

National report for Finland 2 / 2019 (no secrets)

Date 9.1.2020 (time frame August 16 – December 31, 2019)
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Positive points for public transport:

1. A test train from St. Petersburg visited Imatra¹ in August. This should precede a permanent service someday (there have been such experiments even before). The Russian Revolution ended this established connection² which had peculiar features³.
2. VR introduced many new services in December⁴, but actually the number of trains has not increased over the years as services have been cut. Likewise, the “record number” of passengers is on the same level as in 2009⁵.
3. Regional train trials started in Tampere region, Seinäjoki region and between Kotka and Kouvola in December as planned. The routes had been selected on a competitive basis during the last months of reign of Minister Berner, before Minister Marin who soon changed over to be Prime Minister. The trial period should end in 2022⁶.
4. A man, who criticized VR’s seat reservation system in 2016 improved it while VR didn’t. This improvement eliminated Flash technique that has been considered a security risk⁷.
5. Prisoners’ travelling conditions have been improved after Parliamentary Ombudsman remarked VR and Criminal Sanctions Agency of deficiencies⁸.
6. British globetrotter Andy Brabin⁹ expressed mainly positive views on train travel in Finland during his latest trip¹⁰.
7. Train tickets for conscripts will be valid also on VR commuter services¹¹.
8. Child, student and pensioner discounts will be applied also on saver tickets¹².

Negative points for public transport:

1. It has been noticed that “the great picture” is missing in Finnish rail infrastructure investment policy. That “missing picture” means it is difficult to get EU funding to our projects. This is actually not surprising at all, while we have not had any long-term planning unlike Sweden, for example¹³. Funding has been applied also on false premises to dubious projects¹⁴, which has led to receiving only peanuts¹⁵.
2. You can’t buy long-distance train tickets with cash in trains and pay-automates any more¹⁶. An 80+ years old man learned this the hard way as an officious conductor was about to throw him out of a train. Only a friendly co-traveller prevented this by using his debit Card¹⁷.
3. Difficulties with purchasing a ticket: a commuter to Helsinki tried to buy a VR serial ticket on the web. The problem was she only received order confirmation but not the ticket itself. Finally she got no ticket, could not travel but got a refund anyway¹⁸.
4. Difficulties with purchasing a ticket: as a blind person could not book by phone, he tried to use the web. After two hours of trying he gave up. According to VR, it is “woefully difficult” for the blind to book tickets digitally¹⁹.
5. VR abandoned allergy compartments on trains²⁰.
6. Train punctuality varies very much. In January, only 58,4 per cent of the long distance services were on time (with a tolerance of five minutes), while the percentage was 87,2 in August and September²¹.

NOTE: For some reason hyperlink function is still out of order in my computer, so sources in Finnish and English are all in footnotes. Further details will be provided per request.

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imatra>

² https://www.imatra.fi/uutinen/2019-08-22_testijuna-saapuu-imatralle-pietarista-syyskuun-lopulla?fbclid=IwAR2uWqwh-J2QSNGoE0M7uLomnmkqs6OWd31ui_kX4tTxCGDg2V8gg1uyCQE

³ <https://steemit.com/longexposurephotography/@olega-friend777/imatra-finland-the-world-s-only-memorial-to-suicides>

- ⁴ https://www.vrgroup.fi/fi/vrgroup/uutishuone/uutiset-ja-tiedotteet/runsaasti-lisaa-vuoroja-joulukuussa---uudet-aikataulut-voimaan-15122019-270820190515/?fbclid=IwAR146RHDyOzz1QbV4yCobwJV_gYE-GPEFYr_INxINYFr8k_nhHm4-ZC0Lqw
- ⁵ <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11114931?fbclid=IwAR1WYjDI4RJ09V9HHix5S57o3gLqDliIjvRNffIK6u3q6OWbPOTpfkuF2L8>
- ⁶ <https://www.lvm.fi/-/kolme-hanketta-alueellisen-junaliikenteen-pilottien-jatkosuunnitteluun-996013>
- ⁷ <https://www.is.fi/digitoday/art-200006229280.html?ref=rss&fbclid=IwAR243V-WMhRoxZRAqIP7aDQomhr32tj4qqKKZ389wnZ4EvLYQQH8NsmAC0Vo>
- ⁸ https://www.iltalehti.fi/kotimaa/a/4dddc56c-05b3-46b6-9326-5934e6227a65?fbclid=IwAR2VrH9bZ3Nd0eouXQDwbTb0AIpV_Ai-urIiNGvDF41QJ6t2e-W8sf1CmuA
- ⁹ <http://discoverbyrail.com/>
- ¹⁰ https://www.is.fi/kotimaa/art-200006288589.html?fbclid=IwAR2wxbQYZOFIuJFLu7LCHg4hwvdwZJZnP2GRkLr3xZ_6JrPXC96We_M1M
- ¹¹ <https://ruotuvaki.fi/-/asevelvollisten-lomamatkat-helppotuvat?fbclid=IwAR387TbaawsRkNCnPkCaju0drGpSrMjQSGN9Bn0WI62YVXbJDyRhZnxGvMY>
- ¹² <https://www.kauppalehti.fi/uutiset/vr-halpuuttaa-alennusryhmien-saastolippuja-kymmenia-prosentteja/9951a6d6-afac-4911-982c-1a735de11f4c?fbclid=IwAR2iZYIt2MkhfmI5Ag4jk0kf7euh5lxbdfUe2DGUUtutTyWzZb-uT0pP4>
- ¹³ https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10940468?fbclid=IwAR3_wBhxhOXy91TSfARXgStidrgYbWg-7TOa_wriQQT47eSRC1YtUrFn3z4
- ¹⁴ <https://puheenvuoro.uusisuomi.fi/kalevikamarainen/188918-the-city-rail-loop-line-and-eu-subsidies-economical-with-the-truth/>
- ¹⁵ <https://helsinginmetro.wordpress.com/2015/07/12/bryssel-rakentakaa-keskenanne/>
- ¹⁶ https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10931014?fbclid=IwAR21rhl1BJ6en_pFYBPwgPV00w4o33xLot4fdyqxpNSVswJ95sIIY_icaao
- ¹⁷ <https://puheenvuoro.uusisuomi.fi/leomirala/vrn-otteet-kovenevat?fbclid=IwAR2FNV0VAYMi2cSfoodw4BJCjJBZBLMVubZLfJnW4F93VJjCqgVT1qzsekM>
- ¹⁸ https://www.is.fi/taloussanommat/art-200006219198.html?fbclid=IwAR0CT7NcN1aIzIHRy6g4_uukwNzuz66z1LRE0GIl2S7K-JP8wW20IxXbPwY
- ¹⁹ <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-200006265560.html?fbclid=IwAR2pLmrm-kWEUiYHRfRtOFwiYbajvtTzK-qyupXJjINVLMjCu06jMA9w9Q>
- ²⁰ https://www.iltalehti.fi/kotimaa/a/44b5ed02-550b-4e18-bb9e-c74a560e5205?fbclid=IwAR3S17MkbSVjZ3VQOk515MfHTsEM_8hcxoEFZQb1Bo8RdQucAhZMzaCHDSw
- ²¹ https://www.iltalehti.fi/kotimaa/a/01cf3e6d-587e-4619-8c2c-6358a805e819?fbclid=IwAR2Q_quez8f07i6-MfB6vbuKufCsFAfAeDHVU6QgbkIArgt74_jYFBfJZLa4