

## **STATEMENT ON THE DRAFT GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL TO THE PARLIAMENT CONCERNING THE AMENDMENT OF THE ALIENS ACT**

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The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers issues its thanks for the opportunity to comment on the draft government proposal concerning the extension of the long-term or so-called D visa to include students, researchers, employees of certified employers as well as corporate management and the family members of the above.

The aim of the reform is to speed up immigration by granting a long-term visa in connection with a residence permit. The visa would enable a third country citizen to arrive in Finland without having to wait for the residence permit card in their country of departure. The arrangement should speed up the process by an estimated 1–2 weeks.

The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers generally considers actions to smoothen the immigration process as being necessary. As the draft proposal states, the aim of the Government is to at least double work-based immigration by 2030 as compared to the present day. Researchers represent precisely the highest type of expertise that Finland wants to attract.

The proposal's effect of shortening the arrival process to Finland by about a week is, however, modest compared to the aims. The Union considers the primary concern to be the acceleration of the residence permit process itself. The current proposal seeks to make the process smoother by adding yet another application process. This arrangement would be paid for by the D visa applicants as processing fees. The Union points out that public sector and grant-funded researchers primarily pay the work permit application and other immigration-related administrative costs themselves. The proposed D visa system, therefore, creates an extra cost for researchers and other experts moving to Finland from third countries if they wish to speed up their arrival. Even though the aim to speed up the process is positive, the Union is doubtful that the proposed arrangement would promote a positive image of the Finnish immigration process.

What is positive about the proposal is that a long-term visa would decrease the immigration costs of a person who has lost their residence permit card, especially when they apply for a new residence permit abroad.

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