

National report for Finland 2 / 2018 (no secrets)

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Positive points for public transport:

1. Thirty long-distance rail services were introduced in August¹. Night train frequency to Kolari has also been increased².
2. HSL approved **seven bidders** in their tendering process in August: VR Group Oy (Finland, incumbent), SJ AB, Arriva Sverige AB, MTR Nordic AB, Transdev Sverige AB (Sweden), First Rail Holdings Ltd. and The Go-Ahead Group plc (Great Britain). Services should start in June 2021. Meanwhile, opening the services elsewhere in the country **is also proceeding**.
3. VR returned pdf-timetables after months' long break and public outcry³.
4. Some direct bus lines will be reintroduced between Espoo and Helsinki because the Western metro has lengthened many passengers' travel times⁴. Tighter frequencies were also tried there but the results are still under analysis⁵.
5. A new tram line between Pasila and Kalasatama will be constructed in Helsinki⁶.
6. Increased ticket inspections have reduced the number of fare dodgers in Helsinki region⁷.
7. The new art station building in Iittala proves that sometimes even bureaucrats can surprise you in a positive way⁸.
8. VR is renewing its ticket sales system (positive point, if they really make it "from flop ten to top ten")⁹. New ticket types are also being tested. A group of five persons (a family or just friends) can travel for 29 euros in Helsinki region commuter trains between Helsinki and Tampere and Lahti for a day. Trial period ends in September¹⁰.
9. **National Non-Discrimination and Equality Tribunal** reprimanded VR for discriminating against a disabled person (a train service had been replaced by a bus with no access to wheelchairs)¹¹. As it happens, VR started to use the **EU Disability Card** at about the same time¹².
10. **Finnish Transport Agency** has published its station area regeneration guidelines¹³.
11. The record hot summer lead to record-high sales of (non-alcoholic) drinks in VR restaurant cars (good for the business and the thirsty passengers)¹⁴.
12. **The Ministry of Finance** proposes to accelerate the rail service between Helsinki and Tampere in its budget. The mandarins want the 187-kilometre trip done in less than an hour with conventional rolling stock (nowadays it may last between about 90 and

¹ <http://www.vrgroup.fi/fi/vrgroup/uutishuone/uutiset-ja-tiedotteet/kaukoliikenteeseen-30-uutta-junavuoroa-elokuusta-lahtien-110620181156/>

² <http://www.vrgroup.fi/fi/vrgroup/uutishuone/uutiset-ja-tiedotteet/vojuniin-pysyvasti-edullinen-saastolippu-vr-lisaa-vuoroja-kolariin-140620181228/>

³ <https://www.helsingin uutiset.fi/artikkeli/695579-vr-palauttaa-kaivatun-ominaisuuden-nettisivuilleen-kuukausien-poissaolon-jalkeen>

⁴ <https://www.lansivayla.fi/artikkeli/658649-hsl-palauttaa-osan-suorista-bussilinjoiosta-espoosta-kamppiin>

⁵ https://www.tekniikkatalous.fi/talous_uutiset/liikenne/alkaako-kansan-palaute-purra-torstaina-testataan-tiheampaa-metroluoketta-espoossa-6738330

⁶ <https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-200005718700.html?share=f0dd947c65fc20d59bb506a435d75ced>

⁷ <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10150524>

⁸ <http://linnan.fi/taideasema/>

⁹ https://www.kauppalehti.fi/uutiset/vr-laittaa-lipunmyyntijarjestelmansa-taas-uusiksi---tavoite-on-se--etta-paasemme-flop-kymppista-top-kymppiin/DGSzkiAT?_qa=2.3012339.291043590.1527775618-687558680.1520432633

¹⁰ <http://www.vrgroup.fi/fi/vrgroup/uutishuone/uutiset-ja-tiedotteet/vr-lahiliikenne-kokeilee-uutta-kiinteahintaista-kimppalippua-29-eurolla-matkustaa-porukalla-koko-paivan-280520180950/>

¹¹ <http://www.vrgroup.fi/fi/vrgroup/uutishuone/uutiset-ja-tiedotteet/vr-pahoittelee-vammaisiasiakkaan-syrjivaakohdelua-korvaavien-kuljetusten-ohjeistusta-paivitetty--050720180930/>

