



European
University
Institute

ROBERT
SCHUMAN
CENTRE FOR
ADVANCED
STUDIES



COUNTRY
REPORT
2018/21

DECEMBER
2018

REPORT ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF MOBILE EU CITIZENS: FINLAND

AUTHORED BY
JOHANNA PELTONIEMI



This report was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)

© Johanna Peltoniemi, 2018

This text may be downloaded only for personal research purposes. Additional reproduction for other purposes, whether in hard copies or electronically, requires the consent of the authors. If cited or quoted, reference should be made to the full name of the author(s), editor(s), the title, the year and the publisher.

Requests should be addressed to GlobalCit@eui.eu.

Views expressed in this publication reflect the opinion of individual authors and not those of the European University Institute.

Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBALCIT)
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
in collaboration with
Edinburgh University Law School

Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Finland
RSCAS/GLOBALCIT-PP 2018/21
December 2018

© Johanna Peltoniemi, 2018
Printed in Italy
European University Institute
Badia Fiesolana
I – 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)

www.eui.eu/RSCAS/Publications/
cadmus.eui.eu

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

The Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, created in 1992 and currently directed by Professor Brigid Laffan, aims to develop inter-disciplinary and comparative research on the major issues facing the process of European integration, European societies and Europe's place in 21st century global politics.

The Centre is home to a large post-doctoral programme and hosts major research programmes, projects and data sets, in addition to a range of working groups and *ad hoc* initiatives. The research agenda is organised around a set of core themes and is continuously evolving, reflecting the changing agenda of European integration, the expanding membership of the European Union, developments in Europe's neighbourhood and the wider world.

For more information: <http://eui.eu/rscas>

The EUI and the RSCAS are not responsible for the opinions expressed by the author(s).

GLOBALCIT

GLOBALCIT is the successor of EUDO CITIZENSHIP, which has been the key reference for the study of citizenship and the franchise between 2009 and 2017. With the geographic expansion of the Observatory's scope the new name reflects our worldwide coverage.

GLOBALCIT provides the most comprehensive source of information on the acquisition and loss of citizenship in Europe for policy makers, NGOs and academic researchers. Its website hosts a number of databases on domestic and international legal norms, naturalisation statistics, citizenship and electoral rights indicators, a comprehensive bibliography and glossary, a forum with scholarly debates on current citizenship trends, media news on matters of citizenship policy and various other resources for research and policy-making.

GLOBALCIT studies political participation in the context of the project Fostering Awareness, Inclusion and Recognition of EU mobile citizens' Political Rights (FAIR EU) and as a part of the EU-CITIZEN network.

This report was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020).

The content of this report represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

For more information see: <http://globalcit.eu>

Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens

Finland

*Johanna Peltoniemi**

Abstract:

Non-citizen residents from other European Union Member States have the right to vote and stand as candidates in municipal and European Parliament (EP) elections. Furthermore, citizens from other Nordic countries (Norway and Iceland) as well as third-country nationals (if they meet the residence criteria) are eligible to vote in municipal elections. Voter registration is automatic with the exception of non-citizen residents from the EU in the EP elections. Non-resident Finnish citizens have the right to vote and stand as candidates in national elections and EP elections but not in the municipal elections. Until now, only personal voting has been possible, but postal voting will be possible from abroad for the first time in the parliamentary elections and EP elections of 2019.

Abstrakti:

Suomessa asuvan muiden EU-maiden kansalaiset ovat äänioikeutettuja ja voivat asettua ehdolle kuntavaaleissa sekä Europarlamenttivaaleissa. Muiden Pohjoismaiden kansalaiset (Norjan ja Islannin kansalaiset) sekä muiden Euroopan Unionin ulkopuolisten maiden kansalaiset voivat äänestää sekä asettua ehdolle kuntavaaleissa, mikäli asumisperuste täyttyy. Äänestäjäksi ei tarvitse rekisteröityä, sillä äänestysrekisteri kootaan automaattisesti. Tästä poikkeuksena on Europarlamenttivaalit muiden EU-maiden kansalaisten osalta. Ulkomailla asuvat Suomen kansalaiset ovat äänioikeutettuja ja voivat asettua ehdolle kansallisissa vaaleissa mutta eivät kuntavaaleissa. Tähän saakka ainoastaan henkilökohtainen äänestäminen on ollut käytössä Suomen vaaleissa, mutta kirjeäänestys otetaan käyttöön vuoden 2019 eduskuntavaaleissa, jolloin äänestäminen kirjeitse on ensimmäistä kertaa mahdollista ulkomailta äänestettäessä.

* Ph.D., postdoctoral researcher, Department of Political and Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki (Finland)

1. Introduction

Generally, non-citizen residents are not allowed to vote in Finnish elections, whereas non-resident citizens are allowed to vote. However, as shown in Table 1, Nordic citizens as well as citizens of other EU Member States and third-country nationals (TCN, foreigners not from the EU nor from a Nordic country) are allowed to vote and/or stand as candidates in municipal elections if they meet the residence criteria (if they have domicile in Finland for a certain time prior to the elections). Furthermore, EU citizens residing in Finland are additionally entitled to vote and/or stand as candidates in European Parliament (EP) elections. Voter registration in Finland is automatic, with the exception of non-citizen voters in EP elections.

Table 1. Conditions for electoral rights of non-resident citizens and non-citizen residents

Type of voter	Election type	Right Voting	Right Candidacy	Automatic registration	Remote ¹ voting
Non-resident citizens	National Legislative	YES	YES	YES	YES
Non-resident citizens	European Parliament	YES	YES	YES	YES
Non-citizen residents	Local Legislative	YES ²	YES	YES	YES
Non-citizen residents	Local Mayoral	N/A ³	N/A	N/A	N/A
Non-citizen residents	European Parliament	YES ⁴	YES	NO	YES

¹ Postal voting is allowed for non-resident citizens from abroad as well as a person with a right to vote who lives or stays abroad during the whole period of advance voting and the actual election day.

² Nordic and EU citizens are entitled to vote and/or run as a candidate in municipal elections if they have domicile in Finland 51 days prior to an election. Foreign residents other than Nordic and EU citizens are entitled to vote and/or run as a candidate in municipal elections if they have domicile in Finland continuously for two years and 51 days prior to an election. Non-citizen residents may use remote voting with the same criteria as non-resident citizens and resident citizens. Thus, advance voting as well as voting from abroad is possible for all eligible voters.

³ Local mayoral elections in Finland are indirect elections

⁴ Citizens of another Member State of the European Union who have reached the age of 18 not later than on the day of the election and whose municipality of residence, as defined by law, is in Finland on the 51st day before the election day, or who are employed by the European Union or an international organisation in Finland or are family members of such a person and reside in Finland and have not lost the right to vote in the Member State where he or she is entitled to vote. A prerequisite for the right to vote is, however, that the person enrolls with the voting register in Finland 80 days before election day to the local register office.

