



Country guide for new EPIET/EUPHEM fellows

**Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos
(National Institute for Health and Welfare),
Helsinki
Finland**

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<http://epietalumni.net/activities/countries-guide/>

Please note: This is a living document. If you find any information to be incorrect or out of date, or there is anything you wish to add, please amend the guide (and date it accordingly) and send the new version to your cohort representative for uploading onto the EAN country guides website. Thank you.

CONTENT

EARLY ON AND GETTING STARTED	4
1. Registration in Finland	4
Residence permit/card (if needed) & Visa (if needed)	4
Registration, including social security number/ID/Person number	4
Finnish Immigration Service (Migri)	4
Local Register Office (Maistraatti)	4
2. Finding accommodation	4
Areas to live	5
Type of housing	5
Terms – when looking for a flat	5
Necessary documents to get accommodation – contract	5
Amenities: Internet, Telephone, Television, Gas, Electricity, Water, Heating	5
Furniture and household goods	5
Useful websites	5
3. Reimbursement of expenses	6
4. Finances	6
Bank account	6
Taxes	6
5. Administration	6
Contract	6
Salary corrections	6
Pension (public/private)	6
6. Insurance	7
Health insurance	7
Recommendations/suggestions	7
Travel clinics/where to get vaccinations	7
Travel insurance	7
Travel health insurance	8
Accident insurance	8
Liability insurance	8
Expat insurance	8
7. Leaving the country	8
Suggested removal companies	8
Places to deregister from	8
	2

AT WORK	8
8. Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos (National Institute for Health and Welfare)	8
Getting to & from the city/institute	8
Your office space	9
Access card	9
Laptop and mobile	9
Remote Access	9
Holidays	9
Public Holidays	9
Working Time	10
Lunch	10
LIVING IN FINLAND	10
9. Culture (dos and don'ts)	10
10. Public transport	10
Travel within Helsinki:	10
To and from airport:	11
Travelling by train outside Helsinki:	11
11. Cycling in the city	11
12. Language schools	11
13. Recreational activities, sports, worth visiting, meeting people	12
Worth visiting	12
14. Supermarkets	12
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	13
15. Moving in with a family	13
CONTACT	13
16. Key contacts at your institute	13
Secretariat	13
HR	13
Finance	13
17. Contact information of current and previous fellows	13

EARLY ON AND GETTING STARTED

1. Registration in Finland

Residence permit/card (if needed) & Visa (if needed)

As an EU-citizen, you have the right to live in any EU country, if you work there.

During the first 3 months of your stay, your host country cannot require you to register your residence. You can do so, if you wish. After 3 months, your host country may require you to register your residence with local authorities, to show that you are working there and obtain a document confirming your right to stay.

Source: https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/residence/residence-rights/index_en.htm

Registration, including social security number/ID/Person number

Finnish Immigration Service (Migri)

EU/EEA citizens (except Nordic citizens) must register their right to reside in Finland upon arrival, if their stay lasts for longer than three months. In order to obtain your personal identity code, you will need to fill an online application on this website:

<https://enterfinland.fi/eServices/info/europeancitizens>, which will guide you through every step, including making an appointment on <https://migri.vihta.com/public/migri/#/home> before you go to the Helsinki service point. The personal identity code (henkilötunnus) is required for almost everything, opening a bank account, renting a flat, getting health insurance, etc. Hence, it is important to register as soon as possible so you can proceed with other administrative issues.

Address: Käenkuja 3aA, Helsinki

Website: migri.fi

Local Register Office (Maistraatti)

Contact the Local Register Office at International House Helsinki (1st floor) in order to register an address and/or apply for a Finnish personal identity code if you do not yet have one. You need to bring along the following documents: a passport or a valid photo ID, an employment contract, an EU registration certificate (if you want to apply for a Finnish municipality of residence (kotikunta)). If you have accompanying family members, please note that they also need to visit the Local Register Office in person in order to register an address and familial relationships and/or apply for a Finnish personal identity code, if they do not yet have one. They need to bring along the following documents: a passport or a valid photo ID, a legalized original marriage certificate (if you are married), children's legalized original birth certificates (if you have children who are under 18), an EU registration certificate (if you want to apply for a Finnish municipality of residence (kotikunta)).

