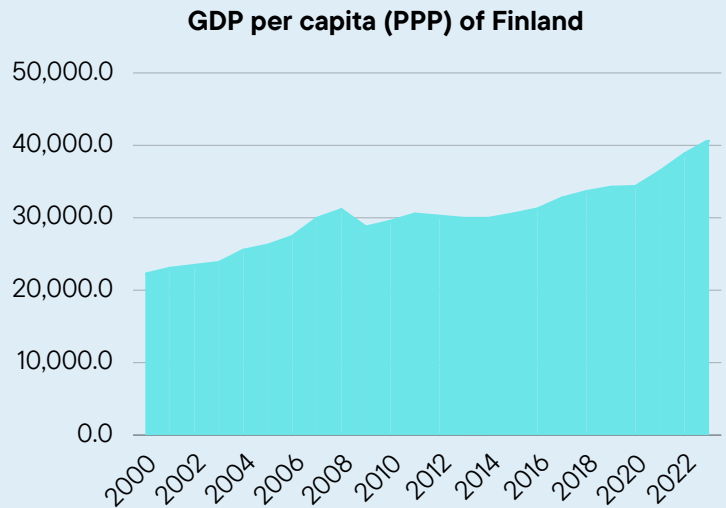


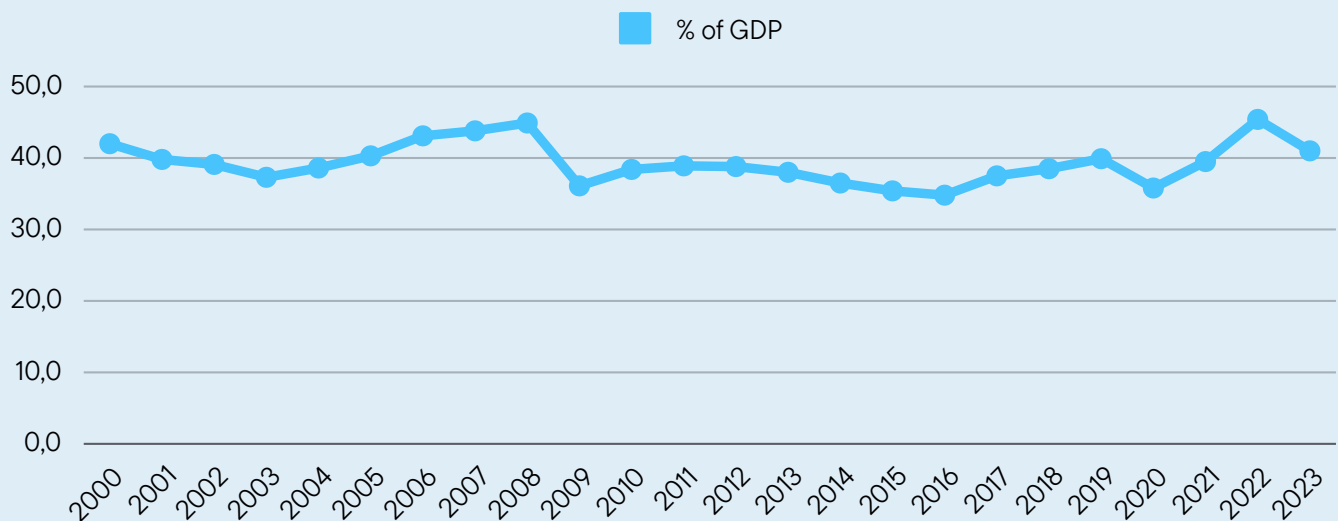
IMPACTS OF THE 2004 EU ENLARGEMENT ON FINLAND

GDP Per capita in Purchasing power in Finland ¹

The data shows that Finland's GDP experienced **growth between 2000 and 2008**. Recovery from global financial crisis of 2008 was also steady yet gradual. It took until 2016 to reach the precrisis GDP level. Finland's GDP **rose significantly after 2004**, coinciding with the European Union's enlargement, which brought ten new member states into the EU. Enlargement and global demand likely expanded markets and trade opportunities for Finland, benefiting its export-driven economy. The GDP increased from €25,500 in 2004 to €29,900 in 2007, reflecting strong growth during this period. However, the global financial crisis in 2008 caused a sharp contraction, as GDP fell to €28,700 in 2009. The recovery was gradual but steady, with stronger growth observed post-2016, **reaching €40,700 by 2023**.