1.1. Demographic Characteristics of Non-citizen Residents and Non-resident Citizens

Non-citizen residents

In 2017, there were 98,212 EU citizens living in Finland, out of which 57 % were men (55,582) and 43 % women (42,630). It seems that most of the EU citizens in Finland are living nearby the three biggest cities of Finland: Helsinki, Turku or Tampere. In fact, the majority of EU citizens in Finland, 59 % (57,465) lived in the Uusimaa-region in the south of Finland. Moreover, some 8,517 EU citizens lived in Varsinais-Suomi in Southwest Finland (9 % of all EU citizens in Finland), and 5,277 (5 % of all EU citizens in Finland) lived in Pirkanmaa. Thus, nearly three-quarters of all EU citizens living in Finland, 73 %, lived nearby the three biggest cities (Statistics Finland 2018a).

Previous research (Sutela & Larja 2015) has suggested that the main reasons for EU citizens to move to Finland were family (47 %), work (36 %), studies (7 %) and other reasons (9 %). Thus, it is not surprising that the largest age cohort of EU citizens living in Finland was 30-35 years. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 1 and Table 2, the majority of EU citizens in Finland by the end of the year 2017 were from the age cohorts between 25 and 50 years (Statistics Finland 2018a).

Figure 1. Age composition of EU citizens in Finland in 2017

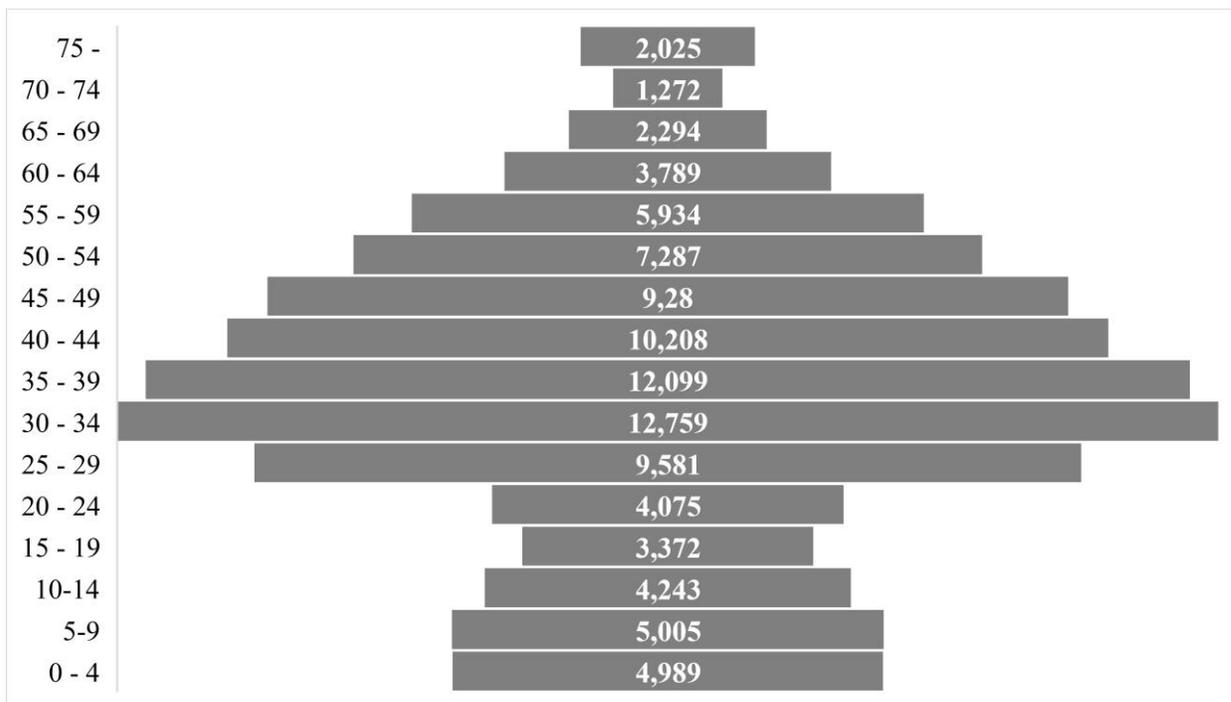


Table 2. Age composition of EU citizens in Finland in 2017 by gender

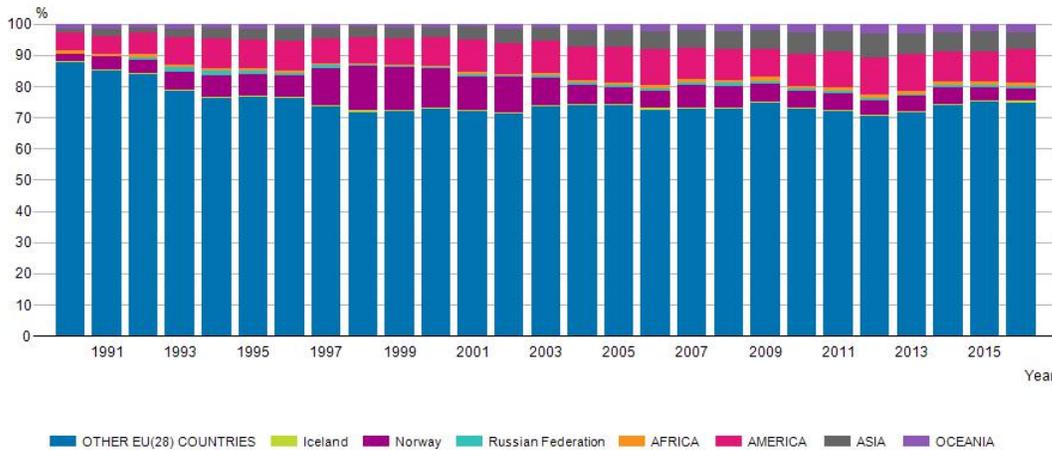
Age	Gender	
	Male	Female
0-4	2,256	2,463
5-9	2,601	2,404
10-14	2,200	2,043
15-19	1,678	1,694
20-24	2,085	1,990
25-29	5,006	4,575
30-34	7,296	5,463
35-39	7,557	4,542
40-44	6,526	3,682
45-49	5,699	3,581
50-54	4,240	3,047
55-59	3,191	2,743
60-64	1,931	1,858
65-69	1,291	1,003
70-74	775	497
75-	980	1,045

Non-resident citizens

During the last century, approximately one million Finns migrated, first to North America, and later in the 1960s and 1970s to Sweden. Since the 1980s, emigration from Finland has been more Europe-centred. Nowadays there are around 1.6 million people outside Finland with Finnish roots, and circa 600,000 first-generation Finns. The biggest share of Finnish citizens abroad live in Sweden. This is due to the ‘second wave’ of emigration that took place in the 1960s and 1970s (Peltoniemi 2018).

Currently, emigration from Finland is most common to other European countries. As shown in Figure 2, around 80 % of emigrating Finns moved to other European Union Member States or to other Nordic countries, Norway or Iceland.

