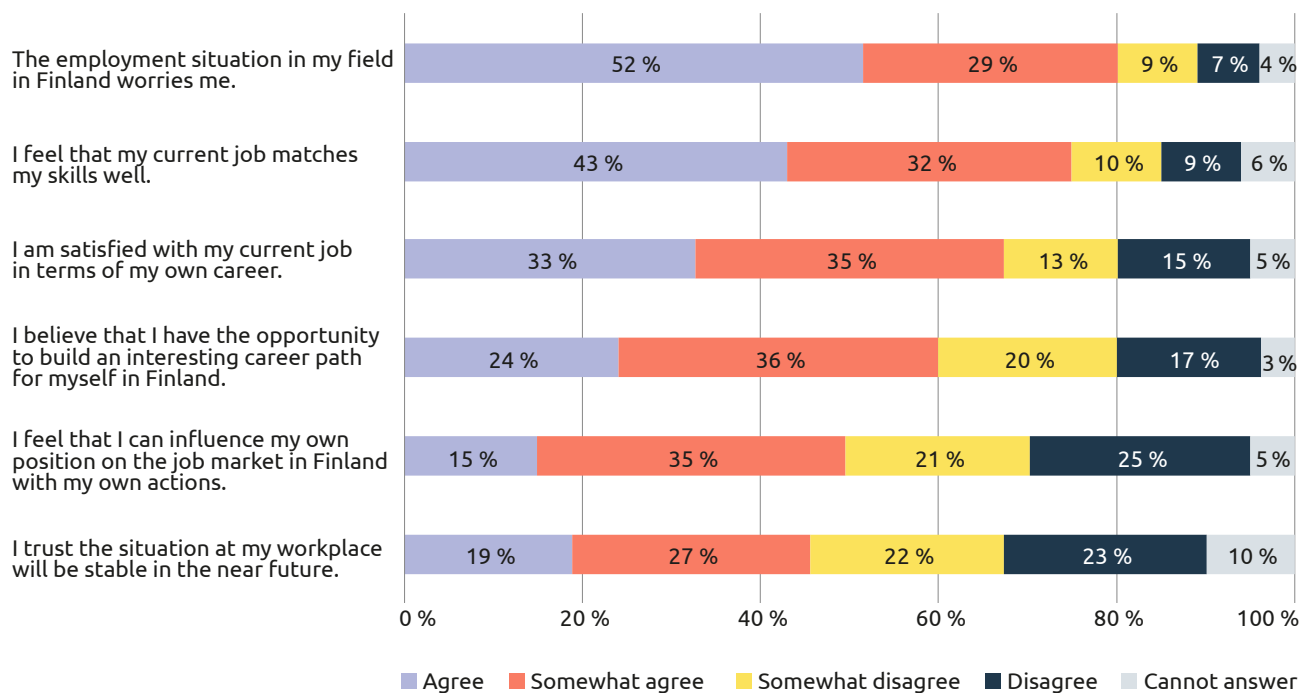


Figure 13: Statements of own situation in 2025

Particularly worrying are the changes from 2024, with the opinions of respondents' abilities to influence their position on the labour market, to build a career path and of their satisfaction with their current job in terms of their career all having fallen (Figure 14).

Respondents were also asked about the strengths of Finnish working life. The most frequently mentioned strength was work-life balance, followed by flexibility. Stability, training availability, and opportunities for career advancement were mentioned the least of the suggested strengths (Figure 15.).

