

Migrant children in Finland

NGOs promoting children's rights

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Central Union for Child Welfare

- Founded in 1937 to build co-operation between NGOs, municipalities and state authorities.
- An umbrella for 131 organisations: 92 NGOs and 39 municipalities.
- About 30 employees.
- Our vision: The children should be a priority in all decision-making.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN) is the foundation for all the lobbying activities.



Main sources of funding



- Children's Day Foundation (Linnanmäki Amusement Park)
- Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA)
- Child's World magazine
- Annual conferences
- Publications
- Other grants or targeted funding admitted by foundations or ministries
- Member fees



International co-operation

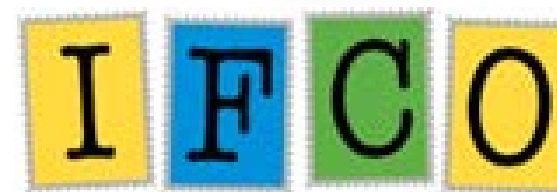
The Central Union for Child Welfare is active in many international forums and works together with many child and family organisations.



Eurochild
Putting children at
the heart of Europe



OMEP



International
Foster Care
Organisation



Lastekaitse Liit
Estonian Union for Child Welfare

International child welfare work

- involves lobbying, sharing of good practices, shared understanding of what constitutes a good life for a child and research and development projects.
- aim is to make information available to member organisations → newsletter on international affairs 4 times/year.



NGOs and the EU funding

- We do not know how many NGOs receive EU funding.
- Many actors feel that the EU application process is too complicated and time consuming.
- In order to get EU funding the NGOs need also national funding.
- The role of the NGOs in the integration of immigrants is growing.

