

National report for Finland – June 2014

Date	3.6.2014
Country	Finland
Organisation	Suomen Rautatiematkustajat ry, http://www.rautatiematkustajat.fi/
Name	Kalevi Kämäräinen

Positive points for public transport in our country:

1. The Scottish bus mogul Sir Brian Souter has purchased majority of the shares¹ of Onnibus Oy², the enfant terrible in the recently deregulated Finnish bus industry. The company also placed an order of 15 Van Hool double deckers and is going to recruit some 50 drivers.³ This is the second time that Souter's business interests enter the bus market in Finland.

It remains to be seen whether Souter has rail plans in the long run, too, as Onnibus also has a subsidiary called Onnirail.⁴

2. While a new partner enters, old ones exit and form a coalition of their own called OnniExpress⁵ and claim to operate the majority of the lines Onnibus used to run (they have also introduced a direct Finland – Estonia route using a ferry connection).

You can't yet tell whether the outcome of these developments stays on the positive side, but there certainly are developments. While the "old school" tries to torpedo the entrants (and some also the Tampere tram project), the entrants try to do something positive from the passenger point of view, anyway.

Negative points for public transport in our country:

1. As mentioned in the previous National report (September 2013), we were going to lodge a complaint with the Finnish Government's granting of a five-year extension to VR's long-distance passenger service monopoly. We finally got the paperwork done and forwarded it to the Finnish Permanent Representation to the European Union on February 17.⁶ It took quite a while to prepare the complaint as the whole thing contains of two binders of documents (spine width 75 millimetres). See the complaint text (with links to most of the attachments) in Finnish⁷, a press release⁸ and a short representation with a map⁹ in English.
2. In April this year there were two further developments which caused us to write an additional letter to the EU Commission. As VR is to drop some minor station stops unilaterally, this contradicts with the public service obligation doctrine which was supposed to be the raison d'etre of the company's monopoly. Now we also have reasons to question the EU funding granted to the planning stages of the City Rail Loop¹⁰ in Helsinki. This letter can be read in its entirety in Finnish¹¹ and in English¹².

NOTE: If the provided links are in Finnish, google translator might provide you understandable text. And if something is still left open, you can ask details from us.

¹ <http://www.souterinvestments.com/news/souter-investments-makes-investment-n10160-s11.aspx>

² <http://www.onnibus.fi/en/>

³ <http://www.talouselama.fi/uutiset/onnibus+tilasi+miljoonilla+kaksikerrosbusseja/a2247017>

⁴ <http://www.taloussanommat.fi/autot/2013/12/20/kun-halpajunat-haastavat-vrn-kyse-isoista-rahoista/201317615/304>

⁵ <http://www.onniexpress.fi/etusivu.html>

⁶ <http://www.finlandtimes.fi/travel/2014/02/18/4923/Passengers-protest-against-VR%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%98monopoly%E2%80%99-business>

⁷ http://rautatiematkustajat.fi/eu-kantelu/SRM_PSA_KANTELU.pdf

⁸ http://rautatiematkustajat.fi/eu-kantelu/SRM_PSO_complaint_Press.pdf

⁹ <http://rautatiematkustajat.fi/2014-03-14%20EPF%20on%20Finnish%20monopoly-KK-1-2.ppt>

¹⁰ http://portal.liikennevirasto.fi/sivu/www/e/projects/planning_phase/city_rail_loop_pisara

¹¹ http://rautatiematkustajat.fi/SRM_PSA_KANTELU_2.pdf

¹² http://rautatiematkustajat.fi/SRM_PSA_KANTELU_2_GB-rev.pdf