

National report for Finland 1 / 2018 (no secrets)

Date	6.4.2018 (time frame January – March 2018)
Country	Finland
Organisation	Suomen Rautatiematkustajat ry, http://www.rautatiematkustajat.fi/
Name	Kalevi Kämäräinen

Positive points for public transport:

1. Recently suspended train services were further **reintroduced** in March (VR propaganda “selling” them as new services was bought almost 100 per cent by the media).
2. Although being mentally rural backwater, business opportunities lure foreign firms. For example, Swedish tram operator Stockholms Spårvägar is interested in operating the trams of Tampere (traffic should start in 2021).¹
3. Sweden and Finland **are co-operating** in order to have the **Bothnian Corridor** included in the TEN-T network.
4. A missing ticket automat for HSL trains was installed on platform level at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport Station in March (train services started in December 2016).²
5. HSL will receive a **27 million euro discount** for train services operated by VR.
6. **Tendering** HSL train services will commence.
7. A “private” firm (one of our museum operators³, that is) will run some Panda specials⁴ to **Ähtäri zoo** in May. VR also runs a regular skeleton service via Ähtäri, but those timetables don’t suit day-time visitors’ needs.

Negative points for public transport:

1. As **forecast**, Helsinki Metro and its **Western extension** has **problems** almost daily⁵ (also because drivers are resigning) and people in many **places** suffer. For example, in Haukilahti (10 kilometres to Helsinki City Centre) travel times have increased in average of 25 minutes.⁶ Completion of the next phase to Kivenlahti will also be postponed to 2024 instead of 2020 and the estimated cost overrun is now 400 million euros.⁷
2. More train services were slowed down in March. Although of temporary nature (track-works), a negative point, as long as it lasts.
3. Helsinki tram drivers **quit selling tickets** in February (can be weighed positively too).
4. A new **rail rebellion** is emerging in **Hämeenlinna**. People are unhappy with more long-haul trains just passing by although some local services have been added.⁸ Number of passengers has also dwindled from 1.000.000 to some 800.000. Results? We’ll see.
5. A union boss once again proved, that they do not represent the travelling public even if they sometimes say so (another fresh testimony was the train strike as response to Government message of opening the passenger rail sector to competition). This time, while worried about the conductors’ fate **in the HSL area** (see our **previous** report), he proposes they will be granted the right to give penalty fares to passengers without ticket. One would assume that selling tickets would be a more natural choice⁹.
6. Different Government Ministries might be at loggerheads with the opening of passenger traffic. It is said that the **Prime Minister's Office** opposes splitting VR to four companies because it is against the interest of VR(!)¹⁰.

NOTE: Further details provided per request.

¹ https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10133948?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=y-leuutiset&utm_medium=social

² <https://www.helsinginuuutiset.fi/artikkeli/621975-puuttuva-lippuautomaatti-arsyttaa-lentoasemalla-ensiapua-saadaan-vihdoin#.WrdnnKLTHI4.twitter>

³ <https://www.keitelemuseo.fi/>

⁴ <http://aksa.fi/keitelemuseo-jarjestaa-pandajunan-ahtariin-toukokuussa/>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10156076564213151&set=gm.1724447877606749&type=3&theater&ifg=1> (“Are you going to Lapland?” “No, I’m trying to take the Metro to Matinkylä.”)

⁶ <https://www.lansivayla.fi/artikkeli/621854-haukilahtelaisilta-murskatulos-metrosta-etaisyys-10-kilometria-matka-aika-piteni>

⁷ <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10097227>

⁸ <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10132007>

⁹ <https://motiivilahti.fi/lehti/artikkeli/hsl-kilpailuttaa-lahiliikenteen-kuinka-kay-konduktoorien/>

¹⁰ <https://vrleaks.wordpress.com/2018/03/28/a28032018/>