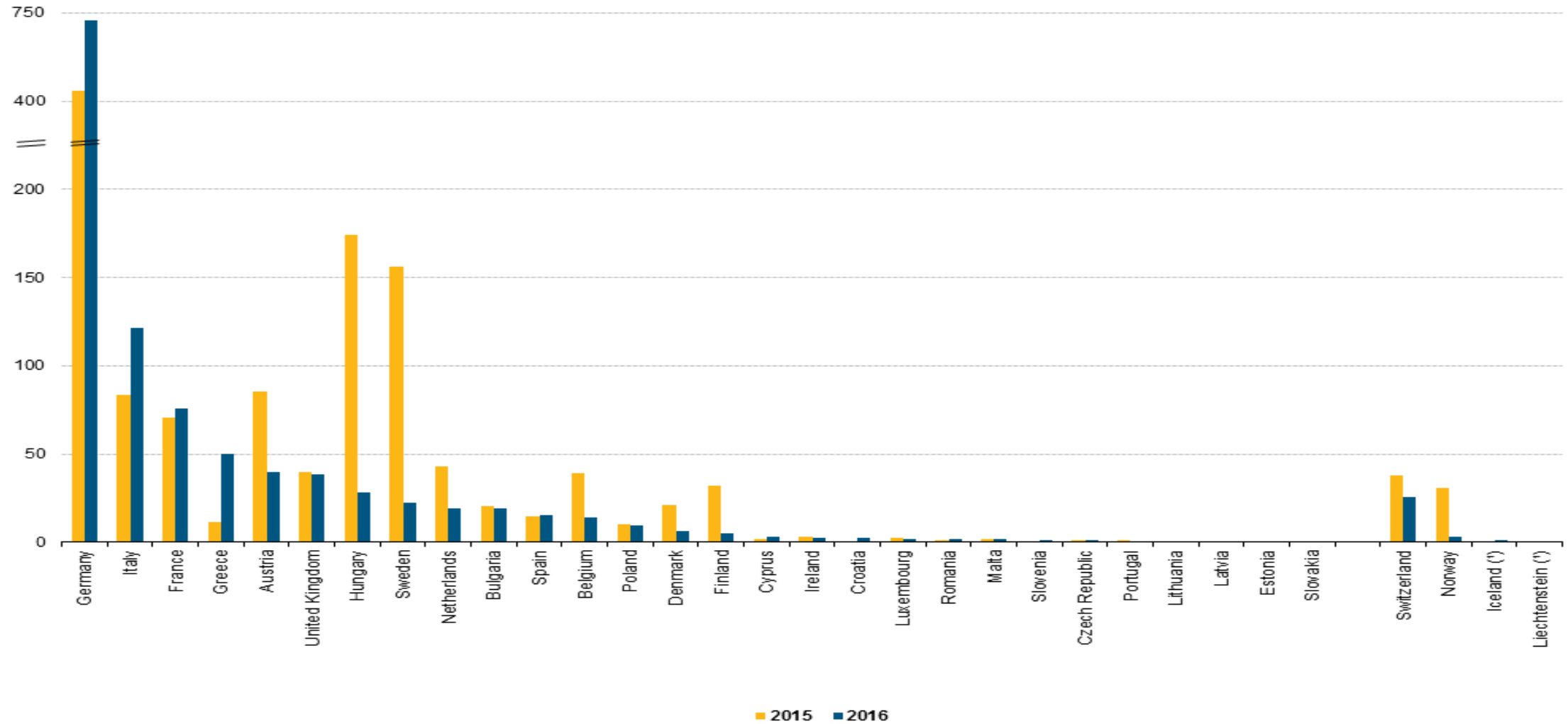


NGOs and the integration of immigrants

- Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1.9.2011) & the integration programs of the government → NGOs should play a major role in integration.
- In practice refugees are often the only immigrant group that are provided the benefit of extended consultation hours and interpreters even though majority of the immigrants also need these aids.
→ NGOs are compensating the authorities and help immigrants in many ways in everyday matters.
- Public authorities see the organisations as intermediaries between them and the immigrants.



Asylum seekers in the EU and EFTA member states in 2015 and 2016



Note: the y-axis is interrupted with a different interval above the interruption from that below it.

(*) 2015: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_asyappctza)