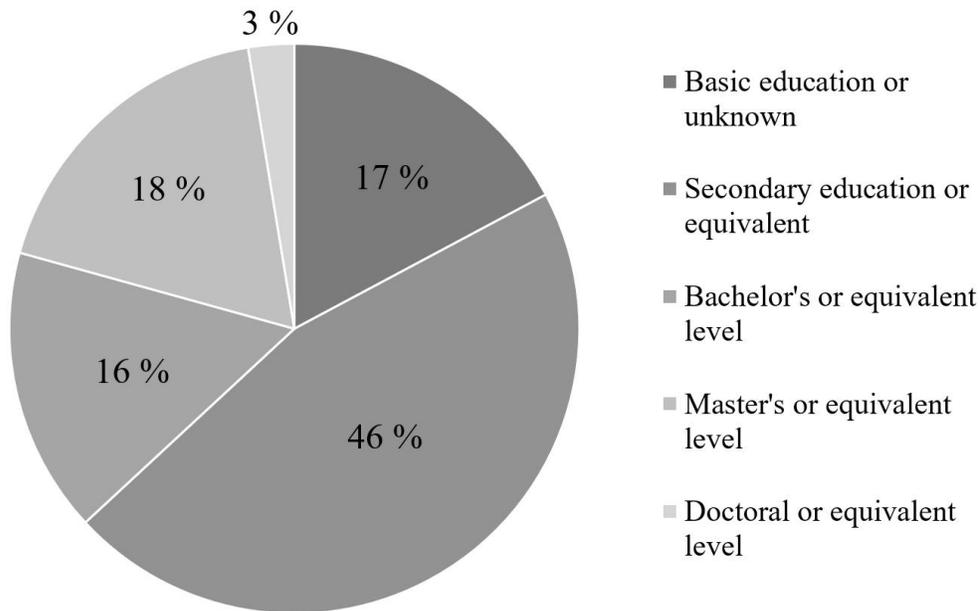
Figure 2. Emigration from Finland 1990-2016 (Statistics Finland, 2018e)



Since the beginning of 1980s, emigration from Finland decreased gradually to its second lowest point since the Second World War in 1991, to 5,997 (the lowest point in Finnish emigration was in 1955 when only 5,687 Finns emigrated). However, since 1991, the number of emigrating Finns has steadily increased to the level that it is now, of approximately 20,000 Finns emigrating every year. Traditionally, Finnish women are slightly more likely to emigrate than men, however the difference is rather small, around 2 percentage points on a yearly comparison. Furthermore, the biggest age cohort among emigrating Finns is 25-34 years old. For instance, in 2016 nearly one-third (5,510; 30.5 %) of Finns moving abroad were from the age cohort 25-34 (Statistics Finland 2018e; Migration Institute of Finland 2018).

Another interesting characteristic of Finnish emigrants is language. Approximately 5 % of the Finnish population has Swedish as their mother tongue. Simultaneously, on a yearly basis, 15-20 % of emigrating Finns are Swedish-speaking Finns. For instance, in 2016, 18 % of Finns moving abroad were Swedish-speaking Finns. Thus, Swedish-speaking Finns are clearly over-represented among Finnish emigrants (Statistics Finland 2018e). This could be due to the fact that Swedish-speaking Finns often reside in regions from where emigration has been traditionally more prevalent (South and Western Finland as well as Ostrobothnia). Furthermore, when moving to Sweden or other Scandinavian countries, language is not an obstacle for the Swedish-speaking Finns, but on the contrary, it may have some pull-effect.

Figure 3. Level of education among persons emigrating from Finland 2005–2016 (Statistics Finland 2018e)



As shown in Figure 3 and Table 3, the majority of Finns emigrating from Finland in 2005–2016 had a secondary level or equivalent education (high school, polytechnic or equivalent). Meanwhile, 37 % of the emigrants had a university degree (bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree). Thus, it seems that the group of non-resident citizens is more educated than the average Finnish resident citizens are. The highest level of education for the majority of Finnish residents is secondary or an equivalent level of education (50.5 %). Simultaneously, the percentage of individuals that have completed university education was 20.8 % of Finnish workforce.

Table 3. Level of education in Finland and among emigrants

	Finnish >15 years old citizens residing in Finland, 2017, n (%)	Finnish citizens who emigrated from Finland 2005–2016, n (%)
Basic education	1,321,847 (28.7)	15,859 (17.1)
Secondary level or equivalent	2,326,626 (50.5)	42,441 (45.9)
Bachelor's	500,520 (10.9)	15,064 (16.3)
Master's	416,084 (9.0)	16,729 (18.1)
Doctoral education	44,042 (1.0)	2,453 (2.7)
Total	4,609,119 (100)	92,546 (100)

1.2. Summary of the Electoral Rights of Non-citizen Residents and Non-resident Citizens

In general, all election legislation in Finland is merged into one single act: the Election Act (714/1998). Furthermore, provisions on the right to vote in municipal elections are laid down in the Constitution of Finland and the Local Government Act (563/2015). Provisions on the candidate eligibility in parliamentary elections and the eligibility of the President of the Republic are laid down in the Constitution of Finland. Provisions on the candidate eligibility in municipal elections are laid down in the Local Government Act. Provisions on the candidate eligibility in the elections to the European Parliament are laid down in section 164 of the Election Act.

Non-citizens may vote and stand as candidates in local (municipal) elections if they meet the residence criteria, and citizens of other EU Member States may additionally vote and stand as candidates in the EP elections. Voter registration in Finland is automatic, with the exception of non-citizen voters in EP elections. For non-citizen eligible voters, a prerequisite for the right to vote in EP elections is that the person enrolls with the voting register in Finland 80 days before the election day with the local register office. A fresh registration is needed for each election for non-citizen voters. Furthermore, non-resident citizens may vote and stand as candidates in all elections with the exception of local (municipal) elections, and voter registration is automatic (Ministry of Justice, 2018a).

Voting in Finnish elections is possible both on the election day and in advance. Advance voting is very common in Finland, as is shown in Table 4. Furthermore, postal voting will be implemented for the first time in the national parliamentary elections in 2019 for voters abroad.

2. Non-national EU Citizens' Franchise in EP and Local Elections

2.1. Overview of Relevant Administrative Regulations

The foundation of the Finnish election legislation was laid at the beginning of the 20th century. The parliament act and the election act of the Grand Duchy of Finland were enacted in 1906 and the first parliamentary elections in accordance with these were held in 1907. The first act on municipal elections was enacted in 1917, the first president of the Republic of Finland was elected by Parliament in 1919 and in 1922 an act on the election of presidential electors was enacted. In 1994, the President was for the first time elected directly by the people in a two-stage election. When Finland joined the European Union in 1995, the law on the election of Finnish representatives to the European Parliament was enacted. In 1998, through an amendment, all election legislation was merged into one single act: the Election Act, which entered into force on 8 October 1998.

