

Aland

Overview:

Åland (Åland (Swedish), Ahvenanmaa (Finnish) The Åland Islands, called the 'Land of Streams' in Finnish, is an archipelago of approximately 6,500 islands. More than 90 percent of its 25,000 plus inhabitants and a majority of the 16 designated communities live on the largest island, Åland, where its only city capital, Mariehamn, is located. Though politically a province of Finland, the islands are demilitarized, unilingually Swedish, and possess a semi-autonomous relationship to Finland as a result of a formal declaration by the League of Nations in 1921, later ingrained in the Finnish Autonomy Act (the Autonomy Act) providing jurisdictional powers to the Åland government.

Territory:

6,757 islands (larger than 0.25 hectare), of which around 60 are inhabited. Land area: 1,527 sq km Water: 11,820 sq km Total: 13,517 sq km Highest Point: Orrdalsklint, 129 m above sea level.

Location:

Situated at the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia in the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Finland.

Latitude and Longitude:

60 20 N, 19 88 E

Time Zone:

GMT +2

Total Land Area:

1527

EEZ:

0

Climate:

Average daily temperature July: 18.5 degrees Celsius. February: 0.5 degrees Celsius.

Natural Resources:

rich but limited farm and grazing lands

ECONOMY:

Total GDP:	
2001	1,160,000,000.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
2002	34,675.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2001	3.5%	62.1%	17%

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2001	5.5%	37.7%	44%
2005	5.1%	16.5%	75.8%

External Aid/Remittances:

Subsidies (via Finland) amounted to 38 Million Euros, out of a GDP of 963 Million Euros in 2004

Growth:

n/a

Labour Force:	
2003	13,107

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
2003	1.3%
2005	2.3%

Industry:

Shipping (Ferry service), tourism, financial services. Åland's GDP and economy is dominated by the shipping industry, both freight or person/car ferry. Much of the Baltic is serviced by the Åland shipping industry. The food industry is the largest land-based industry in Åland.

Niche Industry:

Åland's economy is dominated by the service sector, particularly the maritime industry such as shipping and ferry service, which accounts for 40 percent of the GDP.

Tourism:

Arose from strong shipping and ferry services industry; tourism industry based largely on the duty free items purchased on the ferry services.

Imports and Exports:	
Tot. Value of Imports	0.00 ()
From Eu:	
Import Partners (EU:)	
Partners Outside EU:	
Import Partners:	
Tot. Value of Exports	()
To Eu:	
Export Partners:	
Partners Outside EU::	
Export Partners:	
Main Imports:	
Main Exports:	

TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS**External:**

Number of Airports:

Number of Main Ports:

Internal:**Air**

Although ferries are the dominating form of transport to Åland, there are also flights between Mariehamn and the Swedish and Finnish mainlands.

Road:

Despite its relatively small size, there are 912 km of public roads in Åland.

Sea:

Because of Åland's geographical location, the local economy and resident population are very dependent on good communications. In wintertime, 20 ferries depart from Åland to Sweden and the Finnish mainland every day, the number almost doubling in summertime. As of spring 2004, also service to Estonia. Locally, the archipelago is served by publicly owned regional ferries which depart several times a day.

Other Forms of Transportation:**Economic Zones:**

n/a

Energy Policy:

n/a

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector				
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)
2005	23	0	19	4	267	0	0	0	0	0

Official Currency:

Euro / Swedish Crown also used

Banking and Insurance:

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:

Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:

Number of Insurance Companies:

The Bank of Åland Plc is a Finnish commercial Bank listed on the Helsinki Stock Exchange (HEX). Established in 1919, the Bank offers services from 20 branches in the Åland Islands and 8 branches in the Finnish mainland cities of Helsinki, Espoo/Tapiola, Turku, Parainen, Tampere and Vaasa. The Head Office is in Mariehamn, in the Åland Islands.

Financial Services:

In addition to the customary banking services such as loans and retail banking, the Bank of Åland offers its customers a wide range of savings and investment services. The Bank is an authorized stockbroker on the Helsinki Stock Exchange and has a wide network of banks with which it cooperates. The Bank also acts as an agent for insurance and investment products offered by internationally respected issuers.

Communications/E-Commerce:

open and outward. Economic data is widely available from both public and private websites and publications.

Public Ownership:

Under the Act of Autonomy, the Right to Domicile deals with land ownership, voting rights, and conducting business on Åland. The limitation to own or to be in possession of real property was introduced to ensure that the land would remain in the hands of Åland islands. Right of domicile is acquired at birth if it is possessed by either parent. Immigrants who have lived in Åland for five years and have an adequate knowledge of Swedish may apply for the status, provided they are Finnish citizens. The Åland Government can, occasionally, grant exemptions from the requirement of right of domicile for those wishing to acquire real property or conduct a business in Åland. Those who have enterprises outside Åland for more than five years lose their right of domicile.