Unaccompanied minors in the Nordic countries

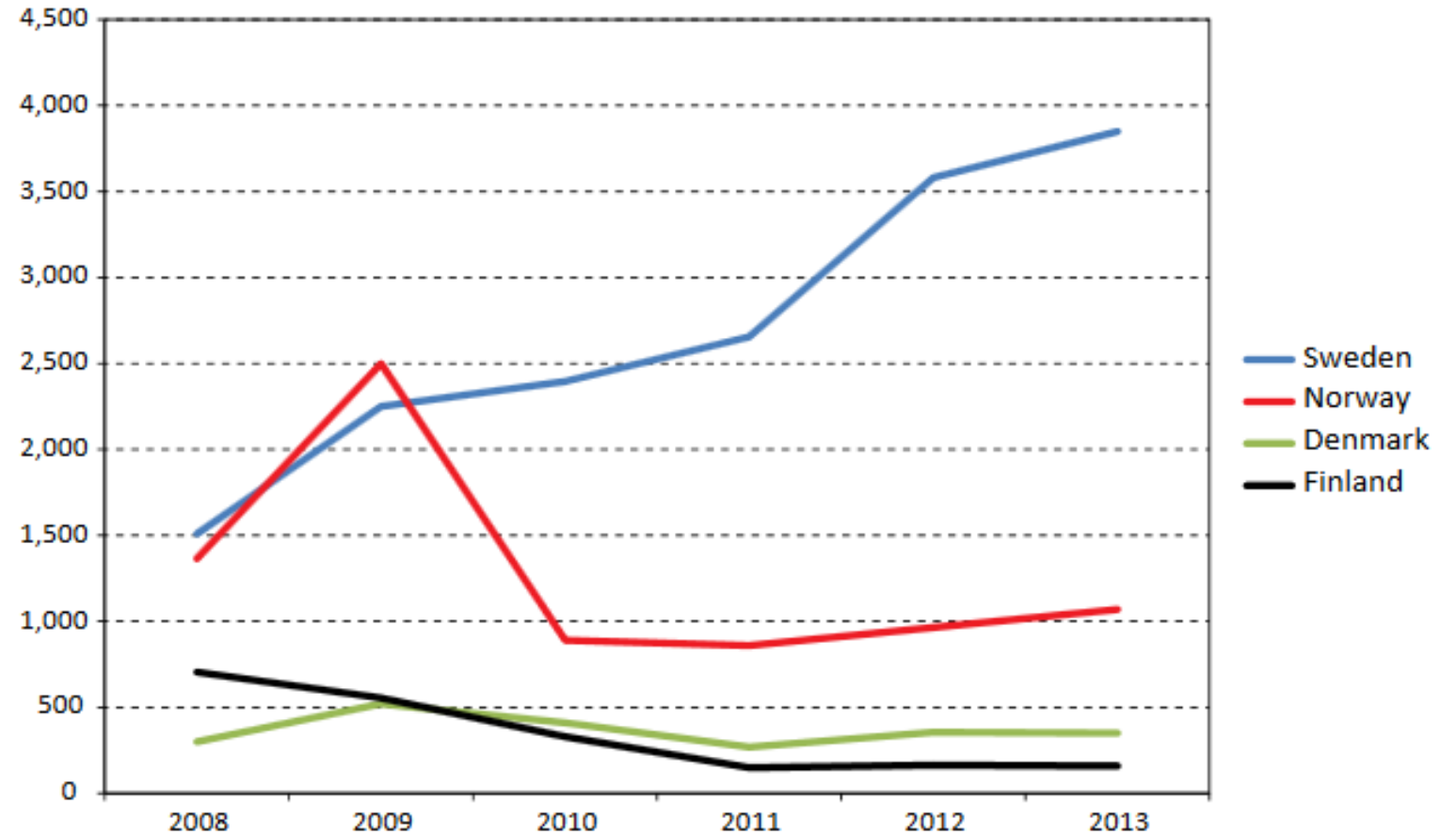


Figure 2. Asylum applications submitted by unaccompanied minors in the Nordic countries (Source: Eurostat 2015).



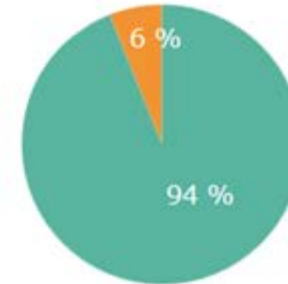
Unaccompanied minors in Finland in 2015

Unaccompanied minors – top 5 countries of origin in 2015. Source: Migri/European Migration Network Finland

YKSINTULLEET ALAIKÄISET TURVAPAIKANHAKIJAT,
VIISI SUURINTA RYHMÄÄ 2015



SUKUPUOLIJAKAUMA



Miehet **Males**



Naiset **Females**



... in EU, Sweden and Finland

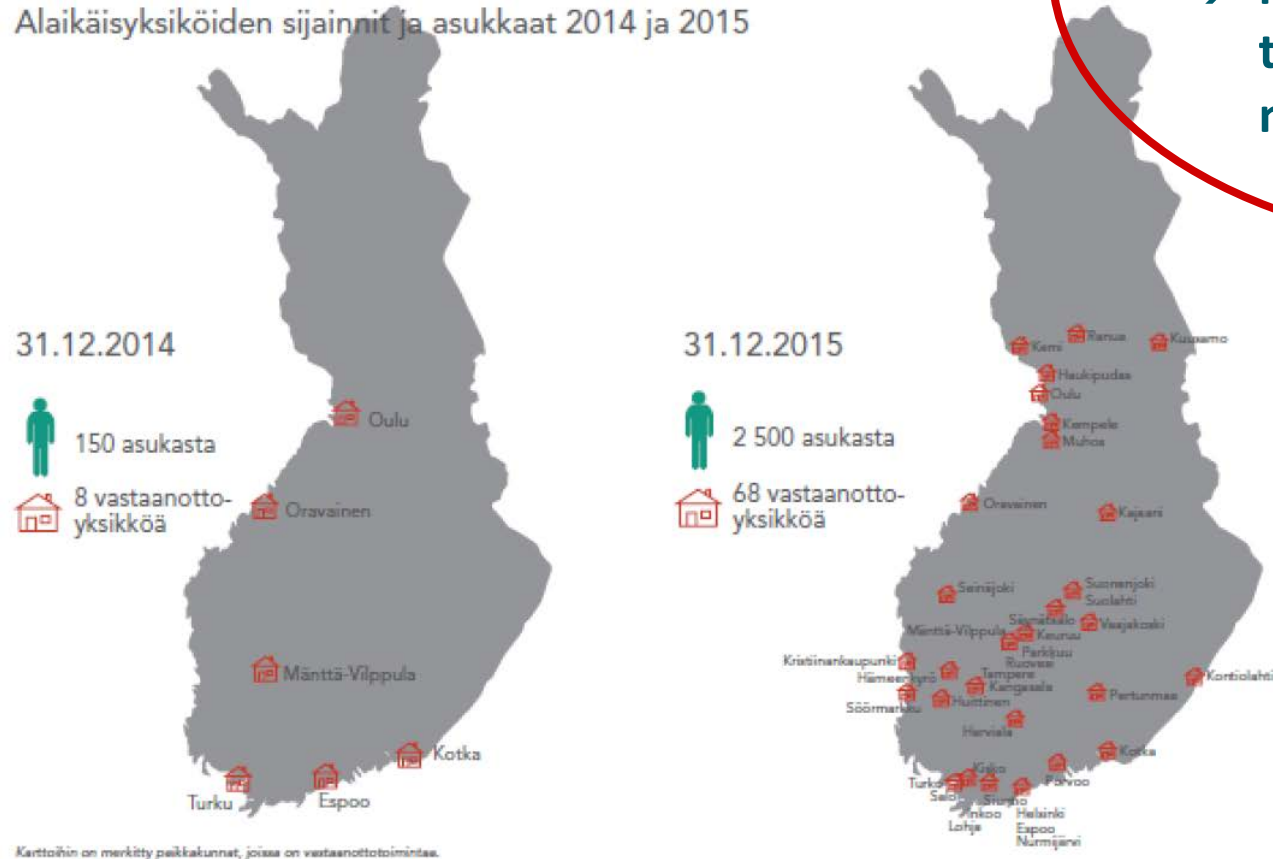
- In EU usually about 11 000 - 13 000 asylum applications by unaccompanied minors
 - **88 300** in 2015
 - **35 369** of them in Sweden (40 %)
- In Finland in 2015: **3 024** in 2016: **401** in 2017 (until end of March): **60**
- Main countries of origin: Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, in 2016 also Syria