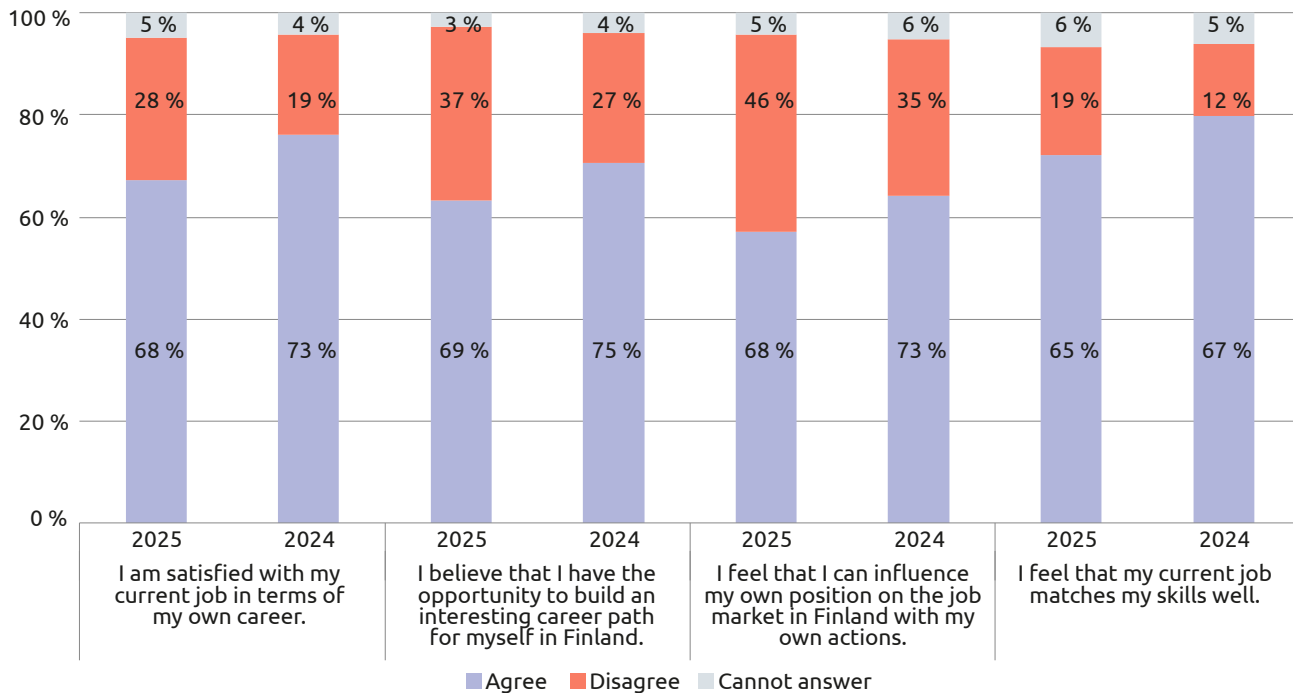


Figure 14: *Statements of own situation in 2025 and 2024*

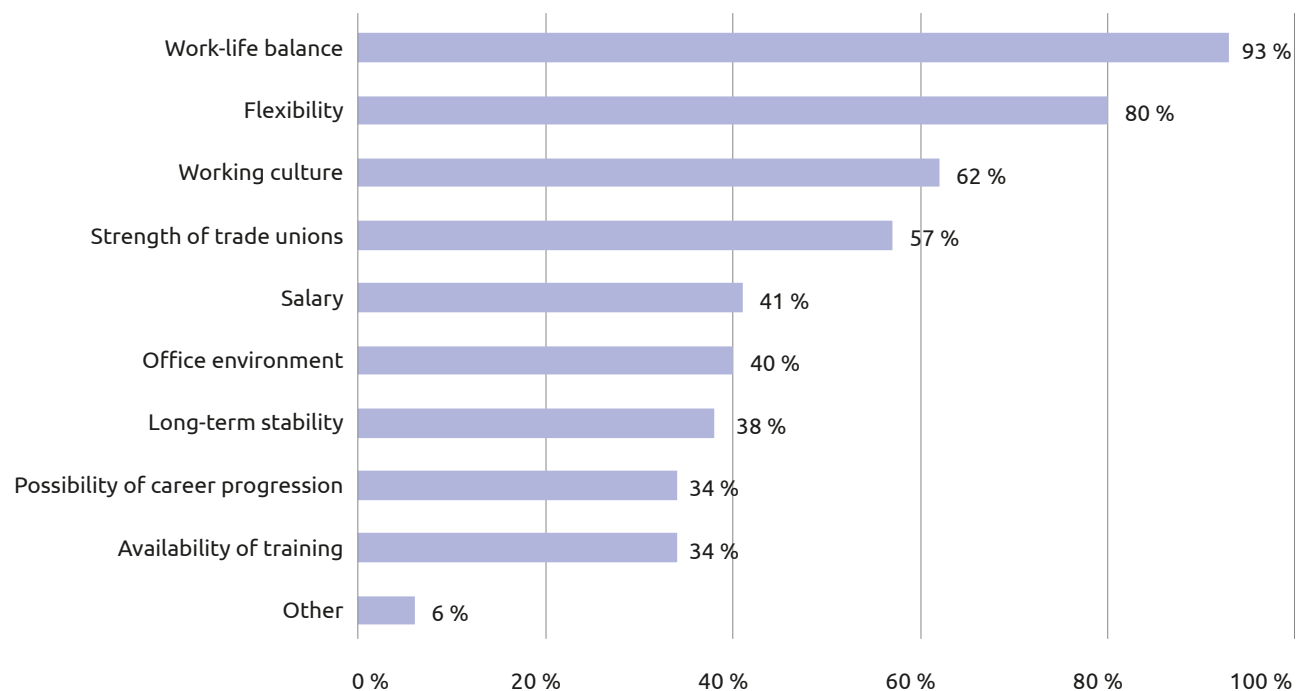


Figure 15: *Strengths in Finnish working life, as mentioned by respondents (%)*

Finnish immigration policy and attitudes

The respondents' views on the current and future situation of Finland as a country for international experts were extremely negative, although there were differences based on nationality and gender (see Figure 16).

Respondents from other European countries had slightly more negative attitudes towards Finland compared to others. Only 40% of them agree or somewhat agree that they would recommend Finland as a place to work and live, whereas the proportions were higher among those from EU/EEA countries or outside Europe ($p < 0.05$). They also