Finland constitutes an interesting case from both the geographical and the institutional perspective. Geographically and culturally, Finland is a Nordic country. However, institutionally Finland differs from Scandinavian countries with an electoral system that combines the use of a proportional formula as well as multi-member districts with a strong degree of candidate centeredness (candidates in an overly pronounced role in elections in comparison to parties). The electoral system used in Finland is an open-list proportional representation system, but whereas in many proportional representation systems in Western Europe voters are entitled to indicate also their favoured candidate within their favourite party list, in Finland it is compulsory to vote for a candidate. The Finnish system is a mixture of characteristics strongly advanced by majoritarian systems (i.e., the specific focus on candidates), with a feature typical of proportional systems (i.e., the focus on parties), which makes the electoral system interesting also from the perspective of emigrants' political participation (Bengtsson and Wass 2010)

All Finnish elections follow the following principles: the elections are direct, the elections are proportional, and the elections are secret. Furthermore, the right to vote is universal and equal. Voting is personal and thus, the right to vote may not be used through an agent. The system is a combination of voting for individuals and parties: a vote goes both to a party and a person (excluding presidential elections in which votes are only cast for a candidate).

According to the Finnish Election Act, in parliamentary elections, presidential elections and elections to the European Parliament, every Finnish citizen who has reached the age of 18 no later than on the election day is entitled to vote. In presidential elections, the voting age shall be reached no later than on the day of the first round of the presidential election.

In elections to the European Parliament, citizen of another Member State of the European Union are also entitled to vote if they have reached the age of 18 no later than on the election day. Furthermore their municipality of residence referred to in the Municipality of Residence Act (201/1994) must be in Finland or alternatively they work for the European Union or another international organisation in Finland or are family members of such a

person. Finally their personal information must have been entered in the Population Information System in the manner referred to in the Act on the Population Information System and the Certificate Services of the Population Register Centre (661/2009). However, a person who has lost his or her right to vote in the country of which he or she is a citizen (home state), due to a court decision in an individual civil or criminal matter, is not entitled to vote in Finland (1213/2013).

Elections are conducted by organising advance voting and voting on election day. Local authorities are responsible for organising the advance voting and the voting on election day in Finland, while the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for organising advance voting abroad. Voting by proxy is not allowed. However, a new amendment (939/2017) to electoral law came into effect on 1.11.2018, thus allowing postal voting to be used in the next parliamentary elections in 2019.

Advance voting is very popular in Finland, around half of all the votes are cast in advance (see Table 4). Advance polling stations are:

1. General advance polling stations in Finland, the number and location of which the local executive determines. Unless there are specific grounds for deciding otherwise, there shall be at least one such advance polling station in each municipality;
2. Finnish diplomatic missions and their offices as determined by a government decree as well as general advance polling stations for municipal elections in the Province of Åland as specified by government decree;
3. Hospitals, operational units of the social services offering round-the-clock treatment and other units determined by the local executive, as well as prisons (institution);
4. Finnish ships which are abroad when the advance voting is conducted. (563/2015)

In addition, the advance voting may, under the conditions laid down below, be conducted at the voter's home (at-home voting). Each voting district has an election day polling station determined by the local executive. For special reasons, the polling station may be located outside the voting district or the municipality, if this does not cause undue difficulty to the voters (247/2002). The local executive shall ensure that the name, address, opening days and daily opening hours of each general advance polling station in the municipality and the name and address of the election day polling station and other information specified by the Ministry of Justice are entered in the polling station register maintained by the Population Register Centre in the manner determined by the Population Register Centre without undue delay. Those general advance polling stations and election day polling stations in Finland which have been entered in the polling station register by the end of the day 51 days prior to the election shall be the polling stations used in the election even if a claim for rectification submitted against the decision of the local executive referred to in this section has not been considered and even if the municipal appeal submitted to an administrative court seeking to amend the decision has not been resolved. A claim for rectification submitted to the local executive and a municipal appeal submitted against a decision of the local executive shall be considered urgently. A decision of the administrative court on the appeal is not subject to appeal (247/2002).

Table 4. Number of advance votes in elections 1978-2018

	Year	Advance voters	Percentage of all voters
Electoral college elections	1978	176,850	7.2
Parliamentary elections	1979	298,197	10.3
Municipal elections	1980	220,512	8.0
Electoral college elections	1982	351,142	11.0
Parliamentary elections	1983	357,838	12.0
Municipal elections	1984	249,129	9.2
Parliamentary elections	1987	454,376	15.7
Presidential elections	1988	688,641	21.8
Municipal elections	1988	485,185	18.3
Parliamentary elections	1991	1,133,506	40.8
Municipal elections	1992	1,027,334	38.1
Presidential elections, first round	1994	1,359,880	42.4
Presidential elections, second round	1994	1,500,212	46.7
Parliamentary elections	1995	1,217,805	43.4
Municipal elections	1996	844,203	34.9
European Parliament elections	1996	816,623	34.5
Parliamentary elections	1999	1,094,283	40.4
European Parliament elections	1999	589,775	47.3
Presidential elections, first round	2000	1,366,233	44.5
Presidential elections, second round	2000	1,517,061	47.4
Municipal elections	2000	844,867	37.7

Parliamentary elections	2003	1,062,017	37.7
Municipal elections	2004	940,705	39.1
European Parliament elections	2004	662,474	39.7
Presidential elections, first round	2006	1,297,631	42.9
Presidential elections, second round	2006	1,470,967	46.5
Parliamentary elections	2007	1,230,765	44.1
Municipal elections	2008	1,022,469	39.9
European Parliament elections	2009	773,098	43.8
Parliamentary elections	2011	1,342,772	45.4
Presidential elections, first round	2012	1,420,943	46.3
Presidential elections, second round	2012	1,559,064	53.7
Municipal elections	2012	1,062,190	42.4
European Parliament elections	2014	740,845	42.6
Parliamentary elections	2015	1,386,958	46.5
Municipal elections	2017	1,169,319	45.2
Presidential elections, first round	2018	1,591,969	53.0

Source: Statistics Finland (2018c).

2.2. Voter Registration

Local elections

Voter registration in Finland is automatic in all elections, with the exception of non-citizen voters in EP elections. The Population Register Centre of Finland compiles a computer register of everyone entitled to vote (voting register) at the latest 46 days before the election day. This register contains some of the information on the voters (e.g. name, personal number, electoral district, municipality of residence, and polling station) which was in the Population Information System 51 days before the election day.

The voting register is public and the local registry offices (*maistraatti*) give out information from the register by phone or as extracts (if the extract is given to someone else than the voter a fee is charged for the extract) from day 41 before the election day. In addition, everyone in the register is sent a notice of his or her right to vote (card of information) not later than 24 days before the election day. The card states among other things the election day, the days for advance voting, a list of the advance polling stations within the electoral district, the name and address of the polling station on the election day, and the addresses and telephone numbers of the election authorities. The voting register is later used to print out the electoral rolls for the polling stations on the election day (Ministry of Justice, 2018a).

EP elections

For non-citizen eligible voters, a prerequisite for the right to vote in EP elections is that the person enrolls with the voting register in Finland 80 days before the election day at a local registry office. There are 36 local registry offices in mainland Finland and one in Åland. While the voter registration is automatic for all other elections, for EP elections a new registration is needed for each election for non-citizen voters (Ministry of Justice, 2018a).

