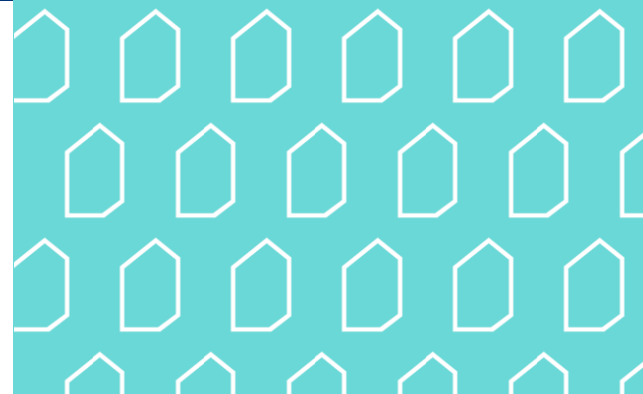


Data exchange between Finnish & Estonian population registers

Workshop 13th October 2022
Helsinki & online



**DIGITAL AND
POPULATION DATA
SERVICES AGENCY**



New agreement!

- The Finnish and Estonian governments signed an inter-state agreement on exchange of population data on 21st September 2022
- Now off for ratification in both countries
 - Coming into force expected during Spring 2023
- After ratification, **1 year** until first data exchange services must be live



How have we come here?

- The history goes way back – to the **Nordic** cooperation
- After WWII, the first Inter-Nordic agreements were made
 - Passport union – no passport controls at borders – in the 1950s
 - **Agreement on population registration, 1960s**
 - and many more...



The Nordic agreement

- When migrating between Nordic countries, the country of arrival decides, whether you are registered with "permanent residence"
 - SE: folkbokförd
 - NO: bosatt
 - FI: hemkommun
 - DK: bopæl
- Renewed in 1989 and 2004
- Electronic data exchange since 1.1.2007
 - Info from **country of arrival** to **country of departure**, that permanent residence has been granted
 - Certain population data sent from **country of departure** to **country of arrival** → no need to transport birth/marriage/etc. certificates



1990s – Baltic liberation

- 1991 Estonian independence reinstated
- New population registry was built
 - Close cooperation with Finnish Population Register Centre
 - Many common solutions
- Estonia's situation in the 2000s very similar to Finland's in the 1960s
 - 1960s: Many moving to work from Finland to Sweden
 - 2000s: Many Estonians working in Finland
- Estonia interested in data exchange with nearby countries
 - E.g. interest in joining the inter-Nordic agreement



Administrative agreement in 2005

- The Estonian way of registering residence and address was too different from the Nordic
- Finland and Estonia continued negotiations on a bilateral agreement
- The result: **Agreement on data exchange** on Estonian citizens living in Finland and Finnish citizens living in Estonia
 - Initial exchange of all data of these citizens
 - After this, updates (info on changes) can be requested regularly
- Agreement not between governments but between agencies
 - Data exchange based on mandates in national legislation



Problems?

- In practice, data exchange turned out one-sided
- Estonia: utilises data from Finland for direct and automated updates of population register
 - Need for citizens to send updates to Estonia much diminished
- Finland: cannot update their population register based on info from Estonia
 - Due to legislation, addresses cannot be updated → The manual work of reaching out to the individual made updates from Estonia non-essential
 - For similar reasons, other data could also not be registered automatically
→ No resources for manual updates



Solution?

- In 2015, Finland proposed negotiations on new agreements that would address these flaws
- Proposal included an inter-state agreement resembling the inter-Nordic agreement, which would give Finland the necessary legal base for updating addresses
- Estonia, again, was especially interested in increasing frequency of updates on their citizens living in Finland



Negotiation process

- Initial negotiations started in with two agreement drafts:
 - Inter-government agreement (\approx Nordic agreement)
 - Inter-agency agreement (\approx 2005 agreement, but with more data)
- Negotiations led by Finnish Ministry for Finance and Estonian Ministry of the Interior
 - First round Summer 2016 to Spring 2018, when first draft sent for national consultations (Swedish: “remiss”) in both countries
 - Second round in 2020, second draft for national consultations
 - Third round in 2021–2022, when agreed to merge agreements into one → third national consultations
- During negotiations, consultations with Ministry of Justice (data protection) and Ministry for Foreign Affairs (international law, protocol)



The signed agreement

- Two separate data exchanges in one agreement
 - 1) Data exchange when migrating between countries (any citizen), cf. Nordic agreement
 - 2) Continuous data exchange on citizens living in the other country (only Finnish/Estonian citizens), cf. 2005 agreement
- Additionally: rules for determining country of residence for persons with "double residence" (both FI and EE)
 - And the procedure to find these persons in the register



So what now?