showed the least confidence in Finland becoming a better place for immigrants in five years: only 10% agreed or somewhat agree with this statement ($p < 0.01$). Women, on the other hand, were more optimistic about Finland's ability to attract international experts in the future: 29% of women agreed or somewhat agree, compared to 20% of men ($p < 0.05$).

There was a slight increase in overall positive responses compared to 2024. A slightly larger share believed that Finland would become a more attractive and better place for immigrants in the future than in 2024, while the concern over the immigration policy debate in Finland had slightly decreased, although over 80% still expressed worry.

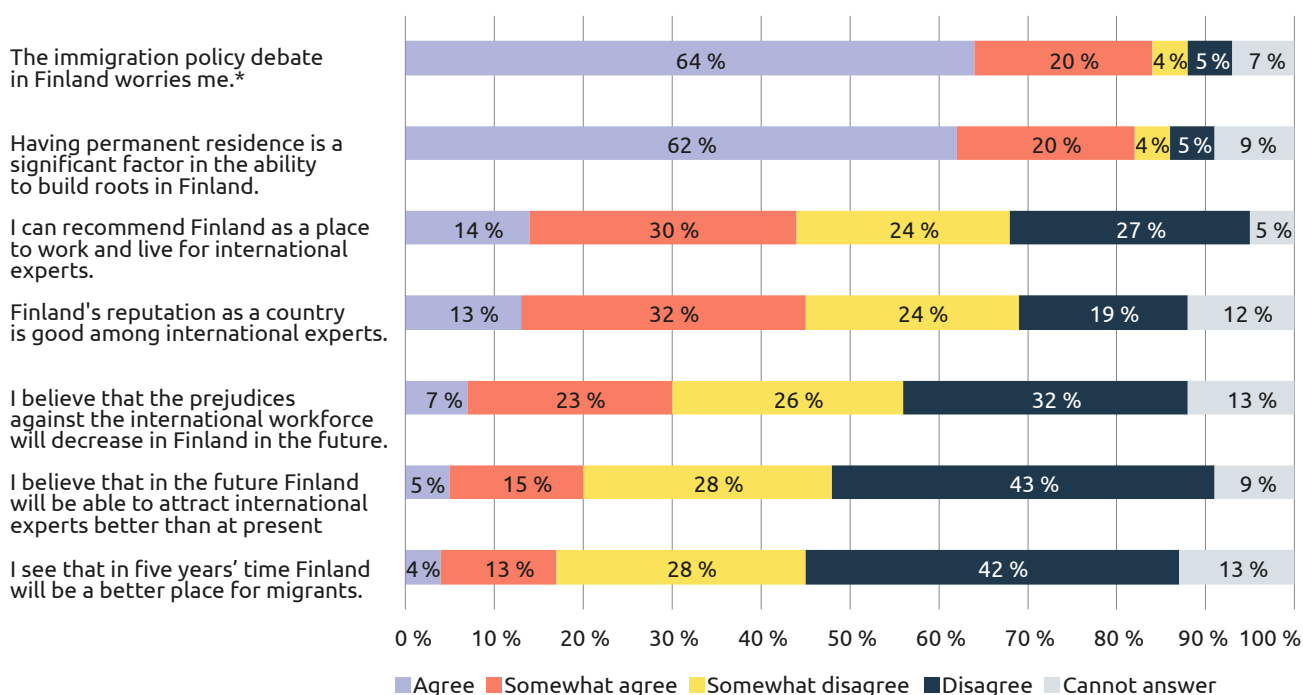


Figure 16: *Opinions of policy and attitudes in Finland in 2025*

Alarminglly, a notable drop can be seen in those who would recommend Finland to international experts, and in those who think Finland has a good reputation amongst international experts. Respectively, only 44% and 45% either agreed or somewhat agreed with each statement. (See Figure 17.)