2.3. Information during Election Campaigns

The Finnish Ministry of Justice provides an elections website *Vaalit.fi*, which offers information on the elections, voting and political parties. The website is available in Finnish, Swedish and English. Furthermore, some information is available also in Albanian, Arabian, Chinese, Estonian, French, German, Inari Sami, Karelian, Kurdish, Northern Sami, Persian, Plain Language Finnish, Polish, Romani, Russian, Skolt Sami, Spanish, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese. Moreover, the website provides videos on how to cast a vote in plain language. In addition, the European Parliament offers the *thistimeimvoting.eu* website also in Finnish.

Some political parties' websites can be viewed in languages other than Finnish. It seems that out of the 11 groups in the Parliament, seven offer information also in other languages. Six parties' websites can be viewed in English (The Social Democratic Party of Finland, Blue Reform, Finns Party, Green League, Left Alliance, and Christian Democrats), and six parties' websites in Swedish (The Social Democratic Party of Finland, Finns Party, Green League, Left Alliance, Swedish People's Party, and Christian Democrats). Furthermore, two parties offer information also in Russian (The Social Democratic Party of Finland and Green League) and one in Sami (Left Alliance). However, in most cases, the information offered in other languages is more limited and not always up to date.

The national broadcaster Yle provides news also in English, and during the previous municipal election campaign, Yle hosted an election debate in English in which candidates from each of Finland's major political parties explained their positions in various themes, and the video was streamed online and available to watch also afterwards. This was part of the *#useyourvote* campaign by Yle News. In addition, a cooperation network for multicultural

organisations, Moniheli, has run several projects aimed at increasing turnout among third-country nationals in Finland, such as iCount (2012-2015) and Kaikkien Vaalit (2017), offering information and debates in English (see e.g. Breton 2018).

Overall information regarding the elections and parties is rather widely available also in English and Swedish. However, information provided in other European languages is very limited.

2.4. Political Parties and Candidacy Rights

Non-national residents can stand as candidates if they are entitled to vote in the same election. Thus, the right to vote and the right to stand as a candidate are combined. EU citizens and other Nordic citizens may stand as candidates in municipal elections if they have resided in the municipality for at least 51 days before the election. Moreover, EU citizens may stand as candidates for EP elections if they reside in Finland on the 51st day before the election is held. Third-country nationals can stand as candidates in municipal elections if they have resided in Finland for at least two years on the 51st day before the election is held.

The political parties in Finland do not target EU citizens with special campaigns for any of the elections. Political parties in Finland have seldom had non-national candidates from other EU Member States on their candidate lists for the EP elections. The conditions for registering are the same for non-national candidates. A candidate has to be either admitted to a Finnish political party's candidate list or be nominated by a constituency association. A constituency association may be established by at least 2,000 persons entitled to vote. In addition, a non-national candidate must declare that they are not candidates in any other country and that they have not lost the right to vote in the Member State of which they are a citizen (Ministry of Justice 2018b).

In municipal elections, the share of non-national candidates (candidates whose mother tongue was not Finnish, Swedish or Sami) was 2.2 % (727 candidates). The share of non-national candidates increased from 1.8 % of all the candidates in the previous municipal elections of 2012. Furthermore, 5.7 % of the eligible voters, and 0.7 % of those elected, were non-national. In the Helsinki metropolitan area, the share of elected non-nationals was 5 %, whereas in other regions, the share was markedly less, between 0-2 %. In total, 66 elected candidates had a mother tongue other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami. As shown in Table 5, Russian and Estonian were the most common languages among non-national candidates (164 Russian candidates and 72 Estonian candidates) (Statistics Finland 2018d).

Language	Eligible voters	Candidates	
	N	N	%
<i>All languages, total</i>	4,390,971	33,607	0.8
Finnish	3,930,811	30,965	0.8
Swedish	208,424	1,877	0.9
Sami	1,458	36	2.5
<i>Other language, total</i>	250,278	727	0.3
Russian	57,531	164	0.3
Estonian	39,122	72	0.2
Arabic	10,489	44	0.4
English	14,058	40	0.3
Kurdish	8,057	40	0.5
Turkish	5,380	39	0.7
Somali	10,199	31	0.3
Persian	6,267	22	0.4
Spanish	5,969	21	0.4
German	5,425	21	0.4
Bosnian	1,476	16	1.1
Albanian	3,228	14	0.4
French	6,013	12	0.2
Hungarian	2,383	12	0.5
Dutch	1,442	12	0.8
Portuguese	1,907	11	0.6

Source: Statistics Finland (2018d)

2.5. Turnout

Statistics Finland collects rather detailed data about electoral participation, candidates and election results. Furthermore, whereas electoral turnout has been somewhat thoroughly studied in principle, from the viewpoint of non-resident and non-citizen voters' turnout, candidacy and election results are very scarcely studied.

In Finland, non-citizen residents (other than Nordic and EU citizens) are entitled to vote and/or run as candidates in municipal elections if they have had a domicile in Finland continuously for two years and 51 days prior to an election. However, heretofore, TCN voters have been researched in Finland only scarcely (see e.g. Pirkkalainen, Wass & Weide 2016a; Pirkkalainen, Wass & Weide 2016b; e.g. Wass & Weide 2015; Wass et al. 2015).

As shown in Table 6, turnout among other Nordic country citizens (Iceland and Norway) was on a much higher level than turnout among other EU citizens in the Finnish municipal elections in 2017. More than a third of both men and women from Iceland and Norway voted, whereas less than 18 % of EU citizens voted. Around one-quarter of the third-country nationals voted. However, the difference between TCN men and women was rather drastic: 27.6 % of TCN women voted, while only 19.2 % of TCN men voted, the difference being nearly 9 percentage points.

Table 6. Turnout of non-national EU citizens, citizens of other Iceland and Norway and third-country nationals in the municipal elections in 2017

	Persons entitled to vote				Turnout (%)			
	Total	Other EU citizen	Iceland and Norway	TCN	Total	Other EU citizen	Iceland and Norway	TCN
Females	80,461	34,498	325	45,638	19.6	17.8	36.6	27.6
Males	96,200	46,553	516	49,131	18.4	17.4	36.6	19.2
Total	176,661	81,051	841	94,769	19.0	17.6	36.6	23.4

Source: Statistics Finland 2018c

As shown in Table 7, turnout among other EU citizens in fact surpassed the turnout among Finnish voters in the 2014 EP elections. Whereas 40.9 % of Finns residing in Finland voted in EP elections in 2014, the equivalent share among other EU citizens was 45.1 %. Interestingly, similar tendencies have been noted also in Denmark (Hansen 2018).

Table 7. Turnout of non-national EU citizens in EP elections 1996-2014

	Persons entitled to vote, other EU citizens			Persons who voted, other EU citizens			Voting turnout, other EU citizens		
	Both genders	Male	Female	Both genders	Male	Female	Both genders	Male	Female
2014	7,333	4,173	3,160	3,273	1,848	1,425	44.6	44.3	45.1
2009	6,211	3,522	2,689	2,231	1,324	907	35.9	37.6	33.7
2004	5,525	3,142	2,383	2,342	1,312	1,03	42.4	41.8	43.2
1999	3,909	2,447	1,462	1,376	845	531	35.2	34.5	36.3
1996	2,514	1,598	916	1,625	1,053	572	64.6	65.9	62.4

Source: Statistics Finland 2018c.

