

National report for Finland – October 2011

Date 14.10.2011
Country Finland
Organisation Suomen Rautatiematkustajat ry
Name Kalevi Kämäräinen

Positive points for public transport in our country:

1. VR ticket reform as an experiment to something better.
2. Helsinki Region Transport is ordering nine new commuter trains. This would enable the older rolling stock usage elsewhere on the network if someone intervenes with the VR policy of scrapping all surplus rolling stock.

Negative points for public transport in our country:

1. The long promised VR ticket reform introduced September has had its bad days regarding how the system works and what the "reforms" are.

Functional and managerial flaws:

- the new system "fell" so that tickets could be purchased only from trains if anywhere at all (journeys were "on the house" in some cases)
- VR leadership gave conflicting statements about the causes of the havoc
- there are still very few confirmed details available about the reform

Negative points noticed so far:

- the promised flexible pricing might be working some day (at the moment the system is strictly kilometre-based as opposed to previous occasional special offers on some routes)
- sleeping car berth tickets have fixed prices with no discounts
- there won't be any family discount on sleeper services
- you need six persons in order to get group discount instead of three
- serial tickets for students are now 10 trips for the price of nine instead of the previous 11 trips for the price of 10
- joint train / bus –ticketing will be greatly reduced
- pre-booked tickets must be reclaimed within 24 hours from the booking
- if there are less than 24 hours to the departure of the train, booked tickets must be reclaimed at once
- you can buy a monthly ticket for a period between 14 and 365 days with a starting price equivalent to a two-month ticket (tickets with a validity for less than two months are comparatively more expensive)
- there are two types of serial and monthly tickets instead of three: regional + express trains and Intercity + Pendolino services (Intercity and Pendolino used to have their own ticketing). This will mean higher prices in certain towns

Possibly positive element:

- one might have even a 50 % discount if you book your ticket two months in advance (does not apply to sleeping car berth tickets)

2. Train services have been cancelled because of "conductor shortage"; e.g. some sort of industrial action can't be ruled out.