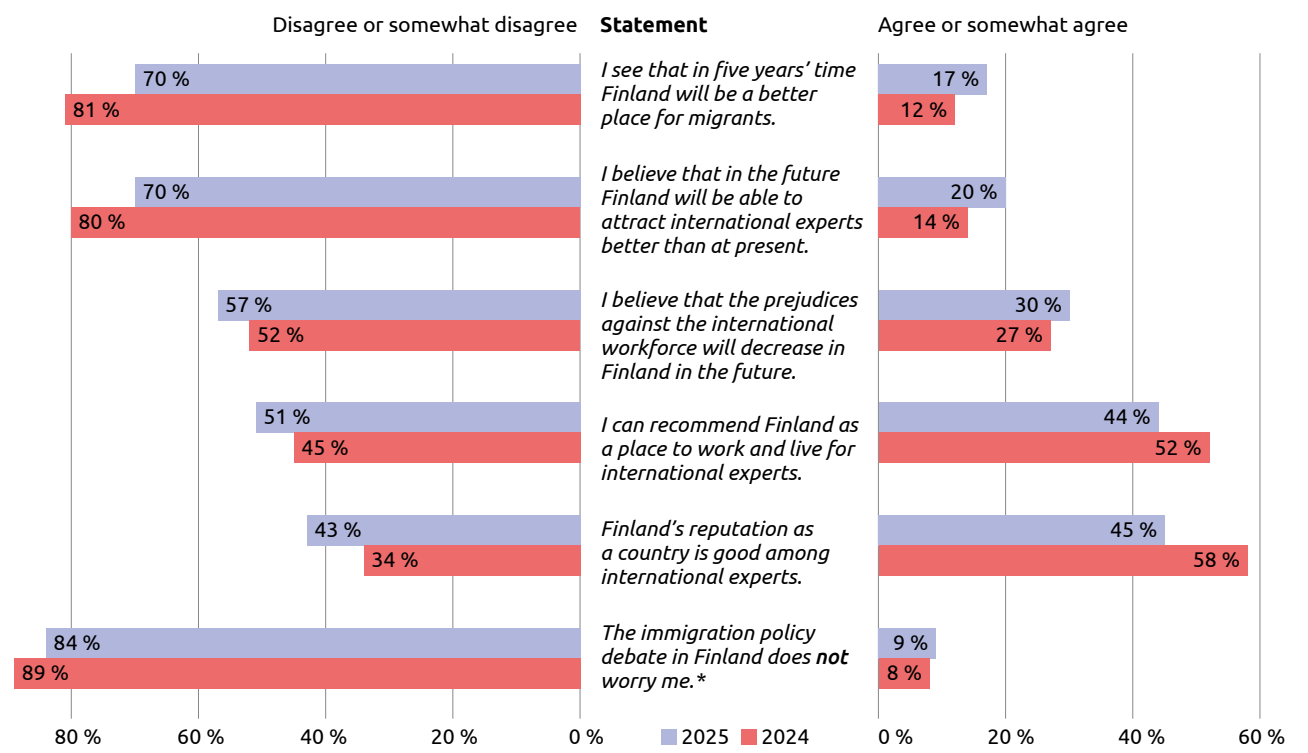


Figure 17: *Opinions of policy and attitudes in Finland, in 2025 & 2024*

*Reverse-coded Likert item

Future in Finland

Nearly half of the respondents planned to stay in Finland permanently in the future, a proportion slightly lower than in the previous year. As in last year's survey, one-third expected to live in Finland for several years before probably moving elsewhere. 12% of respondents saw themselves moving as soon as possible or in around a year (see Figure 18).

Among respondents from EU/EEA countries, 57% intended to stay in Finland permanently, whereas a larger share of those from other regions either

expected to leave at some point or were uncertain. Notably, respondents from other European countries (non-EU/EEA) were more likely to want to leave Finland soon: 14% expressed this view, compared to 7% of those from outside Europe and only 3% of those from EU countries ($p < 0,001$).

Views on leaving Finland were also associated with family situation – those living alone were more likely to consider leaving ($p < 0,001$). In contrast, the length of stay in Finland and having a permanent job were not associated with intentions to remain in the country.