3. Non-resident Citizens' Franchise in National and EP Elections when Residing in Other EU Member States

3.1. Overview of Relevant Administrative Regulations

Finnish citizens residing abroad are entitled to vote in Finnish elections with the same conditions as Finns residing in Finland. The only exception are municipal elections, as the right to vote and stand as candidate is residence-based. Currently, Finland uses personal voting as a method of voting from abroad. A vote is cast in a designated polling place (e.g. embassy) in advance (early voting). No registration is needed, but the distance to the nearest polling station may be significant. However, postal voting will be implemented for the first time in parliamentary elections 2019.

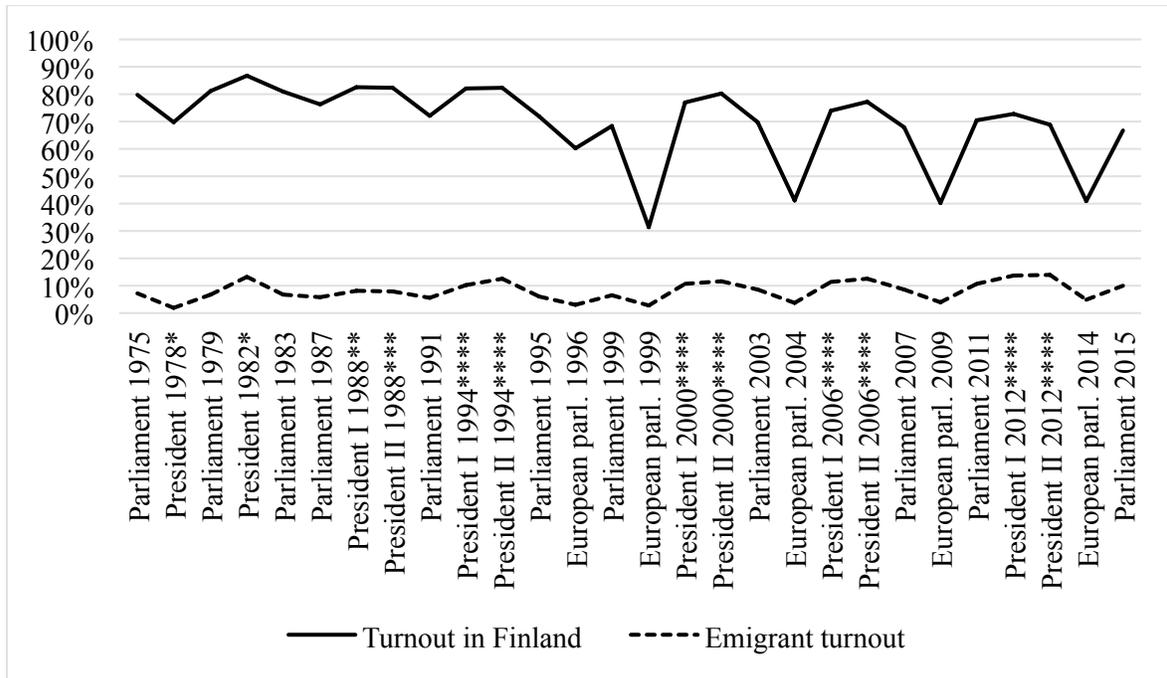
3.2. Voter Registration

Non-resident citizens are eligible voters in Finnish parliamentary and presidential elections, as well as in EP elections unless they register on the voter register of another Member State. Furthermore, dual-citizens are also eligible in Finnish elections. Non-resident citizens are registered on the electoral roll in the same way as resident citizens: the Population Register Centre of Finland compiles a computer register of everyone entitled to vote (voting register) at the latest 46 days before the election day. Everyone in the register, including non-resident citizens, is sent a notice (card of information) of their right to vote (Ministry of Justice, 2018a).

3.3. Turnout

External voting was first implemented in Finland in 1958 for Finnish citizens residing in Finland, but statistical data on the turnout of emigrants has been collected since the 1970s, when emigrants first got the right to vote in Finnish elections. In the 2015 national parliamentary elections, 5.4 % of eligible voters (242,096 persons) resided abroad. Swedish-speaking Finns were the only other minority with such a large electorate. As shown in Tables 8 and 9, as well as in Figure 4 below, the turnout in Finnish parliamentary elections is average by European standards, unlike the other Nordic countries, where turnout is relatively high. In the parliamentary elections held from 1995 to 2015, the average turnout was 69.2 %, and among Finnish emigrants 8.4 percent% (Peltoniemi 2018).

Figure 4. Turnout in Finnish Elections 1975-2015⁵



Source: Peltoniemi (2015).

⁵ * Presidential elections in 1978 and 1982 were elections to choose electors

** The first round of presidential elections in 1988 was direct election

*** The second round of presidential elections 1988 was election to choose electors

**** Presidential elections in 1994 through 2012 were direct elections

Table 8. Turnout in Finnish parliamentary elections 1983-2015

		Persons entitled to vote			Voting turnout		
		Both genders	Male	Female	Both genders	Male	Female
Whole country	2015	4,463,333	2,145,580	2,317,753	66.9	66.2	67.4
	2011	4,387,701	2,105,867	2,281,834	67.4	67.0	67.7
	2007	4,292,436	2,057,295	2,235,141	65.0	63.5	66.4
	2003	4,220,951	2,019,451	2,201,500	66.7	65.3	68.0
	1999	4,152,430	1,980,462	2,171,968	65.3	64.3	66.1
	1995	4,088,358	1,943,704	2,144,654	68.6	67.8	69.3
	1991	4,060,778	1,925,225	2,135,553	68.4	67.7	69.0
	1987	4,017,039	1,901,317	2,115,722	72.1	72.2	71.9
	1983	3,951,932	1,870,142	2,081,790	75.7	76.2	75.3
Finnish citizens living in Finland	2015	4,221,237	2,048,886	2,172,351	70.1	68.9	71.3
	2011	4,159,857	2,014,958	2,144,899	70.5	69.6	71.3
	2007	4,083,549	1,974,638	2,108,911	67.9	65.8	69.9
	2003	4,015,552	1,938,306	2,077,246	69.7	67.6	71.6
	1999	3,948,265	1,898,580	2,049,685	68.3	66.8	69.7
	1995	3,882,661	1,859,426	2,023,235	71.9	70.6	73.1
	1991	3,832,069	1,828,322	2,003,747	72.1	71.0	73.2
	1987	3,769,661	1,793,858	1,975,803	76.4	76.2	76.6
	1983	3,670,241	1,742,688	1,927,553	81.0	81.2	80.9
Finnish citizens living abroad	2015	242,096	96,694	145,402	10.1	10.3	9.9
	2011	227,844	90,909	136,935	10.6	11.0	10.2
	2007	208,887	82,657	126,23	8.6	9.1	8.3
	2003	205,399	81,145	124,254	8.8	9.2	8.5
	1999	204,165	81,882	122,283	6.5	6.9	6.3
	1995	205,697	84,278	121,419	6.1	6.7	5.6
	1991	228,709	96,903	131,806	5.6	6.1	5.3
	1987	247,378	107,459	139,919	5.8	6.0	5.7
	1983	281,691	127,454	154,237	6.7	7.2	6.2

Source: Statistics Finland (2018c).

