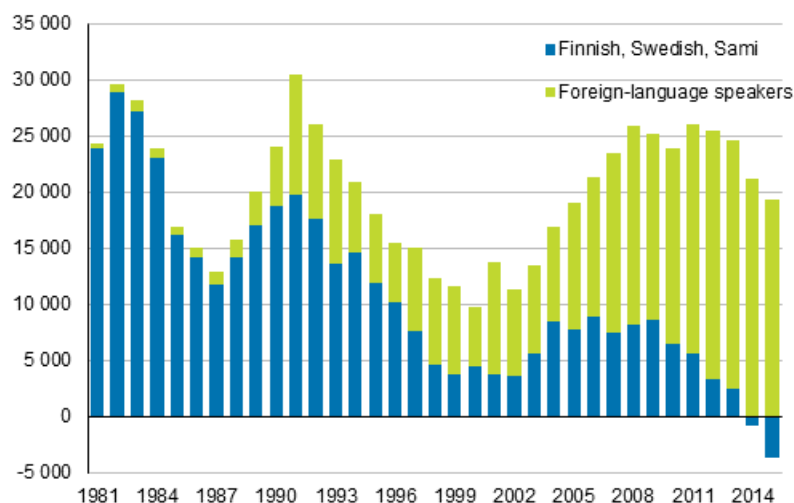


# Population Structure 2015

## Number of persons speaking national languages as their native language went down for the second year in a row

According to Statistics Finland's statistics on population structure, the official total population of Finland at the end of 2015 was 5,487,308. In the course of 2015, Finland's population grew by 15,555 persons. The number of persons speaking Finnish, Swedish or Sami as their native language went down by nearly 4,000 persons. The number of foreign-language speakers grew by good 19,000 persons.

**Change in the population by native language in 1981 to 2015**



## Share of foreign-language speakers six per cent of the total population, over 11 per cent in Uusimaa

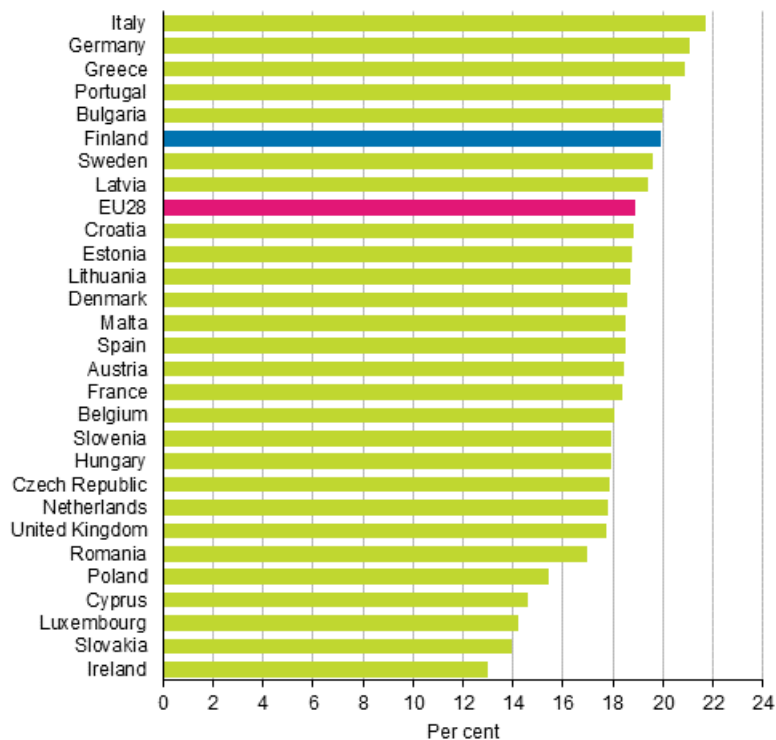
A total of 329,562 persons speaking a foreign language as their native language were living permanently in Finland at the end of 2015. The proportion of foreign-language speakers in the total population was now six per cent. The biggest foreign-language speaking groups were Russian speakers, 72,436 persons, Estonian speakers, 48,087, and Somali speakers, 17,871.

Examined by region, the share of foreign-language speakers was at the end of 2015 highest in the region of Uusimaa, 11.3 per cent of the population, and lowest in South Ostrobothnia, 2.0 per cent.