Please note that your documents must be legalized or certified with an Apostille. Documents must also be translated into Finnish, Swedish or English if they are in some other language.

Address: International House Helsinki, Albertinkatu 25, Helsinki

Website: <https://www.ihhelsinki.fi/>

2. Finding accommodation

Before contacting estate agents, it is a good idea to contact current EPIET/EUPHEM fellows or named contact at the host site, who may know of a place that is available to rent.

Areas to live

Helsinki is considered a safe city and choosing where to live will depend on the budget and how close to work or city centre you prefer to stay. A few popular neighbourhoods are Töölö, Kampi, Punavuori, Kalio. They all have good public transport connection to THL and the city centre. Some of those neighbourhoods are located in the city centre ([Helsinki map](#)). THL is situated about 20 minutes from the city centre by tram or bus.

Type of housing

The majority of Helsinki's population reside in block of flats. The size of accommodation and the location will depend on your preferences and budget.

Terms – when looking for a flat

You will sign a contract with the landlord when you find the flat to stay. The contract will contain all the rules and obligations as well as other terms and conditions describing how to behave in your newly rented place.

Necessary documents to get accommodation – contract

The procedure to rent through the rental agencies might be impossible before your arrival as they request a Finnish personal identification code in order to rent a flat. However, you get the ID code only after having the working contract, followed by registration at the Finnish immigration service.

Amenities: Internet, Telephone, Television, Gas, Electricity, Water, Heating

Depending on the landlord, the Internet, electricity, heating might be included in the rent. Water, television and other amenities are usually extra. The electricity is around 20€ a month, water 20€. There are three major internet service providers in Finland: ELISA Saunalahti, SONERA and DNA. Further details can be found at: <http://saunalahti.fi/>, <http://www.sonera.fi>, <http://www.dna.fi>. You might be asked to give a deposit (100€) when subscribing to a provider, monthly cost around 30€ a month.

Furniture and household goods

Take into account that finding an apartment and applying process can take quite a while (around one month) and most apartments for rent in Helsinki are not furnished.

Useful websites

The following websites also provide details of properties available and give an idea of price range which can vary from around 800€ (for a studio flat) upward (depending on the neighbourhood):

<http://www.vuokraovi.com>

<http://www.vuokraturva.fi/english/>

<http://asunnot.oikotie.fi/>

<https://www.tori.fi>

Usually the rent agreement is signed for one year. Deposit is common when renting an apartment (normally amount of 1-3 month rents) and is returned upon moving out. In Finland there is a law for residential leases, which details the conditions of rental contracts:

<https://www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/1995/en19950481.pdf>

3. Reimbursement of expenses

You are entitled to the relocation reimbursement from THL and this includes the flight tickets to/from Helsinki and the removal costs within budget limits. The rules for what you can be reimbursed change on a frequent basis, so we advise you to contact your supervisor before making any financial commitment.

4. Finances

Bank account

The following documents are required to open a bank account:

- Valid passport (or identity card with your picture);
- Work contract from THL;
- Finnish personal identification code;
- Tenancy agreement.

Most banks have English speaking staff. You can choose between, e.g. Nordea bank, Helsinki OP Bank (Helsingin Osuuspankki or briefly OP) or Danske Bank. You should go to one of the offices in person and ask for an appointment for opening a bank account, **the delays to get an appointment can be quite long**, so do not hesitate to try several banks and/or book one while taking care of the other administration issues. You will get your bank card by mail to your address, but first you need to notify your address in Finland at Maistraati. Keep in mind that some banks **take a few weeks before you will get your account number**, which is required to be registered in THL personnel files. Therefore, opening a bank account should be one of the main priorities after moving to Finland.

Taxes

Contact the Tax Administration at International House Helsinki (2nd floor). You need to bring along the following documents: a passport or a valid photo ID, an employment contract. A tax card will be issued, which needs to be provided to THL. **You must have a Finnish personal identity code before you apply for a tax card.**

Address: International House Helsinki, Albertinkatu 25, Helsinki

Website: <https://www.ihhelsinki.fi/>

5. Administration

Contract

The contract will be signed after the arrival to Finland and visit to THL. No extra documents are needed for the signing.

