

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-005020/25
to the Commission
Merja Kyllönen (The Left)
(18 December 2025)**

Subject: Is the Finnish Government failing to comply with the EU Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU) by proposing to impose annual tuition fees on international students?

The Finnish Government has acknowledged that international upper secondary school students fall within the scope of the above-mentioned directive, which prevents the levying of tuition fees on those students. The government is nevertheless proposing that students from non-EU/EEA countries who are enrolled in upper secondary education and vocational training should be required to pay a fee, citing economics and children's interests as the grounds for its proposal.

If the proposal is adopted, all Member States will be able to circumvent the right to education guaranteed by the directive, making unequal treatment part of the conditions applicable to persons covered by the directive. This would undermine the objectives of the directive and its effective implementation, and would be at odds with the principles of EU law. Furthermore, education and training providers would no longer receive state subsidies for the students concerned.

The Finnish Government's proposal is therefore at odds with:

1. Article 12(1)(c) of the EU Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU);
2. Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 2 of Protocol No 1 thereto;
3. sections 6(2), 16(2) and 22 of the Constitution of Finland (731/1999);
4. Article 52 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, read in conjunction with Articles 7 and 8 and Article 5(1) of the Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679).

Is the Finnish Government failing to comply with the EU Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU) by proposing to impose annual tuition fees on international students?

Submitted: 18.12.2025

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(27 March 2026)**

Directive 2011/98/EU (the 'Single Permit Directive') ⁽¹⁾ provides a right to equal treatment to third-country workers and third-country nationals admitted for purposes other than work and who are authorised to work.

This applies in a number of areas, including education and vocational training. Those provisions apply once the person concerned has been admitted, as the Single Permit Directive does not harmonise admission conditions. However, the Single Permit Directive does not apply to international upper secondary school students.

The Commission takes note of the law proposed by the Finnish government as referred to by the Honourable Member and will take contacts with the competent Finnish authorities at services' level to ask for clarifications.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2011/98/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State (OJ L 343, 23.12.2011, p. 1).