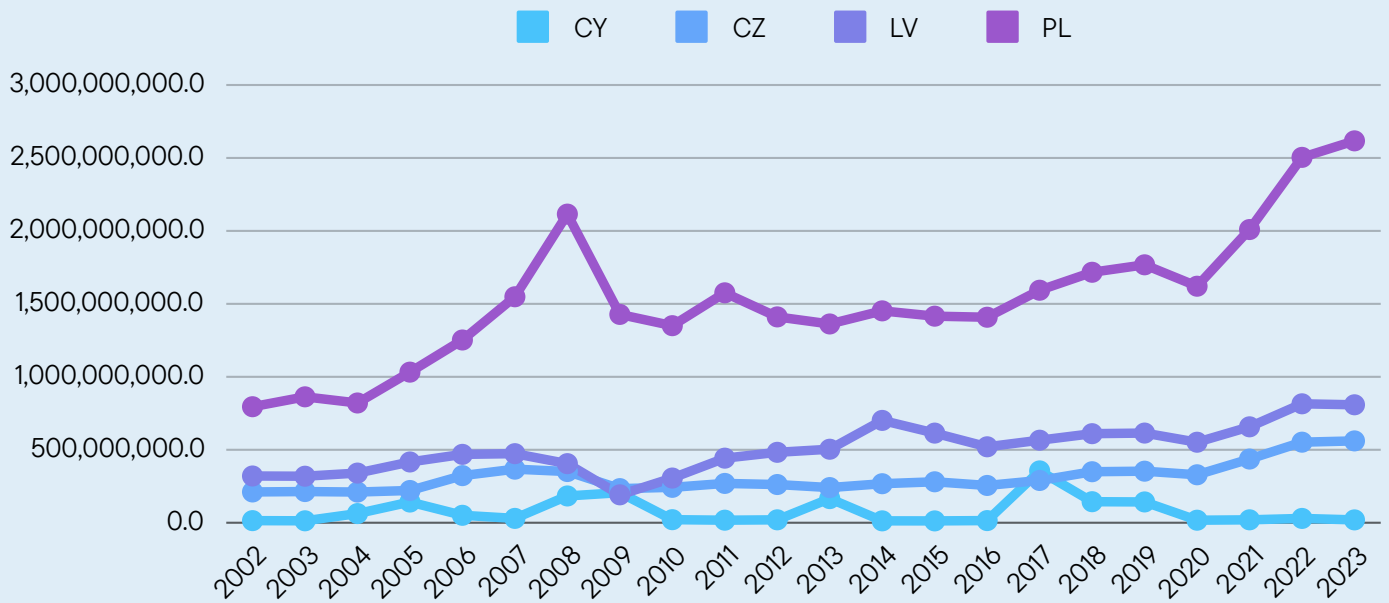


Trade in goods and services



Change in the share of exports of goods and services as % of the GDP ²

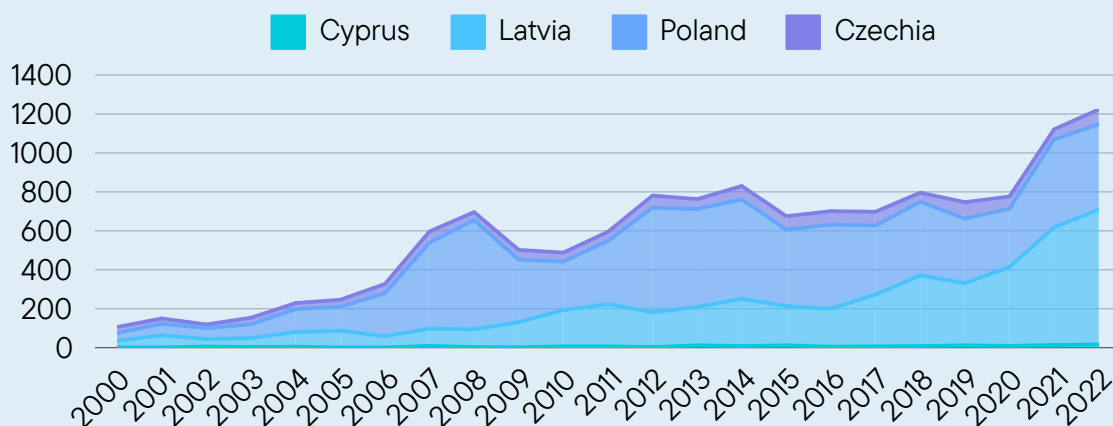
Value of exports to new EU member states before and after 2004 (€) ³



The 2004 enlargement appears to have provided Finland with enhanced **access to new markets**, reflected by the notable increase in export values in subsequent years. For example, exports to Poland rose from €795 million in 2002 to €1.03 billion in 2005, continuing to grow steadily thereafter, **peaking at €2.62 billion in 2023**. Latvia and Cyprus also saw substantial increases, particularly after 2008, despite fluctuations during the global financial crisis. However, exports to Cyprus exhibit irregular trends, with sharp spikes in specific years (e.g., 2017). The trade with the Czech Republic also experienced growth, with exports increasing consistently prior to 2008 and after 2016. Overall, the data suggests that the EU enlargement created **significant opportunities** for Finnish exports, especially to larger markets like Poland, driving **long-term economic engagement**.