Salary corrections

Please enquire with the Fellowship Programme Office at ECDC if you need to know the correction factor for salaries in your host countries. These can change and the most up to date information should be available from the Programme Office.

Pension (public/private)

Public pension will be deducted from your monthly salary. For more information Contact the Finnish Centre for Pensions (ETK) at International House Helsinki (2nd floor).

Address: International House Helsinki, Albertinkatu 25, Helsinki

Website: <https://www.ihhelsinki.fi/>

6. Insurance

Health insurance

The Finnish Social Insurance Institution is called Kela. In Finland, each person paying taxes has the right to use the public health care system. To have access to the public health care system you need to have a Kela card. It usually takes up to a few months to receive a Kela card (you do not automatically receive the EU Health Insurance Card along with your Kela card, you need to apply for it separately online at <https://www.kela.fi/web/en/european-health-insurance-card-how-to-apply>). In case of need of medical treatment during that period, you need to cover all the expenses yourself. The costs will be reimbursed receiving the Kela card and after providing the receipts to Kela. **You must have a Finnish personal identity code before you apply for a Kela card.**

If you need to visit a doctor during your employment at THL, you should use occupational health services provided by Mehiläinen, in Töölö. It is preferable to use the Töölö clinic, but it is also possible to go to another Mehiläinen as well. When you make a visit for the first time, you need to fill in pre-employment health examination form (available on their website). At any time, you can apply for a regular occupational check-up.

Address: Pohjoinen Hesperiankatu 17, 5th floor

Website: https://www.mehilainen.fi/terveyspalvelut/toimipisteet/1/mehilainen_toolo

Recommendations/suggestions

In addition to health insurance provided by Kela, you can take an extra health insurance from e.g. insurance companies recommended by the bank, where you opened an account.

Travel clinics/where to get vaccinations

Mehiläinen clinic may provide extra vaccinations, if needed.

Travel insurance

Information about ECDC Travel Insurance

ECDC travel insurance is provided by Cigna International Health Services. All staff and sponsored meeting delegates travelling on behalf of ECDC are covered by this insurance. The insurance takes effect as from the time one leaves their home/office for the meeting/mission and ends upon return to home/office. Times outside this period, including durations with private deviations, are not covered.

Coverage includes, among others, medical expenses as well as costs for repatriation in case of personal accident and/or serious illness, theft, riots etc. For medical expenses, the travel insurance is a complimentary insurance. Any costs or damages that are not covered by the primary insurance (private, national or corporate) will be supplemented by the travel insurance upon a written declaration that such expense had not been covered.

Please note that the ECDC Travel Insurance is only a "top-up" insurance and everyone are expected to have a travel insurance (professional or private) already.

It is recommended to always bring your European Health Insurance Card when travelling in Europe.

Source: ECDC EVA

Travel health insurance

When you get the Kela health insurance, you will also be entitled to have the European Health Insurance Card for which you will need to apply separately (see above). Additionally, you are insured by THL when you travel for work.

Accident insurance

Can be obtained separately, e.g. from your bank.

Liability insurance

In Finland, the majority of the obligatory house insurance packages include also liability insurance. House insurance can be arranged at the bank/insurance company of your choice or by the real estate agency you used to rent your flat.

Expat insurance

Can be obtained separately, e.g. from your bank.

7. Leaving the country

Suggested removal companies

There several options available. Previous fellows used Niemi services:

https://www.niemi.fi/en/moving/ask_for_a_quote

Places to deregister from

You will need to notify Maistraatti before leaving Finland. Additionally, check with administrators at THL, as they will have the most up-to-date information.

AT WORK

8. Terveystieteiden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos (National Institute for Health and Welfare)

Getting to & from the city/institute

For more information about the public transport in Helsinki see “10. Public transport”.

National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), is situated about 4,7 km from the city centre at Mannerheimintie 166, Helsinki. If you come from the city centre, you can take a tram or a bus.