- National consultations (4th round!)
 - Then government bills to each country's parliament
- When both countries have ratified the agreement, it comes into force in approx. 1–2 months, probably in Spring 2023
- Technical discussions on implementation have started (already before signing)
 - In best case scenario, developed technical solutions will be useful also for handling Nordic migrations
- When new data exchange in place, old agreement to be terminated

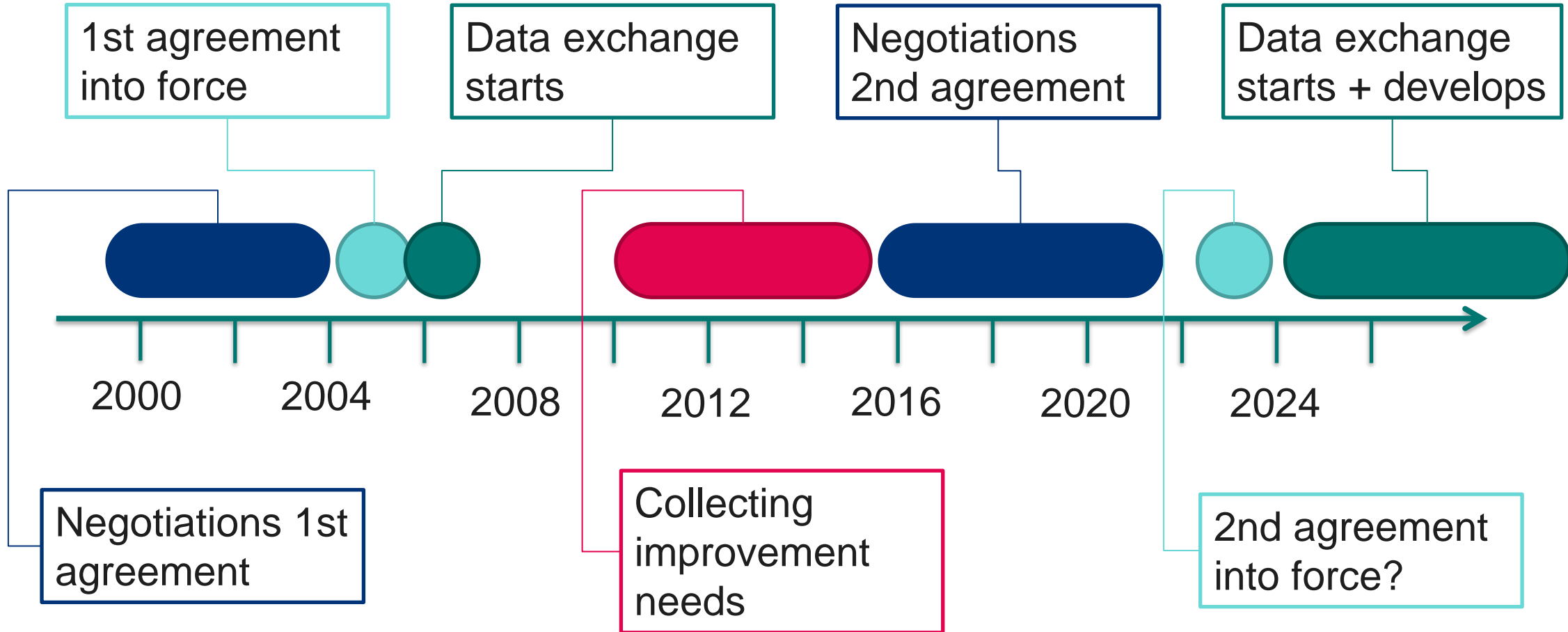


When will actual data exchange start?

- **Continuous data exchange** to start within a year from entry into force
 - H1/2024?
 - In 1st phase, only data on deceased
 - Otherwise, schedule left open for the population register authorities to decide together
- Start of **migration data exchange** also left open
 - Probably 2024 at the earliest



Overall timeline



Happy ending?

- Could any aspects of the FI–EE agreement be useful in a larger Nordic(-Baltic) context?
 - The idea of continuous data exchange?
 - The procedure to resolve ”double registrations”?
- Is there a need to further develop FI–EE data exchange?
- Is there interest for this on EU level?

- Let’s see!



Key takeaways

- Good example of how lengthy a process can be, even if both parties want the data exchange!
 - Legal details
 - Different understanding of EU legislation
 - When do we have the resources (money, staff)?
 - Understanding each others national practices and processes
- Remember:
 - Take technical people into the negotiations at early stage
 - Make sure to consult with all relevant agencies and ministries (not only your own ministry!)
 - No panic, if the first result isn't perfect – try, try, try again!



Questions?

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