Labour

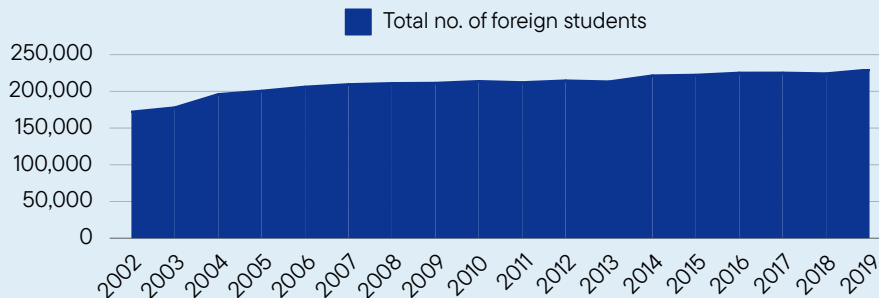
The data highlights how EU enlargement enhanced labor mobility, contributing to greater migration to Finland, especially from larger countries like Poland and Latvia. The number of Latvian nationals rose from 34 in 2000 to 693 in 2022, with steady increases post-2004, particularly after 2018. Similarly, Polish nationals surged from 40 in 2000 to a peak of 561 in 2008 before stabilizing around 438 by 2022. Czech nationals increased moderately, from 31 in 2000 to 76 in 2022, while Cypriots had minimal growth, reflecting a smaller migration trend.



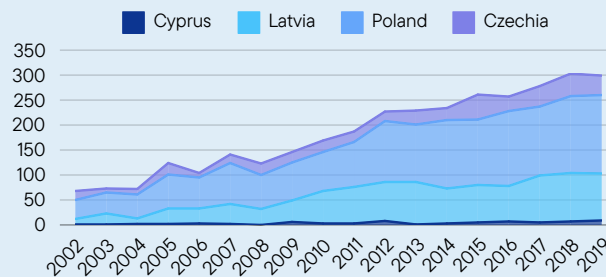
Evolution of labour force coming from new EU member states
(Immigration to Finland - Persons with foreign background, born abroad) ⁴



The data reveals a gradual increase in the presence of foreign students from **Cyprus, Latvia, Poland, and Czechia** in Finland between 2002 and 2019, particularly after the 2004 EU enlargement. The accession facilitated student mobility through initiatives like Erasmus, enabling easier access to Finnish higher education. While overall numbers remained modest, Polish and Latvian students demonstrated consistent growth, with Polish students increasing from 38 in 2002 to 157 in 2019, reaching a peak percentage of 0.06% of all foreign students in 2019. Latvian students rose from 11 in 2002 to 94 in 2019, peaking at 0.04% of foreign students.



Foreign students studying in the country



Number of students from the "new" EU member states before 2004 and now

Cross border cooperation ⁶

The **Interreg Central Baltic** program (126.6 million euros) strengthened ties between **Finland, Sweden, Estonia, and Latvia**, focusing on shared challenges such as environmental sustainability and cross-border economic development. The **Interreg Baltic Sea Region** program (249.2 million euros) **expanded** these efforts to include **Poland, Lithuania**, and other Baltic Sea nations, supporting projects on clean shipping, renewable energy, and innovation. Broader initiatives like **Interreg Europe** (379 million euros) facilitated knowledge exchange across all EU member states, including the "new" ones, to improve regional policies. Complementing these efforts, programs such as **Interact**, **URBACT**, and **ESPN** provided platforms for governance, urban development, and spatial planning, further integrating Finland **with its new EU neighbors**.

European projects with new EU MS (selected examples of joint projects)

Name of the programme	Countries involved	EU funding (€)
Interreg Central Baltic	Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia	126,6 milj euro
Interreg Baltic Sea Region	Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Norway	249,2 milj euro
Interreg Europe	EU27, Norway, Switzerland	379 milj euro
Interact	EU27, Norway, Switzerland	45 milj euro
URBACT	EU27, Norway, Switzerland	80 milj euro
ESPN	EU27, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland	48 milj euro

Sources

- [1] Eurostat, “Purchasing power adjusted GDP per capita.” https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_10_10/default/table?lang=en. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2908/SDG_10_10. Last accessed: 31 January 2025.
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- [3] Customs, “ULJAS - Foreign trade statistics on goods.” <https://uljas.tulli.fi/v3rti/>. Last accessed: 31 January 2025.
- [4] Statistics Finland, “Immigration and emigration by nationality, origin and language, 1990-2022.” https://pxdata.stat.fi/PxWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin_muutl/statfin_muutl_pxt_11a8.px/. Last accessed: 31 January 2025.
- [5] Statistics Finland, “Students and qualifications in post-comprehensive education leading to a qualification by nationality, gender, sector of education, field of education and level of education, 2002-2019.” https://pxdata.stat.fi/PxWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/Passiivi/StatFin_Passiivi_opiskt/. Last accessed: 31 January 2025.
- [6] Kuntaliitto, Alueellisen yhteistyön ohjelmat. <https://www.kuntaliitto.fi/laki/eu-ja-kansainvalisyys/eu-rahoitustietoakunnille/alueellisen-yhteistyon-ohjelmat>. Last accessed: 31 January 2025.