Land Use:

arable land 9% pasture 4% forest 58% other land 29%

Agriculture/Forestry:

Most of Åland's farms are very small. About one third of the roughly 700 farms have only 10–20 hectares of farmland, but agriculture is an important industry for the population outside Mariehamn. Åland farmers have a lot of experience and a long tradition of cultivating special crops such as sugar beets, onions, apples and potatoes. The growing season lasts from May to October. Public demand for clean agricultural products is growing, and in 2001 almost 10 per cent of all farmland in Åland was used for organic farming. The food industry is the largest land-based industry in Åland.

Marine Activity:

Fishing:

Marine Life:

Critical Issues:

small population, unstable population base.

JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES

Capital:

Mariehamn

Political System:

The Åland government has a unicameral parliamentary system. The Åland parliament is called the Lagting, which is elected by a secret proportional ballot of all persons over the age of 18 possessing Åland citizenship. The Lagting appoints the Landskapsstyrelse, Åland's government. Laws passed by the Lagting are submitted to the President of Finland, who may impose his/her veto. Rules on the autonomy and jurisdiction of Åland are contained in the Act of Autonomy of Åland, which can only be altered by the Parliament of Finland in constitutional order and with consent of the Åland Lagting. The current Autonomy Act came into force on 1 January, 1993. The Autonomy Act gives Åland jurisdiction the legislate in the following areas: education, culture and preservation of ancient monuments health and medical services promotion of industry internal communications municipal administration the police service the postal service radio and television In those areas in which the Åland government does not have legislative control, the Finnish government has authority. These areas include foreign affairs, most areas of civil and criminal law, the court system, customs, and state taxation. To ensure that the best interest of Åland is taken into consideration, Åland elects a Member of Parliament (MP) to the Finnish Parliament.

Political Parties:

Åland Centre, Liberals of Åland, Åland Social Democrats, Moderates, Independents, Åland Future, Åland Progressive Group

Important Legislation:

The Act of Autonomy, adopted in 1922, amended in 1951 and 1993, grants the Åland government jurisdiction over a wide range of governance. In short, this act gives the Åland government the authority to pass laws in areas relating to internal affairs of the region and to exercise budgetary power. Right of Domicile is a requirement for the right for Åland citizens to vote and stand for election in elections to the Parliament, own and or be in possession of real property in Åland, and conduct a business in Åland. The limitation in the right to own or be in possession of real property was introduced to ensure that the land would remain in the hands of the local population. It does not prevent people from settling in the Åland Islands. Right of domicile is acquired at birth if it is possessed by either parent. Immigrants who have lived in Åland for five years and have an adequate knowledge of Swedish may apply for the status, provided they are Finnish citizens. The Åland Government can, occasionally, grant exemptions from the requirement of right of domicile for those wishing to acquire real property or conduct a business in Åland. Those who have lived outside Åland for more than five years lose their right of domicile.

Principal Taxes:

Åland is tax free zone.

Associated Power:

Republic of Finland

Citizenship:

Both Åland or Finnish. Under Åland's autonomy act and the right to domicile act, Åland citizenship can be obtained after satisfying due residence and language provisions.

Paradiplomacy:

Åland has negotiated its own treaty with the EU, separate from that of the treaty entered in by Finland in 1995. Additionally, Since 1970, Åland has had its own representation in the Nordic Council. The Parliament of Åland appoints two representatives to the Council, who together with the representatives appointed by the Åland Government, form Ålandic delegation to the Nordic Council. The Åland Government also participates in the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
	1,527	26,347	%

Population:

Year	Resident Population
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Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
2003	17	0	0	0	16

Migration:

Net Migration (2003): Number per/1000 Immigration 766 29.1 Emigration 667 25.4 Net Migration 99 3.8

Crude Birth Rate:

2003	10%
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Life Expecltancy:

Life Expectancy (2002): Females 84.4 Males 79.2 Total 81.8 Death Rate (2003): 268 deaths, 10.2 per 1000

Crude Death Rate:

2003	10.2%
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Ethnicity:

(2003) Å...land 70.7 Finland 20.2 Sweden 5.9 Other 3.2

Class Division:

n/a

Languages:

Swedish 92.9 Finnish 4.9 Other 2.1

Religion:

2003 Lutheran National Church 91.0 Other communities 0.4 Non-affiliated 8.6

Literacy:

99% (Finland)

Education System:

Å...land has complete control over its education system. The language of instruction in all local schools is Swedish. The nine year school system, run by the municipalities also requires English instruction, as well as the optional Finnish, French, and German. Secondary schools throughout the archipelago keep the Å...land students in their home parish until the end of their statutory period of study. Å...land provides college/upper secondary-level education in shipping, commerce, tourism, medicare, domestic economy, technology and farming at its own college of higher education called the Å...land Polytechnic which offers vocational degrees. An exam for Å...lands lyceum, a school offering three-year theoretical courses, prepares students for university studies.

