

Declaration of Ministers of Justice on more effective transfer of prisoners between Finland and Estonia

The strategic partnership between Finland and Estonia is given greater depth by the natural, close and well-functioning cooperation of our neighbouring countries. This cooperation is characterized by daily commuting across the Gulf of Finland, as well as active cross-border residence and entrepreneurship. To promote dynamic interaction and ensure security between our countries, including the prevention of crime, efficient legal cooperation between our countries is of particular importance.

The effective transfer of prisoners to their home countries for the continued enforcement of their sentences is one of the areas of legal cooperation that we, the Ministers of Justice of Finland and Estonia consider to be of particular importance. Our common goal is to promote the transfer of prisoners to prisons in their home countries.

The transfer of prisoners between our countries is governed by EU legislation (2008/909/JHA), which nevertheless allows for a degree of national discretion. In practice, transfers of prisoners can take a long time, and all potential transfers between our countries cannot be carried out.

To improve cooperation on the transfer of prisoners, we, Finnish Minister of Justice Leena Meri and Estonian Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs Liisa-Ly Pakosta, have agreed to:

further advance concrete measures including, among others, securing that all Estonian prisoners in Finnish prisons and Finnish prisoners in Estonian prisons are made aware of their right to be transferred to their EU country of nationality, habitual residence or another EU country with which they have close ties, as well as to explore how to better prioritize transfers between Finland and Estonia and identify other practical obstacles or reasons for delay in transfers.

intensify cooperation between the prison services of the two countries to strengthen prison work and the internal security of our countries.

instruct responsible national authorities to take the necessary measures to increase the efficiency of the transfer of prisoners between our countries.

draft a Memorandum of Understanding between our Ministries to identify and eliminate, within the EU Framework Decision (2008/909/JHA) on transfer of sentenced persons, obstacles for transfer of prisoners between Finland and Estonia, in order to increase efficiency of transfers. The follow-up of the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding may then be done at the expert level.

Tallinn, January 13, 2026

Leena Meri
Minister of Justice of Finland

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Minister of Justice and Digital Affairs of
Estonia