Table 9. Turnout in Finland's elections 2003-2018⁶ (%)

Year	Type of Election	Emigrant turnout	Turnout in Finland	Emigrants' proportion of all electorate
2018	Presidential elections I (only) round	13.1	69.9	5.6
2015	Parliamentary elections	10.1	66.8	5.4
2014	European parliament elections	4.8	40.9	5.2
2012	Presidential elections II round	13.9	68.9	5.2
2012	Presidential elections I round	13.8	72.8	5.2
2011	Parliamentary elections	10.6	70.5	5.2
2009	European parliament elections	3.9	40.3	5.0
2007	Parliamentary elections	8.6	67.9	4.9
2006	Presidential elections II round	12.6	77.2	4.9
2006	Presidential elections I round	11.4	73.9	4.9
2004	European parliament elections	3.7	41.1	4.4
2003	Parliamentary elections	8.8	69.7	4.9

Source: Peltoniemi (2018); Statistics Finland (2014; 2015; 2018b).

Even if approximately half of the eligible voters abroad reside in Sweden, in Finland's elections, emigrant turnout in Sweden is lower than in other countries. For instance, in the presidential elections of 2018, there were 109,089 eligible voters residing in Sweden (out of 251,201 eligible emigrant voters in total), but the turnout was 12.0 % in Sweden (10.4 % for men and 13.1 % for women), when in total the emigrant turnout was 13.3 %. This is rather peculiar, considering that Sweden is the neighbouring country and thus, the emigrants' connections to the homeland are often stronger than for those living further away, and perhaps due to the strong Nordic co-operation in many fields of society, following Finnish politics in Sweden is not very demanding in comparison. Furthermore, the distances to polling stations are most of the time much shorter than in other countries.

Adopting postal voting has initiated some, rather minor, political debates throughout the 2000s, but otherwise there has not been much discussion on non-resident voters. In Sweden, prior to the parliamentary elections of 2018, the Sweden Democrats party stated that Sweden should renounce dual-citizenship. This caused discussion in Finnish media, especially in the biggest newspaper Helsingin Sanomat, as there are many (the exact number is not known, approximately 10,000-100,000) Finnish emigrant citizens with Swedish citizenship. Also in Finland, there was a somewhat heated discussion about dual-citizenship during the spring of 2017 after the national broadcaster YLE revealed that Finnish Defence Forces have been applying restrictions on Russian-Finnish nationals serving or wishing to serve in the armed forces, and that dual-citizens may be barred from taking up certain posts (Yle News 2017). However, this discussion focused more on dual-citizens (in particular, those with both Finnish and Russian citizenship) having access to military posts than voting rights of non-resident voters.

⁶ Municipal elections 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2017 are omitted from the Table 9, as only residents have voting rights.

4. Conclusion

In general, the EU citizens' turnout in EP elections held in Finland is at a good level, at least in comparison to the turnout of Finnish citizens. Resident EU citizens have voted more actively than Finnish citizens in all the EP elections in Finland with the exception of the EP elections of 2009, when Finns voted more actively (turnout of 40.3 %) than other EU citizens (turnout of 35.9 %). As shown in Table 10, the difference has most often been around 4 percentage points.

Table 10. Turnout in EP elections 1996–2014 in Finland

European Parliament elections, year	Non-citizen EU residents in Finland (%)	Finnish citizens in Finland (non-resident citizens excluded) (%)	Difference in turnout (percentage points)
2014	44.6	40.9	+3.7
2009	35.9	40.3	-4.4
2004	42.4	41.1	+1.3
1999	35.2	31.4	+3.8
1996	64.6	60.3	+4.3

In the municipal elections, however, the turnout among non-citizen residents is significantly lower than among Finnish citizens. The total turnout among non-citizen residents (EU citizens, Nordic citizens and third-country nationals) was 19.0 % in the municipal elections of 2017. In the same elections, the general turnout was 58.9 %. However, Nordic citizens and third-country nationals were more active in voting than EU citizens, and the turnout among EU citizens was only 17.6 %. Voter registration is automatic in municipal elections, on the contrary to EP elections, in which EU citizens need to register as voters. Thus, it does not seem that the costs caused by registration would explain the difference in EU citizens' turnout in Finnish municipal and EP elections. In fact, perhaps precisely because individuals need to register for EP elections they are aware of their voting right whereas with the automatic registration for local elections they may not be aware, despite information campaigns. Nevertheless, voter registration to EP elections could also be a hindrance for EU citizens deciding to vote in Finland.

Key challenges for participation to non-citizen residents and non-resident citizens

As most of the information regarding elections and the campaigning takes place in Finnish (or in Swedish), the information could be more difficult to attain for EU citizens than Finnish citizens. Furthermore, media coverage on candidates and parties is in general only in Finnish. In Finland, televised election debates have a very important standing for both voters as well as candidates and parties. As Eloranta and Isotalus (2016) have noted, election debates are the most central events during the campaigning. So much so that television viewers are nowadays enabled to partake in the debates through tweeting, which has made election

debates much more social. However, as the election debates are held in Finnish, this mode of informative campaigning does not reach those non-citizen voters who are not fluent in Finnish.

In general, it seems that information on elections offered by election authorities is relatively well available in other languages, especially in English. For instance, the Ministry of Justice offers information on elections, candidacy and voting in English almost as comprehensively as they do in Finnish. However, parties, candidates and the media do not offer much information for non-citizen residents as well as non-resident citizens.

In terms of non-resident citizens, Finns living abroad, the largest obstacles seem to be the distance to polling station as well as the experienced deficits in knowledge about the current political situation in Finland. Previous research (Peltoniemi 2018) has suggested that the physical distance from the polling station was the most important reason for non-voting of more than one-third of Finnish non-voters abroad. Whereas lack of motivation is a somewhat common reason for non-voting too, the lack of possibility and lack of knowledge are the overriding reasons for choosing not to vote. The obstacle caused by distance will be solved already in the upcoming national parliamentary elections of 2019, as voters from abroad can use postal voting for the first time. While the actual implementation⁷ of postal voting may cause further obstacles, it will make voting from abroad more convenient nonetheless.

Recommendations

Overall, many obstacles affecting both non-resident as well as non-citizen voters could be overcome by additional information. Whereas the information offered through official channels, such as from electoral authorities, is relatively comprehensive, the information on current political situation, the key issues as well as of the different parties and other political actors, is still somewhat inadequate.

While non-citizen residents could benefit from additional information on political parties and candidates, electoral debates and the Finnish political situation in English, also non-resident citizens would merit from similar type of information offered in Finnish. Whereas news, magazines and debates are in principle available in Finnish, they may be restricted from being viewed from abroad. Thus, a more open access to the national broadcaster from abroad could increase the availability of information for non-resident citizens. Furthermore, the interests and key issues of residents and non-resident citizens may vary, and non-resident citizens could benefit for more targeted messages from different political and administrative actors.