Tram no. 10 drives on Mannerheimintie passing THL (17 min, 8 min intervals). The nearest stop to THL is called “Tilkka” as shown on a screen in the tram or the bus. See the tram 10 route from the city centre to (THL) Mannerheimintie 166

(<https://reittiopas.hsl.fi/linjat/HSL%3A1010/pysakit/HSL%3A1010%3A0%3A01>). Unfortunately,

tickets are not sold on trams. You need to buy a ticket before you board it. Single tickets are available from ticket machines, R-kiosks and other HSL sales points. You can also download the HSL Mobile ticket app on your smartphone to buy tickets. They are charged via card payment to your Visa, Visa Electron or MasterCard. You can find information on tickets and sales points here:

<https://www.hsl.fi/en>. Mobile SMS-ticket is available with the subscriptions of Elisa, Kolumbus, Saunalahti, Sonera, Tele Finland and DNA.

There are a lot of buses driving on Mannerheimintie passing THL. All the buses beginning with 4 leave from Eliel Square (Elielinaukio) near Central Railway station: 40, 43, 411, 415, 421, 431, 436. Bus tickets can be bought from the driver. Nearest bus stop to THL is "Tilkka".

Your office space

Every fellow will get a space in an open office setting, which means that you might be sitting at a different desk every day. There will be a designated shelf space for work related items. Personal belongings can be stored in a locker.

Access card

In order to obtain THL credentials, you need to have a bank account registered in THL's system.

Laptop and mobile

The administrators will assist you with obtaining a laptop and a mobile phone after the registration in THL's system.

Remote Access

More information will be available on arrival.

Holidays

Two vacation days are allocated every month and you need to apply through administrative system of THL to claim the vacation days. An approval from the head of the unit is required before you can leave for vacation.

Public Holidays

	Year 2019
New Year's Day	Tuesday 1.1.
Epiphany*	Sunday 6.1.
Good Friday (movable)	Friday 19.4.
Easter Monday (movable)	Monday 22.4.
Vappu (May Day), Labour Day	Wednesday 1.5.
Ascension Day (movable)	Thursday 30.5.
Midsummer Eve (movable)**	Friday 21.6.
Midsummer (movable)	Saturday 22.6.
All Saints Day - always on Saturdays	Saturday 2.11.
Independence Day*	Friday 6.12.
Christmas Eve**	Tuesday 24.12.
Christmas Day	Wednesday 25.12.
Boxing Day	Thursday 26.12.

*New legislation liberalising shop opening hours in Finland means that many stores are open on 6 December and Epiphany.

**Even though they are not official, public holidays, not all Finns work on Midsummer Eve and Christmas Eve. Some businesses are closed the whole day and some, such as grocery stores, are open for part of the day. This practice is dependent on labour union contracts. Moreover, public transport will run on special holiday timetables.

Working Time

Working time is 7.35 h per day ≈37h per week.

Lunch

THL cafeteria is a good place to have lunch. It serves several meal options including vegetarian dishes; prices vary from 6-9€ for a complete meal. In addition, there is a possibility to warm your own cooked food.

LIVING IN FINLAND

9. Culture (dos and don'ts)

<https://www.edunation.co/studyinfinland/blog/dos-donts-finland/>

10. Public transport

The public transport service in Helsinki is called 'HSL'. For all details on tickets visit:

<https://www.hsl.fi/en>. On 'Reittiopas' (<http://www.reittiopas.fi/en/>), you will find a nice journey planner for Helsinki region, not only for the public transportation, but for cycling and walking routes too.

Travel within Helsinki:

In Helsinki region there is an integrated ticket system that includes different cities. HSL's tickets are valid on buses, trams, metro, commuter trains and Suomenlinna ferry. You can also transfer from one vehicle to another with the same ticket. The price of a ticket depends on whether you travel within one municipality or between municipalities. Helsinki transport system is divided into 3 zones (unless you are travelling to the outskirts of Helsinki a zone 0 or 1 ticket will cover your journey). In March 2019, the reorganization of zones is planned in Helsinki. More information can be found on HSL website.

Available tickets:

- Single tickets;
- Day tickets (for 1-7 day periods);
- Travel cards.