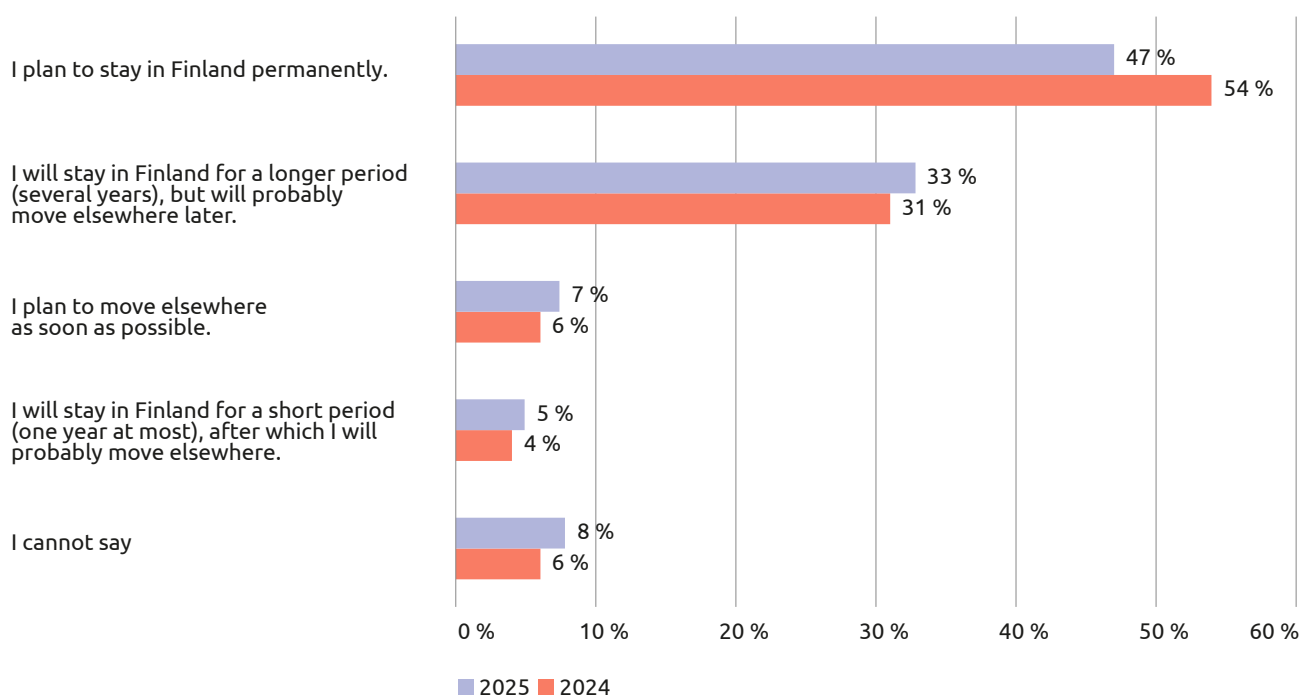


Figure 18: Future plans for living and working in Finland (2024 & 2025)

Factors affecting the decision to stay or leave

The importance of family also emerged when respondents were asked about factors influencing their decision to stay in or leave Finland (see Figure 19). Most respondents cited family-related reasons as the primary motivation for staying, with the well-being of a partner or family being the most positively influential factor. Employment was also a significant positive factor in the decision to stay.

On the other hand, limited language skills were a major negative factor. Additionally, weather and environmental conditions, as well as the time required to obtain permanent residency or citizenship, were more often cited as reasons to leave rather than to stay.