## Share of persons aged 65 or over in the population the sixth biggest in EU 28 countries

There were 1,123,103 persons aged 65 or over in Finland at the end of 2015. Now every fifth Finn is at least 65 years old. According to Eurostat's statistics, the share of people aged 65 or over in Finland was the sixth highest in EU 28 countries at the end of 2014. The share of persons aged 65 or over was highest in Italy, Germany and Greece and lowest in Ireland.

### Share of persons aged 65 or over in the population in EU 28 countries at the end of 2014



## Population increased in eight regions and only in 81 municipalities

During 2015, Finland's population grew in eight regions. In absolute numbers, the population grew most in Uusimaa, by 16,873 persons and in Pirkanmaa, by 2,732 persons. The population grew most in relative numbers in Uusimaa, by 1.1 per cent.

The biggest absolute decrease in population was seen in Etelä-Savo (1,257 persons) and Kymenlaakso (1,170 persons). In relative numbers, the population shrunk most, by 1.0 per cent, in the region of Kainuu.

During 2015, the population grew only in 81 municipalities. In absolute numbers, the population increased most in Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Oulu and Tampere. The population grew most in relative terms in Liminka and Sipoo of the municipalities in Mainland Finland.

The biggest absolute decrease in the population occurred in Kouvola, Savonlinna and Salo. In relative numbers, the population decreased in Mainland Finland most in the municipalities of Ristijärvi, Posio and Siikainen.

# Contents

## Tables

### Appendix tables

Appendix table 1. Regional adjustments 1.1.2016.....	4
Appendix table 2. Population according to language 1980 - 2015.....	4

## Figures

### Appendix figures

Appendix figure 1. Population in Finland 1750–2015.....	5
Appendix figure 2. The largest groups by native language 2005 and 2015.....	5
Appendix figure 3. Foreign nationals by sex 1990–2015 (Corrected on 16 September. Was previously 1980–2015.).....	6
Quality description: Population structure 2015.....	7

# Appendix tables

**Appendix table 1. Regional adjustments 1.1.2016**

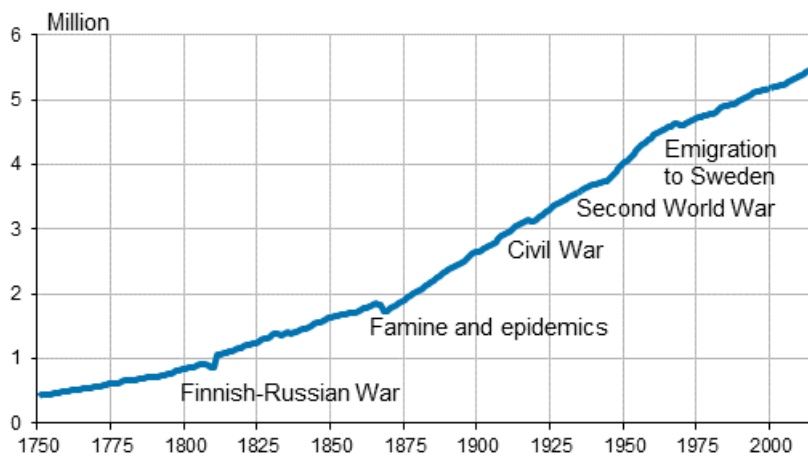
From ---> To	Population		
	Both sexes	Males	Females
Hämeenkoski -----> Hollola	2 102	1 053	1 049
Jalasjärvi -----> Kurikka	7 776	3 904	3 872
Köyliö -----> Säköylä	2 627	1 350	1 277
Nastola -----> Lahti	14 825	7 500	7 325
Alavus -----> Ähtäri	6	4	2
Kuopio -----> Rautavaara	2	1	1
Vihti -----> Espoo	2	2	-
Kainuu -----> North Ostrobothnia	3 074	1 600	1 474
Kajaani sub-reg. unit ---> Oulunkaari sub-reg. unit	3 074	1 600	1 474
Kainuu ELY Centre -----> North Ostrobothnia ELY Centre	3 074	1 600	1 474