Units for minors in 2014 and 2015

Alaikäisyksiköt 2014 ja 2015

Alaikäisyksiköiden sijainnit ja asukkaat 2014 ja 2015



→ expertise everywhere?

→ instructions, coordination, training, monitoring?



From reception to integration of UAMs

- Difficult to find places to settle down – municipalites can choose whether they take refugees or not.
 - This means transfers for children – interrupted integration
 - What about the best interests of child or child's opinion in the placement?
- What happens when they turn 18? What about 'after-care'?
 - The municipalites can get the expences from the Government until the adolescent is 21



Guardianship for unaccompanied minors (god man)

System is still undeveloped. The shortcomings that have existed always (more than 15 years now) became apparent when the number of asylum seekers increased abruptly in 2015.

- The recruitment and monitoring of guardians for unaccompanied children is inconsistent.
- Their role is unclear.
- They have very different backgrounds with no consistent training or monitoring.
- EU is emphasizing the strengthening of the role of guardians



Changes in asylum policy that affect children

Several legislative proposals to tighten asylum policy in Finland:

- More difficult to get international protection.
- More difficult to get free legal aid.
- Almost impossible to succeed in family reunification.
- It is still possible to take families and children into detention.
 - An unaccompanied child who has turned 15 can be detained for max 6 days upon removal.



Advocacy work of the CUCW in Finland

- Policy positions in the legislation work – statements to Government's proposals and hearings at the Parliament
- Influencing to the policy by participating to the working groups nominated by the Government
- Campaigns with members and other NGOs in different areas
- Ad hoc statements and position papers with members and other NGOs
- An important part of the advocacy work is influencing through the mechanisms concerning UN treaties - CRC as the most important. (5th periodic report coming – a coalition preparing the NGO report at the moment). Also UPR.



EU policy & legislation

- EU has always had **jurisdiction in migration**
 - Commission: Directives – with minimum standards.
 - MS: Tightened policy – minimum has become maximum. Pull factors.
- **CEAS – Common European Asylum System**
 - No longer minimum standards but directly binding legislation
 - Migration control determines (Dublin system as the base to all other directives)
- **Integrated child protection systems?**
 - EU also aims to support Member States in ensuring respect for rights of the child.



A young boy is captured in a moment of joyful movement, running towards a large, vibrant blue door. He is dressed in a blue jacket with white stripes on the cuffs and hem, a dark beanie, and camouflage-patterned cargo pants. His right hand is reaching out to touch the black handle of the door, while his left hand is pressed against the door's surface. The scene is set outdoors on a concrete sidewalk, with a long shadow cast by the boy onto the door. The overall atmosphere is bright and positive.

Thank you!