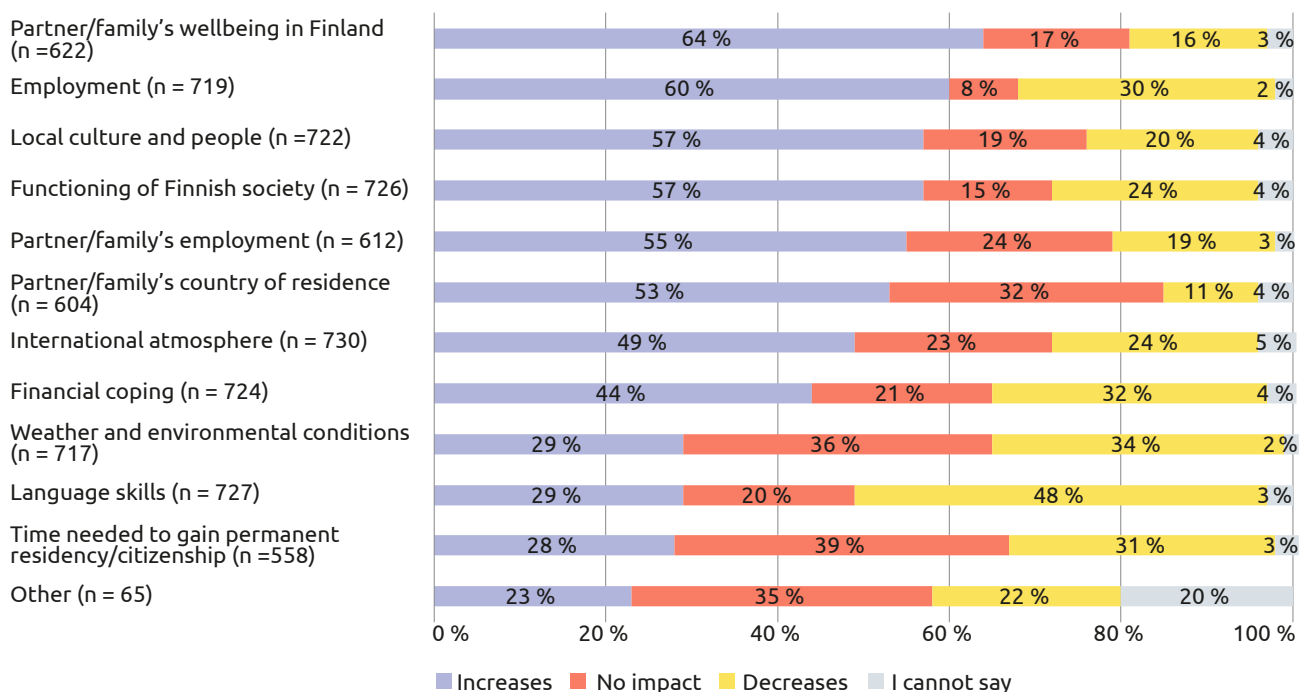


Figure 19: Positive and negative factors influencing the decision to stay in Finland, if applicable

Family emerged as a recurring theme in the open-ended responses when participants were asked about factors that either encourage them to remain in Finland or prompt them to consider leaving. While family-related reasons often served as a strong motivator for staying, other factors—such as unstable employment status, societal attitudes, and challenges related to integration—frequently contributed to considerations of emigration. The responses reflected the diversity of individual circumstances, with both push and pull factors appearing within the same categories. Overall, the factors mentioned in the 340 open-ended responses mirrored those identified in the 2024 survey.

Regarding family, many respondents mentioned having a Finnish spouse as a reason for residing in Finland. For others, children and their adaptation to Finnish society were key motivators. The Finnish education system was also highly valued, and Finland was seen as offering a better future. For some, however, family was the sole reason for staying.

"I have family and kids who will benefit from staying here, despite hardships. But if it were to do only with work situation, I would move away."

Conversely, having family abroad – especially elderly parents – was a common reason for considering departure.

"Cannot get my parents in Finland is a big issue. As they are getting old, probably at some point I need to move back and take care of them."

Some respondents also mentioned the employment situation of their spouse, especially when non-Finnish, which could either support staying or act as a push factor.

"I plan to stay in Finland permanently but it is difficult to find a job for spouse even with a vast experience in her field but only getting rejections because of Finnish language barrier and lack of reference."

In terms of employment, the presence of a permanent job was particularly emphasized. Many

respondents expressed a desire to remain in Finland but viewed this as unfeasible without stable employment. Finding a job was described as difficult, and the lack of opportunities was often linked to the broader economic situation.

"For now unemployment is very high and concerning in Finland. If situation stay the same or get worst that I couldn't secure a job after my contract ends I will leave Finland."

Other employment-related push factors included limited career advancement opportunities, with larger labour markets abroad perceived as offering more possibilities. Respondents also noted that salaries in Finland were lower than in Central Europe or the United States, while taxation and living costs were high. Experiences of discrimination and inequality – previously highlighted in the report – were also cited as negative aspects of working life in Finland.

"Salaries are not competitive enough compared to rest of EU and compared to cost of living. The job market is saturated (low offer, high demand)"

"I have no opportunity to grow and develop my carrier in Finland because discrimination level is not acceptably high."