Total Pre-schools:()	
Total Primary Schools	
First Level:	24
Second Level:	9
Third Level:	1
Total Secondary Schools:	9
Total Professional Schools	0
Universities:	0

Number of Schools per Island:

	Pre-school		Elementary			High-school		Prof.	University	
	Pub	Priv	1	2	3	Pub	Priv		Pub	Priv



Students Enrolled:					
Year:	Pre-School	Elementary	High-school	Prof.	University
2005	0	1,989	1,069	0	0

Teachers							
Year	Pre-School	Elementary			High-School	Prof.	University
		1	2	3			

Most Å...landers who pursue university level studies leave Å...land to attend university in Sweden and Finland.

Medical Services:

One Hospital in Å...land is called the Å...lands centralsjukhus/General hospital with 107 beds. There is also a Grelsby sjukhus/Mental hospital with 37 beds. Free medical services for everyone in Å...land.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

History:

Inhabited from prehistoric times, the island's original inhabitants were absorbed by Fins migrating from the east in the eighth century A.D. More than 11,000 old graves and dwelling sites show evidence of inhabitation in the Å...land Islands during the Stone and Bronze Ages. In 1154, the Swedes launched a crusade to Christianize and control the pagan Finns, and the Å...land Islands were colonized by the triumphant Swedes, becoming thoroughly Swedish in culture and language and remained an integral part of the Swedish kingdom for over 600 years. Due to its strategic importance location, the Å...land Islands were contested between Sweden and Russia during the eighteenth-century wars for supremacy in the north. In 1809, along with Swedish Finland, the Å...land Islands were ceded to the Russian Empire. The Russians fortified the islands which remained the centre of international disputes and treaties through much of the next century. The fortifications were destroyed in heavy siege by the Anglo-French fleet in 1854, during the Crimean War. Under the terms of the 1856 Treaty of Paris, the islands were demilitarized. Affected by the wave of nationalist sentiment that swept Europe in the late nineteenth century, coupled with a dissatisfaction with the repressive and unpopular Russian bureaucracy, the Å...landers developed a particular self-awareness. With the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Å...land's strategic military importance was again emphasized. With British and French consent, the Russians refortified the islands in 1915, which led to the growth of nationalism and pro-Swedish sentiment during the war. After the First World War, Finland declared independence from the crumbled Russian empire in 1917 and claimed the islands as part of its national territory. However, the Å...landers asserted their right to self-determination and voted to secede from Finland and to unite with Sweden, whom supported the idea. This conflict over the islands almost resulted in war between the two countries in 1920. The League of Nations stepped in and decided in Finland's favour in 1921. Under the League decision, Finland was to provide Å...land with autonomy within the Finnish state, later ingrained in the Act of Autonomy in 1922, and subsequently updated in 1951 and 1993. The Act of Autonomy gives the Å...land government jurisdiction over all internal affairs and budgetary powers, with Finland having control over national defense and foreign affairs. On 1 January 1995 Å...land became a member of the EU. This was preceded by a regional referendum in which 74 per cent voted Yes. The Legislative Assembly then gave its consent to the accession. In its membership negotiations, Finland managed to secure a number of special exemptions for Å...land. These are laid down in the "Å...land Protocol," are aimed at safeguarding Å...land's autonomy and sources of livelihood. The requirement of the right of domicile for the ownership of land and conduct of business will continue to apply. Å...land will also remain outside the EU's fiscal union, and the Union's directives on indirect taxation will not apply in Å...land. These exemptions were necessary to safeguard the future of Å...land's ferry industry, and with that the communications to and from the islands. Å...land has one representative in the Committee of the Regions and a counselor at the Permanent Representation of Finland to the EU in Brussels.

Referenda:

EU referendum for Å...land, November 20, 1994, per cent Participation 49.1 Yes-votes 73.6 No-votes 26.4

Recent Significant Events:

n/a

Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

Sources:

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Åland in Brief <http://www.asub.ax/files/alsiff06EN.pdf> 25th January 2008

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