Note, that the travel card has two different types: 1. **multi-user travel card**, which can be purchased from R-kiosks as well as from other sales and service points and can be used by any person holding the card. 2. **personal travel card**, which is available only for those who are registered as permanent resident in Finland and can only be purchased from HSL service point at Rautatientori metro station.

Tickets purchase options:

- Buy single tickets, day tickets for 1-7 days from ticket machines;
- Buy and reload your Multi-user Travel Card from R-Kioski or the ticket machines at larger stations;
- Buy your Personal Travel Card from HSL Rautatientori Service Point and reload it at R-Kioski or the ticket machines at larger stations;
- Buy your ticket on the HSL Mobile app on your smartphone.

You can load the Travel Card with a period ticket (14-366 days) and/or value (5-400€). The validity of the period ticket can begin immediately or within 0-60 days from the moment of purchase. A Travel Card (both types) costs 5€ and it can be used for several years.

To and from airport:

Helsinki Airport is located in Vantaa, about 20 km from the centre of Helsinki. The commuter train connection between Helsinki city centre and Helsinki Airport was opened in July 2015 with five new stations. Daytime, trains on the Ring Rail Line (P and I trains) operate from Helsinki railway station every ten minutes and stop at all stations on the route. Both terminals can be reached smoothly through a direct indoor route from the station by walk and elevators/escalators. The exit/entrance opens at the corridor between Terminal 1 and 2 (arriving from the station, Terminal 1 will be on your right, Terminal 2 will be on your left). The journey takes about 30 minutes to/from Helsinki Central railway station.

Bus 615 and the Finnair City Bus operate between the airport and Helsinki Central Railway Station.

Line 617 operates between the airport and the Hakaniemi market square on rush hours from Monday to Friday. You can purchase the ticket from the driver. The journey takes about 40 min.

Bus 415 operates between airport and Elielinaukio. It takes about 40 min. to get to THL (get off at the bus stop "Ruskeasu" or "Tilkka").

Timetables of commuter trains and buses are available in the HSL Journey Planner:

<http://www.reittiopas.fi/en/index.php>.

Travelling by train outside Helsinki:

The Helsinki Central Railway Station (Rautatieasema) serves as a hub for all major cities and local VR commuter rail network. The station also hosts the Rautatietori metro station, which is the busiest station of the Helsinki Metro. More information on routes, timetables and tickets at:

<https://www.vr.fi/cs/vr/en/frontpage>

11. Cycling in the city

Helsinki has a very well-developed city biking system and many locals are using this service during the season, which begins in April and ends in October. The price for the whole season for a 30 min. free ride costs 30€. Multiple 30 min. free rides are allowed per day. Other payment plans are available at <https://kaupunkipyorat.hsl.fi/en>.

12. Language schools

You can browse and find information on Finnish language courses open to all and held in the Helsinki region (including Espoo and Vantaa) on www.finnishcourses.fi. The University of Helsinki Language Centre's Language Services unit offers open-enrolment fee-based *Finnish for foreigners'* courses. You do not need to be enrolled as a student at the University of Helsinki to participate in these courses. Courses are organized all through the year: autumn courses begin in September (you should enrol in August!), and spring courses in January; summer courses run in June, July and August. Website: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/cooperation/finnish-for-foreigners#registration>.

The Institute of Adult Education in Helsinki (Helsingin Aikuisopisto) also organises open-to-all Finnish language courses that are held during the day or in the evening and on weekends.

Claiming money back for language classes can become complicated for budget reasons – if you are planning to claim back money, please talk to financial department of THL to find out how they have

budgeted this and talk to them about when you are planning to take classes and what the expected costs will be. Consider doing this at the beginning of your fellowship and ask the coordinator team at the introductory course for a description of the funding allocations, as the rules are written in the contract between ECDC and the host site, but it is not explained in the director's decision.

13. Recreational activities, sports, worth visiting, meeting people

As an employee at THL, you are entitled to an amount of 150€/year (~50€ for the 4 months in the first year of your fellowship) for sport/cultural activities at certain places (<https://www.epassi.fi/>). Beforehand, you need to obtain a private Finnish mobile number, which will be listed in the internal THL "HOT" system. At the site of your interest (e.g. gym, opera etc.) you will use your mobile number and the payments will be done automatically through the e-Passi system.