Despite these negative accounts, some respondents highlighted positive aspects of Finnish working life, particularly the emphasis on work-life balance.

Both employment and family were closely tied to broader integration into Finnish society. Many respondents who had settled in Finland no longer saw themselves moving abroad. As one respondent put it: "I have a permanent job, house and family." Others felt aligned with Finnish values and lifestyle. Finland's clean environment, access to nature, and peaceful surroundings were also deeply appreciated.

"I am attracted by Finland's society core values; I share them, and I would like to preserve them. I believe they are the basis for a peaceful and respectful life in society."

"I'm happier and healthier in Finland than anywhere else I've lived. I have a wonderful social circle of finns and non-finns, access to nature, public transportation, sports, libraries, affordable housing."

However, not all respondents felt at home in Finland. Some cited external factors such as the cold weather and darkness, but more often, social environment, prevailing societal attitudes, and language barriers were seen as more significant. Many felt socially excluded and found it difficult to form friendships with Finns, which increased feelings of loneliness and lack of support.

"The situation at work leaves me with the impression that there is no point trying to get involved in social activities until I am fluent in Finnish."

"I feel like I'm not welcomed here. As an international, with the level of services I get compared to the tax I pay and the amount of passive racism I'm exposed to, I don't see myself staying here forever."

Respondents also noted that Finland had changed in recent years. The societal climate was perceived as having become more hostile, and immigration policies more restrictive. This shift was unexpected and caused frustration and concern.

"I have given my all to this country so much that i became a citizen. In the last few years i now feel not wanted here and that society here does not want those that want to push industry and development. Finland wants people to have mediocre salary, push out kids and coast through life without trying to build a fulfilling career. That incorporated with the 'foreigner' glass ceiling and increase racism and discrimination, i don't plan to give any more of my time, effort and tax money to this country. I am one of the leading experts in a field that desperately needs people in Finland but I am not sure they deserve me anymore."

"I think that the direction that the government is moving in is concerning, and that the international workforce faces risk of deportation due to the 3-month rule with very little stability due to the increased duration for permanent RP and citizenship."

Nevertheless, many respondents still saw positive aspects in Finnish society, such as safety and stability, which contributed to their decision to stay despite the challenges.

"Finland has already a very dark and cold environment. Then it comes with cold behaviour from Finnish employers and unsocial behaviour from native Finns. The only reason I want to stay here is, Finland is a safe and secured country. It has pure water, good food and clean environment which is important for a healthy life."

"My desire to stay in Finland has a lot to do with the general level of safety, stability, and personal freedom, despite significant and persistent drawbacks related to working life and social integration. I value these other aspects so highly that I am willing to put up with the drawbacks, but my answer should in no way be taken as an endorsement of the current level of attractiveness of living and working in Finland from the point of view of my rights as a skilled foreign worker, or my acceptance socially: both of these aspects have significantly degraded recently, and if I had known how things would be now I very likely would have chosen to go to a different country; now that I am here though, it is my home and I do not wish to leave."

In summary, the open-ended responses illustrate how various factors are deeply interconnected and how a wide range of considerations influence whether individuals wish to continue living in Finland in the future.

"There are good things, there are bad things, there are hard things. Currently I still think I'd like to stay, but this has become more fragile. This is very highly dimensional puzzle."

Conclusions

The aim of this survey was to gather the often-unheard voices of international technology experts, particularly in the topics of equality and integration, and to monitor how these opinions of Finland have changed since 2024.

The respondents to the survey were highly educated, with over three-quarters having at least a master's level degree, often gained in Finland. Representing over 70 nationalities, they were a diverse group that can be considered well settled in Finland, based on an average time here of 7.6 years, with two thirds having family living here and 60% having permanent residence or EU citizenship.

The employment situation of international technology experts has worsened since the previous survey conducted in 2024. As well as an increased unemployment rate from 3% to 7%, the views towards employment in Finland also show declines in factors such as the perceived ability to influence their job position in Finland, their ability to build a career, and the satisfaction with the current position. In addition, less than half believed the situation in their workplace would be stable in the near future.

Clear differences could be seen between the perceived equality when job hunting compared to in the workplace, with only 17% feeling they are mostly or almost always equal to Finnish jobseekers, compared to 52% who felt equal to Finnish workers in the workplace. Finnish language difficulties, a lack of available jobs and a lack of networks were the main reasons given for difficulties in finding employment. The highlighted strengths of Finland's working life were in working-life balance and flexibility.

