

National report for Finland – June 2016

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Country Finland
Organisation Suomen Rautatiematkustajat ry, <http://www.rautatiematkustajat.fi/>
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Positive points for public transport in our country:

1. The discount campaign started by VR in February¹ has increased sales by 250.000 new tickets² (however, see negative point two).
2. The first phase of Helsinki – Riihimäki railway line improvement starts. There will be a new four track section with local services separated from long distance and freight services.³
3. There will be some railway station reopenings like Kempele⁴, Henna⁵ and Härmä⁶ as a result of successful lobbying or Government orders (subsidized services).
4. Helsinki Regional Transport Authority (HRT) started a shared-use bike service.⁷
5. Tampere light rail⁸ and Raide-Jokeri⁹ light rail between Helsinki and Espoo will receive government funding.

Negative points for public transport in our country:

1. The Supreme Administrative Court declared appeals inadmissible¹⁰ regarding train stops in Haukivuori¹¹. It took "only" 18 months for the court to tell that the Ministry of Transport and Communications had acted incorrectly by attaching appeal instructions to the original decision.
2. VR is cutting further its market-oriented services as well as station stops also on heavily used lines (this "reform" is marketed as faster connections¹²). Personnel will also be sacked.¹³ This is very paradoxical as long-awaited and expensive capacity enhancements are "rewarded" with fewer train services.¹⁴
3. VR extended its contract with HRT until 2021.¹⁵ So, the revision of VR passenger monopoly starts from market-oriented services and tendered services elsewhere.
4. As the State reduced its subsidized train service grants, some municipalities have started paying for rail services.
5. Timetable for the revision of VR monopoly prolongs itself and it is very much possible that there will be turmoil and intrigues "along the line".
6. In the pursuit of faster speeds, more than 100 "forgotten" speed limits were discovered on the rail network¹⁶. No rail lines have been missing so far ;-).

NOTE: If this report and links are not informative enough, ask further details from us.

¹ <http://www.vrgroup.fi/en/vrgroup/newsroom/news/vr-introduces-new-permanently-lower-fares-160220160905/>

² <http://www.aamulehti.fi/kotimaa/250-000-lipun-myyntipiikki-vrn-lippualue-kasvatti-junamatkustajien-maaraa-reippaasti/>

³ <http://www.liikennevirasto.fi/-/helsinki-riihimaki-radan-valityskyky-parantavan-hankkeen-1-vaihe-kaynnistymassa#.V0v96pGLTIV>, <http://www.liikennevirasto.fi/helsinki-riihimaki#.V0v-35GLTIU>

⁴ <http://yle.fi/uutiset/kempeleen-rautatieasema-heraa-henkiin-junat-pysahtyvat-aseamalla-206-alkaen/8864138>

⁵ <http://www.ess.fi/uutiset/paijathame/2015/12/07/ministerio-velvoitti-lahijunien-pysahdyksen-hennaan-kunhan-asema-valmistuu>

⁶ <http://yle.fi/uutiset/pohjalaiset-lobbarit-saivat-jopa-vrn-taipumaan-harman-asema-heratetaan-henkiin/8762407?origin=rss>

⁷ <https://www.hsl.fi/en/citybikes>

⁸ <http://www.railjournal.com/index.php/light-rail/tampere-light-rail-funding-agreed.html>

⁹ <http://www.railjournal.com/index.php/light-rail/finnish-government-backs-helsinki-espoo-lrt.html>

¹⁰ http://www.rautatiematkustajat.fi/haukivuori/KHO_Haukivuori_2016_01_15.pdf

¹¹ http://www.rautatiematkustajat.fi/NatrepFIN_10_214.pdf

¹² <http://www.vrgroup.fi/en/vrgroup/newsroom/news/new-rapid-train-connections-in-finland-save-passengers-time--020520161100/>

¹³ http://m.iltalehti.fi/uutiset/201603300094256_uu.shtml

¹⁴ http://www.dfhk.fi/fileadmin/ahk_finnland/Reden/Paukkeri.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.hsl.fi/en/news/2016/hsl-preparing-tender-commuter-train-services-transitional-agreement-concluded-vr-8069>

¹⁶ <http://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/junia-ajatettu-vahingossa-liian-hitaasti/724128/>