

National report for Finland – June 2015

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Country	Finland
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Positive points for public transport in our country:

1. A Helsinki commuter won a dispute about compensation¹ of local rail traffic delays² in court with the help of the Consumer Ombudsman. Although the sum (10 euros) is not substantial, the principle matters.
2. Rescue rehearsal on the soon to be opened Ring Rail Line was a failure. Almost 500 passengers were to be evacuated from a burning train in a tunnel. According to the Fire Chief in charge, the rehearsal "went to hell" and "in all honesty I must say that we are not as prepared as I thought"³. The positive point is that this was only a rehearsal.

Negative points for public transport in our country:

1. The new Cabinet is reducing public transport subsidies with 15 million euros. It will mostly hit bus transport and will cut supply as subsidized lines can hardly be replaced by market-based ones.⁴
2. As we forecast, the Government of Finland has used "artistic licence"⁵ while applying EU funding for the City Rail Loop -line⁶ (see National report 1 / 2015⁷). Another letter to the Commission will probably be sent this week.
3. According to Helsingin Sanomat⁸, only 7.000 new daily passengers will use Länsimetro⁹ as it opens. Considering the price (1.000.000.000 euros), it is very little and compares pretty much with the "benefits" of the City Rail Loop (estimated 6.500 new daily passengers¹⁰). Active citizens proposed a light rail network instead of the heavy metro, but to no avail.¹¹
4. Helsinki Regional Transport is going to extend its contract with VR until 2021 with annual savings of six million euros as a bait.¹²
5. The EU Commission turned down our complaint against VR passenger monopoly.¹³ The conclusion is a bit surprising as Finland admitted that the rail network is partly open to other operators but VR is the only one to receive subsidies. It also seems that the Commission accepts whatever the Member State says even if the complainant provides evidence to the contrary.

NOTE: Try Google translator with the links in Finnish or ask further details from us.

¹ <http://www.kkv.fi/en/current-issues/press-releases/2015/27.5.2015-district-court-helsinki-city-transport-must-pay-consumers-compensation-for-local-rail-traffic-delays/>

² <http://www.kkv.fi/en/facts-and-advice/travelling-and-travel-agencies/travelling-and-transport/train-journey/>

³ <http://pelastustieto.fi/pelastustoimi/harjoitus-ja-koulutus/keharataharjoitus-meni-pain-seinia-monin-eritavoin/>

⁴ <http://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/hallitus-leikkaa-rajusti-joukkoliikenteesta-iskee-pahiten-linja-autoliikenteeseen/699024/>

⁵ http://www.rautatiematkustajat.fi/pisara_hakemusasiakirjat.htm

⁶ http://www.rautatiematkustajat.fi/pisara/SRM_Pisarakirje_komissiolle_EN.pdf

⁷ http://www.rautatiematkustajat.fi/National_report_FIN_1_2015.pdf

⁸ <http://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/a1432778695491>

⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%C3%A4nsimetro>

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¹¹ <http://portal.liikennevirasto.fi/portal/page/portal/f/hankkeet/suunnitteilla/pisara/Pisaran%20hankearviointi%20ratasuunnitelma%2012.11.14.pdf> (page three)

¹² http://www.tramwest.fi/en_index.php

¹³ <https://www.hsl.fi/en/news/2015/hsl-vr-and-junakalustoyhtio-signed-letter-intent-new-commuter-train-service-contract-6618>

¹³ http://www.rautatiematkustajat.fi/eu-kantelu/Reply_to_the_FI_authority.pdf