In general, it seems that whereas formal information on elections, voting and candidacy is easy to obtain in English, the political debates and key issues of the elections are rather well concealed from non-Finnish speakers. This deficiency has been noted also by the national broadcaster Yle. During the previous Municipal Elections in 2017, Yle hosted an election debate in English in which candidates from each of Finland's major political parties explained their positions in various themes, and the video was streamed online and available

⁷ A voter needs to pre-order a postal voting package from Ministry of Justice. A voter will fill the ballot ticket in the presence of two witnesses and mail the vote to the correct municipality's Central Election Committee. It is the voter's responsibility to mail the vote in time, and all the delayed postal votes will be discarded.

to watch also afterwards. However, the number of eligible foreigners in municipal elections is much higher than in EP elections. In the 2017 municipal elections, 177,000 eligible voters were non-citizen residents, whereas in the 2014 EP elections, 7,000 eligible voters were non-citizen residents in Finland. In comparison, in the 2014 EP elections, 222,216 were non-resident citizens. Thus, the efforts put towards non-citizen resident voters can be seen to correlate with the magnitude of the electorate. It could, however, be useful for non-citizen residents to be able to follow election debates also in English (e.g. with English subtitles), especially as the televised debates have such an important standing for both voters as well as candidates and parties in Finland.

Moreover, Finnish elections are usually accompanied by VAAs and ‘Election compasses’ offered by the media, NGOs and different interest groups. During the presidential election campaign in 2018, Finnish national broadcaster Yle offered the election compass for the first time also in English. VAAs could be offered more commonly also in English, especially during EP election campaigns and municipal election campaigns. However, non-citizen residents could be mobilised by other ways, such as sending SMS-messages in English, as has been previously done for instance in Denmark (Hansen 2018). Moreover, parties and candidates could be encouraged to campaign also in English. Furthermore, election debates could be organised in public places, such as in universities where a large share of employees are international.

References:

- Bengtsson, Åsa & Wass, Hanna. 2010. "Styles of Political Representation: What Do Voters Expect?" *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 20 (1): 55–81.
- Breton, Julie. 2017. *Bringing immigrants to the polls? Voter mobilization through the Kaikkien Vaalit thematic live debates in the 2017 Finnish municipal elections*. Master's thesis. Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, accessed 25.10.2018. <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:hulib-201706195092>.
- Eloranta, Annina & Isotalus, Pekka. 2016. "Vaalikeskustelun aikainen live-twiittaaminen – kansalaiskeskustelun uusi muoto?" In *Poliittisen osallistumisen eriytyminen. Eduskuntavaalitutkimus 2015 [The Differentiation of Political Participation – Finnish National Election Study 2015]* (edited by Kimmo Grönlund and Hanna Wass). Reports and Guidelines, publication 28/2016. Helsinki: Ministry of Justice, accessed 29.10.2018. https://www.vaalitutkimus.fi/documents/Eduskuntavaalitutkimus_2015.pdf.
- Hansen, Kasper M. 2018. "Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Denmark", Country report 2018/4. Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies/GLOBALCIT. Florence: European University Institute.
- Migration Institute of Finland. 2018. *Emigration 1945–2010*, accessed 25.10.2018, http://www.migrationinstitute.fi/en/information-service/statistics#quickset-en_tietopalvelut_tilastot=1.
- Ministry of Justice. 2018a. *Right to Vote and Compilation of the Voting Register*, accessed 9.10.2018, <https://vaalit.fi/en/right-to-vote-and-Compilation-of-the-voting-register4>.
- Ministry of Justice, 2018b. *Eligibility and Nomination of Candidates*, accessed 13.11.2018, <https://vaalit.fi/en/eligibility-and-nomination-of-candidates2>.
- Peltoniemi, Johanna. 2015. "Äänen pitkä matka: Ulkomaalaisten matala äänestysaktiivisuus ja joustavien äänestysmenetelmien merkitsevyys." *Politiikka* 57 (4): 208-225.
- Peltoniemi, Johanna. 2018. *On the Borderlines of Voting. Finnish Emigrants' Transnational Identities and Political Participation*. Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 2403. Doctoral dissertation. Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Pirkkalainen, Päivi, Hanna Wass & Marjukka Weide. 2016a. "The Political Potential of Migrants is often Overlooked in Discussions Around Integration." *Democratic Audit UK*.
- Pirkkalainen, Päivi, Hanna Wass & Marjukka Weide. 2016b. "Suomen Somalit Osallistuvina Kansalaisina." *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka* 81 (1): 69-77.
- Statistics Finland. (2018a). *Population structure*, accessed 5.10.2018, https://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/tau_en.html.
- Statistics Finland. (2018b). *European Parliament Elections - Time Series*, accessed 29.8.2018, http://www.tilastokeskus.fi/til/euvaa/tau_en.html.

- Statistics Finland. (2018c). *Statistics Finland's PX-Web Databases, Elections*, accessed 28.8.2018, <http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/>.
- Statistics Finland. (2018d). *Ehdokkaiden ja valittujen tausta-analyysi kuntavaaleissa 2017*, accessed 8.10.2018, http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/kvaa/2017/04/kvaa_2017_04_2017-04-27_kat_001_fi.html.
- Statistics Finland. (2018e). *Statistics Finland's PX-Web Databases, Population (Migration)*, accessed 22.10.2018, http://pxnet2.stat.fi/PXWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin_vrm_muutl/?rxid=efadd60a-e322-4d9e-99a5-3a5ebe9a362d.
- Statistics Finland. (2015). *Parliamentary Elections - Time Series*, accessed 12.6.2015, http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/evaa/tau_en.html.
- Statistics Finland. (2014). *Presidential Elections*, accessed 15.7.2014, http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/pvaa/tau_en.html.
- Sutela, Hanna & Larja, Liisa (2015). *Yli puolet Suomen ulkomaalaistaustaisista muuttanut maahan perhesyistä. Ulkomaista syntyperää olevien työ ja hyvinvointi tutkimus 2014*. Statistics Finland, accessed 05.10.2018. https://www.stat.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/art_2015-10-15_001.html.
- Wass, Hanna and Marjukka Weide. 2015. *Äänestäminen osana poliittista kansalaisuutta. Maahanmuuttotaustaisten äänioikeutettujen osallistuminen vuoden 2012 kunnallisvaaleissa*. Oikeusministeriön julkaisu, Selvityksiä ja ohjeita 26/2015. Helsinki: Ministry of Justice.
- Wass, Hanna, André Blais, Alexandre Morin-Chassé & Marjukka Weide. 2015. "Engaging Immigrants? Examining the Correlates of Electoral Participation among Voters with Migration Backgrounds." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 25 (4): 407-424.
- Yle News. *Yle: Defence Forces Applying Restrictions to Russian-Finnish Dual Citizens in Armed Service*, accessed 31.1.2017, https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/yle_defence_forces_applying_restrictions_to_russian-