**Appendix table 2. Population according to language 1980 - 2015**

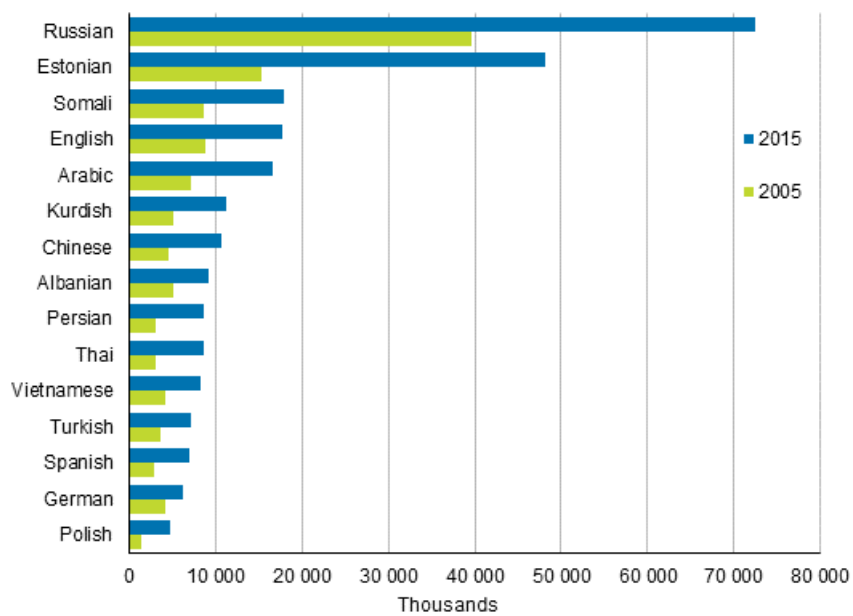
Year	Language							
	Population	Finnish speakers	Swedish speakers	Sami speakers	Other languages total	Finnish speakers, %	Swedish speakers, %	Other languages, %
1980	4 787 778	4 476 807	300 482	1 343	9 146	93,5	6,3	0,2
1985	4 910 664	4 596 908	299 098	1 699	12 959	93,6	6,1	0,3
1990	4 998 478	4 675 223	296 738	1 734	24 783	93,5	5,9	0,5
1995	5 116 826	4 754 787	294 664	1 726	65 649	92,9	5,8	1,3
2000	5 181 115	4 788 497	291 657	1 734	99 227	92,4	5,6	1,9
2005	5 255 580	4 819 819	289 675	1 752	144 334	91,7	5,5	2,7
2010	5 375 276	4 857 903	291 153	1 832	224 388	90,4	5,4	4,2
2015	5 487 308	4 865 628	290 161	1 957	329 562	88,7	5,3	6,0

# Appendix figures

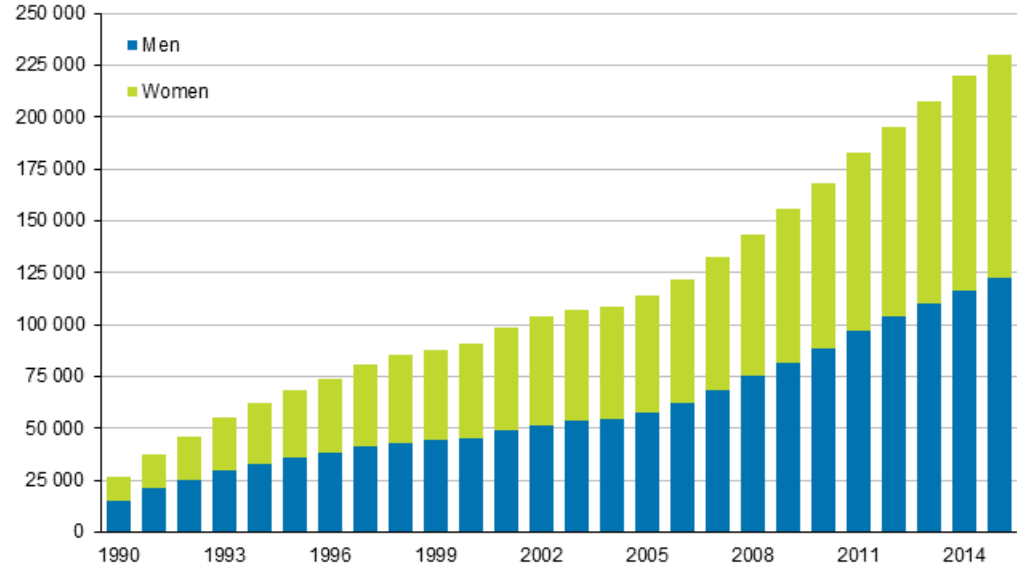
**Appendix figure 1. Population in Finland 1750–2015**



