



# Three Nordic Perspectives on International Students

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# Policy perspectives (1)



## **The institutions of higher education**

- ❖ want to recruit and educate good and qualified international students,
- ❖ are not really concerned about whether they are EU citizens or not (beyond any consequences for the incomes and administrative complications).

## Policy perspectives (2)



The **Governments** have objectives that may contradict each other in practice, such as the wish to:

- ✓ Regulate immigration of third-country nationals, and prevent misuse of regulations
- ✓ Support development in third countries by contributing to their 'brain gain'
- ✓ Establish useful contacts in future markets
- ✓ Recruit and retain specialists needed in the national economy
- ✓ Keep overall expenditures for higher education within sustainable limits

# Common, salient features of the situation in FI, NO and SE

- ❖ The winters are cold and dark, and the summers are light and distracting.
- ❖ Living costs are high, especially compared with the typical income levels in many third countries.
- ❖ The languages are difficult to learn and are not taught as the first foreign language in other countries.
- ❖ English is the first foreign language in FI, NO, SE, and graduate teaching is often in English and/or is using textbooks in English.
- ❖ The universities and other institutions of higher education are good but not outstanding internationally, except for certain special fields.

# Admission procedures, tuition fees and financing

- ✳️ The acceptance by an institution must be followed by a residence permit for study.
- ✳️ Tuition fees:
  - ✓ **FI**: None for most studies, but trial scheme in some
  - ✓ **NO**: None in public institutions, but private ones charge
  - ✓ **SE**: Fees introduced 2011
- ✳️ Financial assistance from country of study:
  - ✓ **FI**: For doctoral level and research only
  - ✓ **NO**: Grants from NORAD/SELF. Loans from SELF
  - ✓ **SE**: No general financial assistance. Few scholarships.

# Permits for family and work

## **FI and NO:**

- ✓ Students can work part time, and full time during vacations.
- ✓ Family members can join them and spouses can work full time.

## **SE:**

- ✓ Students have the right to work and family members can join them.
- ✓ Spouses do not have the right to work.

# After graduation: what happens?

## **FI and NO:**

- ✓ The graduate is expected to return to own country, but is given a 6 month permit to look for relevant work in NO/FI.
- ✓ If succesful, they then will get a regular work permit.

## **SE:**

- ✓ After the completion of studies, third-country national students are not allowed to stay in the country in order to look for work.
- ✓ They can, however, be granted a work permit if they already have a job or a specific job offer.

# Situation in institutions of higher learning in FI (2010), NO and SE 2011

## ✧ Finland (5.4 mill. inhabitants)

- ✓ Institutions: 42
- ✓ Students total: 308 000
- ✓ International students total: 15 700
- ✓ Third-country nationals students (largest) : 11 800 (China, Russia)

## ✧ Norway (5 mill. inhabitants)

- ✓ Institutions: 77 (incl. 34 private), of which 8 universities
- ✓ Students total: 200 000
- ✓ International students total: 10 200
- ✓ Third-country nationals students: 6 800 (China, Russia)

## ✧ Sweden (9.5 mill. inhabitants)

- ✓ Institutions: 49 (incl. 13 private)
- ✓ Students total: 440 000
- ✓ International students total: 46 800
- ✓ Third-country nationals students: 24 400 (China, India, Iran)



# Concluding remarks



- ❖ The international students in FI, NO and SE represent less than 10 percent of all immigrants, both among the immigrants from third countries and among those from EU/EFTA member countries.
- ❖ This form of immigration is considered to be important because:
  - The (mostly positive) impact on the institutions of higher learning;
  - It serves as a source for highly qualified workers;
  - It represents a contribution to 'brain gain', contacts and/or goodwill in countries of origin.
- ❖ The possibility that this immigration channel may be misused is a concern, however (at least for FI and NO).

Thank you for your attention