Almost half of respondents reported receiving little or no integration support from their employers, with translation software and existing multicultural workplaces being the biggest aids in integration. Almost two thirds of respondents who had received Finnish courses, a category that can include a wide variation in course duration and content, found them useful to their integration. High levels of working life integration were being achieved more commonly than in social integration.

Finally, a clear drop in the views of Finland was apparent, with a decrease in both the percentage who would recommend Finland and in those who think Finland's reputation is good amongst international experts. Like last year, serious worries were present about Finland's immigration policy and rhetoric, as well in the prospects of Finland improving as a country for international experts in the next five years.

The results display that among this highly educated, diverse group, there is a definite need to improve the experience of job seeking in Finland, as well as in the ability to integrate socially and in the amount of available employer provided integration support. Together with creating a more positive immigration debate, these steps are crucial to stop the downhill reputational slide that Finland is undergoing in the eyes of international technology experts. In turn, they are steps needed for a better future for Finland.

Recommendations

Based on the findings presented, TEK and In-sinööriliitto together suggest the following:

Develop an immigration model built around incentives, not punishments

1. Provide a fast-track route to permanent residence for international experts when moving to Finland and for those already here.
2. Remove the 3-/6-month rule or add alterations that increase flexibility, for example for those with children in the middle of school years.
3. Link economic and migration strategies more closely, with a focus on the positive role immigration has played and will play in the Finnish economy.

Reduce the brain waste of international experts in Finland

1. Broaden current work discrimination laws to include common forms faced by international experts, such as purposefully unrealistic language requirements, non-recognition of foreign experience and education and hiring decisions based on worries that someone won't stay in Finland.
2. Adopt anonymous recruiting and build upon the EU Pay Transparency Directive to require salary ranges to be listed in all job advertisements in an aim to reduce salary exploitation.
3. Develop and fund the local employment services to provide fast and specialized services for international experts, working to understand local employer needs and to match them with individuals.

Improve integration both in and out of the workplace

1. Fast-track the production and adoption of suitable language and cultural classes for those in working life, to do during working hours.
2. Provide genuine opportunities for international experts to network and build social communities outside of work via city-led efforts.
3. Include trade unions in integration course planning, to improve the understanding of rights and how to notice and respond to exploitation.

Suosituks toimenpiteiksi

Esitettyjen tulosten perusteella TEK ja Insinööri-
liitto ehdottavat seuraavaa:

Kannustava maahanmuutomalli

1. Tarjotaan nopea reitti pysyvään oleskelulupa-
kansainvälisille osaajille – sekä uusille tulijoille
että jo Suomessa oleville.
2. Poistetaan 3-/6 kk sääntö tai lisätään joustoja,
esimerkiksi koululaisten perheille.
3. Talouspolitiikka tukemaan maahanmuuttopo-
litiikkaa – korostetaan maahanmuuton positiiv-
ista vaikutusta.

Hankitun osaamisen tehokkaampi/parempi hyödyntäminen

1. Laajennetaan syrjintälainsäädäntöä: kie-
livaatimusten kohtuuttomuus, ulkomailla
hankitun kokemuksen sivuuttaminen tai
pelko hakijan poismuutosta ei saa vaikuttaa
rekrytointipäätökseen.
2. Otetaan käyttöön anonyymi rekrytointi ja työ-
paikkailmoituksiin palkkahaitarit EU:n palkka-
läpinäkyvyysdirektiivin pohjalta.
3. Kehitetään ja rahoitetaan paikallisia työllis-
tymispalveluita: nopeaa ja erikoistunutta
tukea kansainvälisille osaajille, alueelliset
työnantajien/elinkeinoelämän osaamistarpeet
huomioiden.

Parempi kotoutuminen töissä ja vapaa-ajalla

1. Kehitetään työelämään sopivien kieli- ja kult-
tuurikurssien tarjontaa. Mahdollistetaan kurs-
sien suorittaminen työajalla.
2. Tarjotaan kansainvälisille osaajille aitoja mah-
dollisuuksia verkostoitua ja rakentaa yhteisöjä
työpaikan ulkopuolella kaupunkien tukemana.
3. Otetaan ammattiliitot mukaan kotoutumiskurs-
sien suunnitteluun ja lisätään kansainvälisten
osaajien ymmärrystä oikeuksistaan työntekijöi-
nä. Kehitetään osaamista tunnistaa ja puuttua
hyväksikäyttöön työmarkkinoilla.



**The Union of Professional
Engineers in Finland**