

## National report for Finland 1 / 2020 (100 % public data)

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This short time frame is eventless with one great mostly negative exception: (large-scale) rail projects, their planning<sup>1</sup> and EU funding (76.85 million applied in total). Some projects might qualify such as planning of Espoo city rail link (11.0 million) and improving the Pasila - Riihimäki track (6.5 million). But One-hour Turku - Helsinki Rail Link (37.5 million), Finland Railway (11.7 million) and Vantaa Tram (10.15 million) are more dubious<sup>2</sup>.

At least planning of the megaprojects (One-hour Turku - Helsinki Rail Link<sup>3</sup> and Finland Railway<sup>4</sup>) will be realized through limited companies owned jointly by the Government and municipalities. So, the actual work will be concealed and without legal liability of civil servants; "trade secrets" may appear for instance and this legislative gap is common knowledge among policy-makers<sup>5</sup>.

We already have an "eminent" example of a project run as limited company: extension of Helsinki underground to Espoo (Länsimetro<sup>6</sup>). Costs have soared since the decision to go ahead, taxpayers have to bear the expenses and nobody seems to be accountable<sup>7</sup>. The Government of Prime Minister Sanna Marin has a positive appearance also abroad, but will they fill this remarkable legal gap?

The route of the both megaprojects is also questionable. An experienced party colleague<sup>8</sup> to Minister of Transport and Communications Timo Harakka has publicly opined that optional alignment of Finland Railway to the present line is in breach of current zoning decisions, which do not fall under Government or limited company jurisdiction. This lawyer MP also says that the Finnish Constitution requires Parliament to decide on such grandiose rail plans instead of the Government<sup>9</sup>.

The problem with One-hour Turku - Helsinki Rail Link is a bit different. The old curvaceous line is part of Scandinavian – Mediterranean Corridor<sup>10</sup>, but how about the envisioned more direct link? In EU parlance this is "upgrading"<sup>11</sup>, but does that include totally new alignments? And how about Espoo city rail link as honestly upgrading the old route, then?

Civil service tells us that projects elected for EU funding have been well prepared and they are on track<sup>12</sup>. But are these statements truthful? Does a tram line in Helsinki region really qualify? Some time ago, EU funds were applied to construct the Helsinki City Rail Loop<sup>13</sup> on dubious grounds<sup>14</sup>. Only planning money was received<sup>15</sup> and the line (with its rising budget) remains a castle in the air.

The EU cannot prevent Member States from initiating mega rail projects that can be questionable on several grounds. However, at least two crucial questions can still be made:

1. If projects are being funded in Member States, should the EU insist on strict publicity guidelines in order to prevent national Governments from concealing how the money is really used?
2. Are the EU rules too much open to interpretation or is it perhaps only Finnish phenomenon to apply money on shaky grounds (there are better bets for EU money like the contemporary rail line between Helsinki, Tampere and onwards to Oulu<sup>16</sup>)?

NOTE: Red footnotes are in English. Further details will be provided per request.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lvm.fi/en/-/ministerial-committee-on-economic-policy-supports-large-scale-rail-projects-1033895>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lvm.fi/-/finland-to-look-for-eu-funding-for-the-planning-of-the-one-hour-turku-helsinki-rail-link-and-finland-railway-1033429>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.tunninjuna.fi/en/tunnin-juna-en/frequently-asked-questions>

<sup>4</sup> <https://suomirata.fi/en/what-finland-railway/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-10940190>

<sup>6</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%C3%A4nsimetro>

<sup>7</sup> <https://helsinginmetro.wordpress.com/2018/07/16/metro-ei-ole-koskaan-valmis/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.eduskunta.fi/FI/kansanedustajat/Sivut/358.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hameensanomat.fi/mielipiteet/johannes-koskinen-sd-hankeyhtiolla-ei-ole-paatosvaltaa-suomi-radan-linjasta-1066664/>

<sup>10</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/tentec/tentec-portal/site/maps\\_upload/corridors\\_png/C5\\_scand\\_mediterr.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/tentec/tentec-portal/site/maps_upload/corridors_png/C5_scand_mediterr.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/tent\\_fi.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/tent_fi.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.hameensanomat.fi/uutiset/suomen-ratahankeet-kovassa-kilpailussa-eu-rahoista-uskomme-etta-tulemme-parjaamaan-1086679/>

<sup>13</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helsinki\\_City\\_Rail\\_Loop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helsinki_City_Rail_Loop)

<sup>14</sup> <https://puheenvuoro.uusisuomi.fi/kalevikamarainen/188918-the-city-rail-loop-line-and-eu-subsidies-economical-with-the-truth/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://helsinginmetro.wordpress.com/2015/07/12/bryssel-rakentakaa-keskenanne/>

<sup>16</sup> "Helsinki – Oulu Other Core Network"; [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/tent\\_fi.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/tent_fi.pdf)