**Appendix figure 2. The largest groups by native language 2005 and 2015**



**Appendix figure 3. Foreign nationals by sex 1990–2015 (Corrected on 16 September. Was previously 1980–2015.)**



# Quality description: Population structure 2015

## 1. Relevance of statistical information

The statistics on population structure describe the population resident in Finland on the last day of the year.

The Population Register Centre and local register offices maintain Finland's Population Information System. The last population yearly checking of domicile registers was carried out in Finland on 1 January 1989. After that the Population Information System has been updated by notifications of changes. The data stored in the Population Information System are specified in the act on the Population Information System and on the certificate services of the Population Register Centre (21 August 2009/661). Notifications on population changes for the past year are expected by the last day of January. At the beginning of February the Population Register Centre supplies to Statistics Finland the population data for the turn of the year.

Statistics Finland's function is to compile statistics on conditions in society (Statistics Finland Act of 24 January 1992/48). These also include demographic statistics. Statistics Finland's working order defines the Population and Social Statistics unit as the producer of demographic statistics (Statistics Finland's working order, TK-00-341-15).

## Concepts

**Age** refers to the age of the person in full years on the last day of the year. The data are from the Population Register Centre's Population Information System.

**Citizenship** refers to a legislative bond between an individual and the State defining the individual's status in the State as well as the basic rights and duties existing between the individual and the State (Nationality Act, 359/2003). Persons with both Finnish and foreign citizenship will be entered in the statistics as Finnish nationals. If a foreign national living in Finland has several nationalities, that person will be entered in the statistics as a national of the country on whose passport he or she arrived in the country.

The ISO 3166 standard is used in the classification of citizenship.

**Country of birth** is determined on the basis of the mother's permanent home country at the time of birth. This means, for example, that the country of birth of Estonian immigrants born before Estonian independence is the Soviet Union. Similarly, the country of birth of people who were born in areas that Finland has subsequently ceded is Finland even though the area no longer is Finnish territory. The country of birth is indicated according to the form of government at the time of birth. The ISO 3166 standard is used in the coding of the country of birth.

**Language** is recorded in the Population Information System at the same time as parents register the name and religious denomination of their newborn. That language will be changed only upon separate application. For those babies born at the end of the year, for whom no name, language and religion have been registered in the Population Information System during January, the mother's language and religion are entered in the statistics for the end of the year. For the next year's statistics this information has become revised once notifications have been received. Language can change for children of bilingual families in case the father's language is entered for them in the Population Information System.

In the 2012 reliability survey of the Population Information System some 9,000 working-age persons were asked if the language registered for them in the Population Information System was correct. Language information was correct for 99.7 per cent of the respondents.

Since 1999 Statistics Finland has received from the Population Register Centre languages already coded (ISO 639-1) and non-coded languages in plain language. These plain language names include several names of languages written incorrectly or in Swedish that can be coded. Statistics Finland gives a code for these languages. In previous years Statistics Finland has coded all languages from plain language names and given a code for a language if it has around 15 speakers in Finland.

The **classification of marital** status is as follows:

- Unmarried
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Partner in a registered partnership
- Divorced from a registered partnership
- Widowed after a registered partnership

In 2015 the Population Information System included 60,700 persons without data on marital status. They are immigrants whose marital status could not be ascertained. The Population Information Act requires storing of data on marital status in the Population Information System only as concerns Finnish citizens. In the statistics childless persons were coded as unmarried and if they had children, their absent marital status was changed into divorced.

**Mean population** is the arithmetic mean of the population at the beginning and end of the year.

**Place of residence** refers to the location of the dwelling in which the person was registered on the last day of the year. The present Municipality of Residence Act gives people greater freedom of choice over the locality where they wish to be registered as permanently resident. For example, students may register in the locality where they are studying. Homeless people are also counted in the permanently resident population.

