



# FINNISH POLICE CUSTOMS AND BORDER GUARD PRESS RELEASE

Media, travel agents

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## **Finnish authorities highlight importance of appropriate travel documentation**

**Following full implementation of the Schengen Convention by the Baltic states, passengers at ports in Helsinki have been found to be crossing internal Schengen borders without a passport or new-style Finnish ID card. The crossing of internal borders without appropriate travel documentation is a criminal offence and may lead to travel being interrupted.**

Border controls at land and sea borders, including ferry travel between Finland and Estonia, were abolished following the Baltic states' accession to the Schengen area. Under EU legislation, however, passengers continue to be required to carry the necessary travel documentation (passport or new-style Finnish ID card). Border controls at airports will be lifted on 30 March 2008.

Non-Finnish citizens attempting to enter the country without appropriate documentation may be refused entry. Entry or attempted entry to Finland without appropriate documentation is punishable by a fine or imprisonment for up to one year (under Ch. 17 S. 7 and S. 7a of the Finnish Penal Code). These provisions do not apply to those refused entry.

Within the Schengen area, there are generally no identification checks at the internal borders. The Finnish Police, Customs and Border Guard continue to perform targeted internal border controls in conjunction with immigration control, customs control and public order and safety functions. As a result, travellers may be requested to present travel documentation when moving between Schengen states.

Nordic citizens travelling directly between the Nordic countries are not required to carry travel documentation. However, this exemption does not apply to, for example, Estonian citizens travelling between Helsinki and Stockholm.