Worth visiting

- Visit some of Helsinki's finest museums: the Finnish National Gallery (<http://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en/>), Kiasma – Museum of Contemporary Art (<http://www.kiasma.fi/en>) and Ateneum Art Museum (<http://www.ateneum.fi/en>).
- Suomenlinna Island is one of seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Finland. Suomenlinna is a maritime fortress that was built off the coast of Helsinki in 1748. The island is accessible only by water. A ferry service runs from the Market Square throughout the year. The trip to Suomenlinna takes 15–20 minutes and offers magnificent views of Helsinki and the surroundings from the sea. During the cold winter months, the trip through the ice-covered waters is a unique experience. More info: <http://www.suomenlinna.fi/>.
- Seurasaari Island is a popular open-air museum and recreational area located 15 minutes by bus from the city centre. The wooden buildings represent Finnish building traditions from 18th to the 20th century. More info: http://www.nba.fi/en/museums/seurasaari_openairmuseum.
- Helsinki Zoo, established in 1889, is one of the few zoos located on an island. It is home to 150 animal species and almost 1000 plant species and open throughout the year. More info: <http://www.korkeasaari.fi/helsinki-zoo/>.
- Sightseeing cruises: during the summer time you can take the ferries/boats from the Market Square and experience the archipelago.
- Getting around Finland: Turku, Porvoo, Rauma and Lapland all worth a visit.
- Major cities close to Helsinki: Tallinn (»82 km), Saint Petersburg (»300 km), Stockholm (»400 km).

14. Supermarkets

Supermarkets '*S-Market*' and '*Alepa*' are located close to THL (they sell all the basic things you need including a selection of meats and fruits). Larger supermarkets ('*K-Market*', '*Lidl*') are located in the city centre (e.g. inside shopping centres '*Stockmann*', '*Kamppi*'). Big shopping complexes tend to open Mon-Fri 9:00-21:00, Sat 9:00-18:00 and Sun 12:00-18:00, local shops follow similar hours, some closing earlier from 20:00 onwards on workdays.

The main shopping streets: Aleksanterinkatu, Esplanadi and Mannerheimintie.

Shopping centres and department stores located in the city centre: '*Stockmann*', '*Sokos*', '*Aleksi 13*', '*Forum*', '*Kamppi*', '*Kluuvi*'.

'*R-kioski*' is a chain of convenience stores, with >600 shops in Finland. They sell a range of products, such as books, magazines, stamps, tobacco, ready meals, snacks, drinks, etc. R-kioski shops also

provide services such as prepaid mobile phone top-up vouchers, the sale of public transport tickets and topping up of HSL travel card. Selected shops are also able to sell national rail and bus transport tickets.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

15. Moving in with a family

None of the previous fellows moved to Finland with family. If you are the first one, your experiences will be useful for updating this country guide.

CONTACT

16. Key contacts at your institute

Secretariat

- Palander Marja, marja.palander@thl.fi,
- Pentikäinen Laura, laura.pentikainen@thl.fi

HR

If you need to get in contact with HR representatives at THL consult with your supervisor first.

Finance

- Räisanen Tiina, tiina.raisanen@thl.fi

17. Contact information of current and previous fellows

Feel free to contact the current fellows. They have lots of additional information that they are happy to share with you.

Name	Cohort	Email	Nationality, moved from→to	Moved with partner/family
Viktor Zöldi	2015	zoldi.viktor@oek.antsz.hu	Hungarian, Hungary-Finland	No
Jana Prattingerova	2016	jana.prattingerova@gmail.com	Czech, Czech Republic-Finland	No
Janko van Beek	2016	jankovanbeek@gmail.com	Dutch, The Netherlands-Finland	No
Timothee Dub	2017	timothee.dub@thl.fi	French, France-Finland	No
Marius Linkevicius	2018	marius.linkevicius@thl.fi	Lithuanian, Sweden-Finland	No
Veronica Cristea	2018	veronica.cristea@thl.fi	Romanian, Romania-Finland	No