As well as a permanent place of residence, a person may have a temporary place of residence in a dwelling that this person says he or she occupies temporarily for at least three months. Statistics are compiled only on the basis of permanent places of residence. Data on the place of residence derive from the Population Information System of the Population Register Centre.

**Population** includes those Finnish citizens and foreigners living permanently in Finland even if temporarily residing abroad.

Foreign nationals are domiciled in Finland if their stay is intended to last or has lasted at least one year. The statistics do not include persons temporarily staying in Finland or asylum seekers, who have only a temporary residence permit or whose application for a residence permit is still under processing. An asylum-seeker is not granted a legal domicile and included in the statistics until his or her application has been approved.

The staff of foreign embassies, trade missions and consulates, their family members and personal employees included, are not counted among the resident population unless they are Finnish citizens. On the other hand, the Finnish staff of Finland's embassies and trade missions abroad and persons serving in the UN peacekeeping forces are counted among the resident population.

A Finnish citizen having entered the country must notify the register office if his/her intended stay in the country exceeds three months. The register office will update his/her data in the Population Information System (Act 661/2009). A foreign citizen may enter Finland provided he/she holds a required valid visa, residence permit or residence permit for an employed or self-employed person, unless he/she is an EU or EEA citizen or unless otherwise provided by an international agreement binding Finland (Aliens Act 301/2004). An EU or EEA citizen may stay in the country without a separate permit for three months, after which his/her stay in the country requires justifications and registration with the register office. The register office enters the reported information about the domicile of a foreign citizen into the Population Information System if the person receives a municipality of domicile and a permanent place of residence in it in Finland as defined in the Act on the Municipality of Domicile (201/1994). The length of employment or studying from entry into the country or the length of employment contract must be two years for a foreign citizen to receive the right to a place of domicile.



At a justified request, the information on a foreign citizen may also be entered after a short stay if he/she has, for example, a temporary place of residence in Finland as defined in the Act on the Municipality of Domicile and the entry is necessary for the realisation of rights related to employment or a similar circumstance (Act 661/2009). In statistics on population changes, a person's move into Finland from elsewhere is regarded as immigration only if a notation has been made into the Population Information System that he/she has received a permanent place of residence in Finland.

Persons emigrating from the country must submit a notice of change of address in the same way as persons who migrate within the country (Acts 661/2009, 201/1994). Persons who move to live abroad for more than one year are primarily regarded as emigrants. An exception to this are Finnish diplomats and persons working in development co-operation, etc. (Act on the Municipality of Domicile 201/1994). In accordance with an agreement between the Nordic countries, a period of residence of less than six months is not regarded as a move (Act on the Municipality of Domicile 201/1994, Decree and Treaty 96/2006).

When a person moves from one Nordic country to another, he/she must report his/her move to the local register authority of the country of entry, which will decide whether or not the person is registered as resident in the country of entry. The register authority of the country of entry informs the person concerned and the register authority of the country of exit about its decision. The date when the person has been entered into the local population register of the country of entry is recorded as the date of emigration in the population register of the country of exit (Act on the Municipality of Domicile 201/1994, Decree and International Treaty 96/2006).

### **Origin and background country**

During 2012, Statistics Finland has adopted a new origin classification. A similar classification is already used in the other Nordic countries. The origin and background country are determined based on the country of birth data of the person's parents. Using the origin classification it is easy to distinguish between Finns born abroad and born in Finland with a foreign background.

Data on persons that died before 1964 have not been entered into the Population Information System of the Population Register Centre. There are nearly 900,000 persons among the Finnish population who have been born in Finland and both parent's country of birth is unknown because the parents of these persons have died before the Population Information System was established. People born in Finland before 1970, whose parents' background is not known, have been concluded to be persons with Finnish background if their native language is a national language (Finnish, Swedish, Sami). All such persons who have at least one parent who was born in Finland are also considered to be persons with Finnish background. The background country for all persons with Finnish background is Finland.

Persons whose both parents or the only known parent have been born abroad are considered to be persons with foreign background. Persons who have been born abroad and whose parents' data are not included in the Population Information System are also considered to be persons with foreign background. Persons born in Finland before 1970, whose native language is a foreign language have been considered to be persons with foreign background, as have persons born in Finland in 1970 or after this, whose parents' data are not included in the Population Information System.