¹² <http://www.vrgroup.fi/fi/vrgroup/uutishuone/uutiset-ja-tiedotteet/vammaisiasiakkaiden-matkustus-helpottuu--eun-vammaiskortti-kayttoon-vrn-kauko--ja-lahijunissa-040620181109/>

¹³ https://julkaisut.liikennevirasto.fi/pdf8/lo_2018-18_liikenneviraston_toimintaperiaatteet_web.pdf

¹⁴ <https://www.talouselama.fi/uutiset/junamatkustajat-rynnivat-ravintolavaunuihin-kuumasta-kesasta-kaikkien-aikojen-myyntiennatys/ea2b03c8-427f-3843-9174-260b868912d5>

- 120 minutes)¹⁵.
13. An active rail passenger found a way to save some 20 per cent of his ticket price (the principle is general on routes where you must change trains). If you buy a ticket first to the junction and another from the junction to your destination, you'll make it¹⁶.
 14. HSL is planning to tender Helsinki tram services. The reaction of the municipal tram operator **HKL** is exactly the same with VR: an offer for longer deal with less money. Goes to tell that you can save money even if you only say the word "competition"¹⁷.

Negative points for public transport:

1. There have been less passengers on the Western metro than forecast¹⁸. It also seems that the line costs almost one billion more than forecast¹⁹. Passengers in Espoo are so unhappy that customer satisfaction has plummeted some 20 per cent²⁰. A complaint about the feeder bus services has also been filed to the [Parliamentary Ombudsman](#)²¹.
2. On the other hand, there have been so many more passengers on the national rail network that VR has been short of rolling stock. This is surely a positive problem, if the company had not made things worse by scrapping or letting passenger cars rot in the hands of vandals²².
3. [Rail rebellion in Hämeenlinna](#) has brought some results (see our previous report). VR has promised to add passenger cars to their trains which is an improvement according to city officials.²³
4. A [charter bus](#) plunged on rails after veering off a motorway exit at excessive speed resulting four deaths in Kuopio in August. Both the police and the Safety Investigation Authority are investigating.
5. Finland does not bode well with its rail projects compared with Sweden according to Finnish Broadcasting Corporation²⁴.
6. Cost estimate of the [Jokeri Light Rail](#) has risen from 275 to 355 million euros²⁵.
7. There were problems on the Kouvola to Kotka rail line, when services were replaced by buses because of track refurbishment. The replacement buses did not always show up, passengers had to advise the driver where to go while he made his own route choices huffing at passengers²⁶.
8. A journalist wrote about, how much more worthwhile it is to be late on an international flight than on a domestic train service. His view is that refunds and compensations should be on an equal basis regardless of the form of travel²⁷.
9. The content of the official "Matka"-timetable service was reduced in July. Bus services run on commercial basis were dropped from the system²⁸.

NOTE: Further details provided per request.

¹⁵ <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10343400>

¹⁶ https://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-2000005731899.html?utm_medium=social&utm_content=android.is.fi&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=fb-share

¹⁷ <https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005797948.html?share=b38cdc364de0eafe9ab875742a97b56f>

¹⁸ <https://www.lansivayla.fi/artikkeli/636332-lansimetrolle-karu-vaikutus-ei-veda-matkustajia-odotetusti-matkakorrtimyynti-jopa>

¹⁹ <https://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/art-2000005629436.html>

²⁰ <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10367063>

²¹ <https://www.lansivayla.fi/artikkeli/644012-lansimetron-liityntaliikenteesta-kantelu-eduskunnan-oikeusasiamiehelle-syrjii#.WuQJ0Oyy4lo.facebook>

²² https://www.is.fi/taloussanommat/art-2000005700378.html?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=fb-share&utm_medium=social&utm_content=android.iltasanomat.fi

²³ <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10209965>

²⁴ <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10347101>

²⁵ https://www.tekniikkatalous.fi/talous_uutiset/liikenne/raide-jokeri-maksaa-nykyarvioissa-jo-355-miljoonaa-kustannusarvio-lahes-kolmanneksen-alkuperasta-suurempi-6730901

²⁶ <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10345300>

²⁷ <https://www.hs.fi/mielipide/art-2000005782061.html>

²⁸ <https://www.liikennevirasto.fi/liikennejarjestelma/henkiloliikenne/joukkoliikenteen-palvelut/informaatiopalvelut/liikkujan-infopalvelut/tietoja-matka.fi-palvelusta#.W5nnqOgzZPb>