

The EURASIA CENTER

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Finland: Environmental Overview

Path to EU Accession:

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the bilateral trade between the two countries fell. As a result, in 1991 Finland was hit with an economic depression which lasted till 1993. In 1995 Finland joined the Economic Union. Ever since then the countries economy has been growing especially the services sector. This is due to the fact that Finland does not have many natural resources other the forestry.



Demographics:

- Finland's population is currently estimated to be around 5.2 million with a growth of about .127%. Two-thirds of all Finns fall between the ages of 15 and 64. A large amount of the population is affiliated with the Lutheran Church of Finland (84.2%).

Education:

- The Finnish population as a whole is completely literate.¹
- The education system mandates that every child between the ages of 7 to 16 must attend school where there are no fees for tuition.²
- According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Finnish students consistently outperformed students from other Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED) by placing first in reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy.³



The St. Nicholas Lutheran Cathedral standing in Helsinki.

¹ CIA World Factbook—Finland (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/fi.html>)

² Wikipedia—Finland Education (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Finland)

³ http://www.pisa2006.helsinki.fi/finland_pisa/results/results.htm

Picture Above:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/europe/finland?v=images&a=7>

Geography and Natural Resources:

- Finland, a Nordic country borders Sweden (to its left) and Russia (to its right), The southern part of the country touches two bodies of water which are the Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland. Of the 338,144 square kilometres about 69% of it is forest while 8% is cultivated.
- Due to the location of the country, Finland's main season is winter which lasts atleast over 3 and a half months.⁴
- The area that is Finland puts the Finns at a disadvantage due to the lack of natural resources in within the Finnish boundaries. As a result, Finland does not have any fossil fuels. Therefore the Finns have had to find ways to become more efficient in conserving energy. Finnish corporations export refined oil which is 36% of their chemical exports⁵.



Saimaa is Finland's largest lake which was created during the Ice Age.

Picture Above: <http://www.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=25710>

Agriculture:

- The waning role of agriculture in Finland's economy coincides with the labor force's movement away from agriculture to other fields. As a result, the grain for bread and other goods are mostly imported. Even with the agricultural short fallings, Finland exceeds its domestic need for dairy products. Due to the country's vast forest resources, one of Finland's leading exports is paper.⁶

Relevant Environmental Laws and Regulations:

(See final footnote for additional information)

Forest Act 1996

- This act promotes utilization of the forestry areas for economic profit but at the same time maintaining the "biological diversity" in the area.

⁴ Wikipedia—Finland Geography (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Finland)

⁵ Wikipedia—Finland (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland>)

⁶ Britannica – Finland: Agriculture (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-26126/Finland>)

Water Services Act 2001

- This act wishes to provide clean water to the citizens of Finland, in order to protect their health.

Waste Act 2004

- This act promotes the use of natural resources in a rational manner, in order to hazardous material from harming people as well as the environment.

Waste Oil Charge Act

- The State will collect hazardous waste in order to cover expenses from waste oil management.

Nature Conservation Act 1996

- This act aims to maintain biological diversity, promote scientific research, and conserve the natural beauty of the area.⁷

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Under the Supervision and Coordination of: Dr. Samuel Lee Hancock, CM, Executive Director

⁷ All above information on Finnish environmental laws and regulations was taken from "Legislation Finland" (<http://www.lexadin.nl/wlg/legis/nofr/eur/lxwefin.htm>). Full texts of these laws can also be found linked from this page.