If both parents of a person have been born abroad, the background country is primarily the country of birth of the biological mother. If a person only has knowledge of a father that was born abroad, the background country is the country of birth of the father. If either parent's country of birth is unknown, the background country for persons born abroad is their own country of birth. For persons born in Finland, whose parents' data are unknown and who have been deducted to be of foreign origin, the background country is unknown.

For children adopted from abroad, the adoptive parents are regarded as the biological parents. Thus a child adopted from abroad by persons born in Finland is a person with Finnish background and their background country is Finland.

Data on **religious community** are derived from the Population Register Centre's Population Information System. Religious denomination is reported to the Population Information System for every child when given a name. That information will be changed only upon separate application.

The new Freedom of Religion Act (453/2003) entered into force on 1 August 2003. The new act allowed simultaneous membership to several religious communities after a three-year transition period. The transition period ended on 1 August 2006, after which religious communities can self decide whether their members can also belong to other religious communities. If a person is a member of more than one religious community, the person is included in Statistics Finland's statistics on religious communities in the number of members of the religious community which he or she first joined. These persons are missing from the number of members of the religious community they had joined while they already belonged to some other religious community.

Statistics on religious communities are compiled only on persons belonging to religious communities included in the register of the National Board of Patents and Registration. A religious community can be established in Finland by at least 20 adult persons (Freedom of Religion Act 453/2003).

For those babies born at the end of the year, for whom no name, language and religion have been registered in the Population Information System during January, the mother's language and religion are entered in the statistics for the end of the year. For the next year's statistics this information has become revised once notifications have been received.

The information on religious community does not represent foreigners accurately. Not all their religious communities are included in the register of the National Board of Patents and Registration and not all those practising a religion belong to parishes. At the end of 2015, 84 per cent of foreign-language speakers did not belong to any registered religious community according to the Population Information System.

Data on religious communities are defined as very sensitive. Data can be released by region on religious communities with at least five cases and by municipality on those with at least ten cases.

**Statistical grouping of municipalities** is a classification developed by Statistics Finland that replaces production of statistics on municipalities as towns and other municipalities. The classification has been in use since 1989. The classification allows for more accurate distinctions between urban and rural areas than did the administrative classification into towns and other municipalities.

The grouping of municipalities divides municipalities into three categories according to the proportion of people living in urban settlements and the population of the largest urban settlement:

- Urban municipalities
- Semi-urban municipalities
- Rural municipalities

*Urban municipalities* include those municipalities in which at least 90 per cent of the population lives in urban settlements or in which the population of the largest urban settlement is at least 15,000.

*Semi-urban municipalities* are municipalities in which at least 60 per cent but less than 90 per cent of the population lives in urban settlements and in which the population of the largest urban settlement is at least 4,000 but less than 15,000.

*Rural municipalities* include those municipalities in which less than 60 per cent of the population lives in urban settlements and in which the population of the largest urban settlement is less than 15,000; and those municipalities in which at least 60 per cent but less than 90 per cent of the population lives in urban settlements and in which the population of the largest settlement is less than 4,000.

The now used classification is based on the data for 2014 based on the data on boundaries of urban settlements.

An **urban settlement** is a cluster of dwellings with at least 200 inhabitants. The delimitation is based on the population information at the end of the previous year. Urban settlements are defined and delimited in co-operation with the Finnish Environment Institute using geographic information methods that utilise the building and population data of Statistics Finland's 250 m x 250 m grid data. The population size of grids containing buildings and their neighbouring grids, as well as the number of buildings and their floor area, are reviewed in the definition. From the uniform clusters of dwellings generated in the defining stage, the ones with at least 200 inhabitants are selected.

## 2. Methodological description of survey

Population data are total data. They include the entire population living in Finland drawn from the Population Information System.

## 3. Correctness and accuracy of data

In general, the Population Information System of the Population Register Centre can be considered very exhaustive as regards persons. In order that a person obtains a personal identity code, he or she has to be registered in the Population Information System. It is practically impossible to live in Finland without a personal identity code. A personal identity code is needed so that one can work legally, open a bank account, have dealings with authorities and so on. It can be safely assumed that Finland cannot have any substantial numbers of 'moonlighters' who receive their pay in cash for periods of over one year, for example. Staying in Finland for at least one year is the prerequisite for registering into the population of Finland.

After abolishment of yearly checking of domicile registers in 1989, the Population Information System has been maintained only by notifications of changes to population information. Their correctness is determined by a reliability survey made on the addresses in the Population Information System.

The Population Register Centre charges Statistics Finland with the task of conducting yearly a sample survey on the correctness of the address information. Around 11,000 people are asked whether their address in the Population Information System is correct. In the 2012 survey, the address was correct for 99.0 per cent of the respondents. The non-response of this survey was 16.9 per cent. As regards the non-response, attempts were made to check the addresses from other sources. The address could be ascertained as correct for 92.3 per cent and as incorrect for 5.9 per cent of the persons included in the non-response. The address of 1.8 per cent of the persons in the non-response could not be checked. If we assume that all the unchecked data of persons in the non-response are incorrect, the final proportion of correct addresses would be 98.1 per cent.

Incorrect addresses influence population statistics by municipality only if the incorrect address is in a different municipality than the correct one. Only some of the incorrect addresses are in the wrong municipality.

In connection with municipal elections, returned notifications of voting sent to foreigners usually reveal around 1,000 persons who have moved from the country without giving notice and are thus still included in the Finnish population. The Population Register Centre removes them from the resident population in the Population Information System before the following turn of the year.

A total of 3,210 persons who have probably moved abroad have been removed after analyses from the population data derived from the Population Information System for the end of 2014. These persons are foreign citizens whose address is unknown and who have not received wages and salaries, capital income, entrepreneurial income, unemployment benefit, pension income, income support or compensation from sickness insurance between 2012 and 2014.

## 4. Timeliness and promptness of published data

Statistics Finland dates the population at the turn of the year as at the last day of the year. Since 1999 the regional division used has been that of the first day of the following year. Thus the municipalities that unite on the first day of the new year are already combined in the statistics on the last day of the previous year. Information on the population sizes of the united municipalities before the unification is available, where necessary.

Preliminary population data by municipality are available by month.

[http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/vamuu/index\\_en.html](http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/vamuu/index_en.html)

[http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin\\_\\_vrm\\_\\_vamuu/?tablelist=true](http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin__vrm__vamuu/?tablelist=true)

## 5. Accessibility and transparency/clarity of data

Basic population data are available in electronic form by municipality or with larger regional divisions than municipality in Statistics Finland's free 'Population' online service (Statistical databases) at: [http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin\\_\\_vrm\\_\\_vaerak/?tablelist=true](http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin__vrm__vaerak/?tablelist=true)

The chargeable information service contains more specified information about the population by sub-area of municipality, for example. More information about Statistics Finland's chargeable services is available at: [http://www.stat.fi/tup/tilastotietokannat/index\\_en.html](http://www.stat.fi/tup/tilastotietokannat/index_en.html)

## 6. Comparability of statistics

Until 1998 population statistics by municipality for the turn of the year were compiled according to the regional division of the last day of the year. From 1999 the regional division used has been the first day of the following year. When calculating the change in the population size of a municipality, the previous population numbers of the unifying municipalities are taken into account.

When producing tables on regional time series of the population the tables can be made either according to the regional division of each year or by updating the regional division retrospectively to correspond to the statistics of the last year. The tables always indicate which regional division is used.

Population data are available from 1749 onwards. The number of population has been made public by parish from 1865 and by municipality from 1920 onwards. The ten-year tables of the clergy provide information about the population's age, marital status and language by parish until 1940. From 1950 onwards these data are available by municipality every ten years on the basis of population censuses. Annual population data by municipality on age, marital status and language can be obtained starting from 1970.

Population data by municipality are available in electronic form from 1980 onwards. The population time series in the free 'Population' online service begin from the year 1865. [http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin\\_\\_vrm\\_\\_vaerak/?tablelist=true](http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin__vrm__vaerak/?tablelist=true)

## 7. Coherence and consistency/uniformity

Statistics Finland's other statistics use the data of demographic statistics as basic information on population. Consequently, Statistics Finland's other statistics correspond to demographic statistics.

## Inquiries

Markus Rapo                      029 551 3238  
Director in charge:  
Jari Tarkoma

[vaesto.tilasto@stat.fi](mailto:vaesto.tilasto@stat.fi)  
[www.stat.fi](http://www.stat.fi)

Source: Population Structure 2015, Statistics Finland