

National report for Finland – January 2015

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Country	Finland
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Positive points for public transport in our country:

1. Helsinki Region Transport (HSL) and Finnish Transport Agency are developing a journey planner for the whole of Finland with scheduled completion in 2016. It is intended to provide information also on traffic disruptions and it is also promised that passengers will get a chance to comment on the test version.¹
2. Tikkurila bus terminal was opened in January, 1.² It is part of the Ring Rail Line project which connects Helsinki-Vantaa airport with the national rail network.³
3. OnniBus.com Oy⁴ ordered 20 new double-deck buses from Belgium in December.⁵ A preceding order of 15 double-deckers was placed in May.
4. In the bus branch, "old farts" like Koiviston Auto Oy⁶, Savonlinja-yhtiöt⁷, J. Vainion Liikenne Oy⁸ etc. are now realizing that "competition" in administrative courts against OnniBus.com Oy might not be the best way to woo new passengers. They are now rethinking more flexible pricing systems^{9,10} themselves and might even reschedule buses and redefine routes. Quick feet are evidently necessary, as Mika Mäkilä, CEO of the Finnish Linja-autoliitto (The Finnish Bus Owners' Federation; LAL), estimates there will be corporate corpses in 2015.¹¹ As a curiosity one can mention that LAL has English web pages¹², which contain nothing (at least when accessed in December, 31).

Negative points for public transport in our country:

1. The Board of Helsinki City Transport (HKL) decided to terminate its contracts with Siemens concerning automation of the Helsinki Metro in December¹³ (they were originally signed in 2008). The project is said to be unique in trying to convert already existing rolling stock into automated usage.¹⁴
The termination has repercussions with the extension to Espoo (Länsimetro)¹⁵. In Helsinki platform length (135 metres) allows trains consisting of three two-car units.¹⁶ But in Länsimetro the platform length of 90 metres¹⁷ enables only two two-car units and there won't be more frequent trains as there will be no automation for a long time. Also others than only the decision-makers might show

¹ <https://www.hsl.fi/en/news/2014/hsl-and-finnish-transport-agency-developing-journey-planner-finland-5843>

² <https://www.hsl.fi/en/news/2014/new-bus-terminal-open-tikkurila-1-january-2015-5957>

³ http://portal.liikennevirasto.fi/sivu/www/e/projects/under_construction/ring_rail_line

⁴ <http://www.onnibus.com/en/index.htm>

⁵ <http://www.talouselama.fi/uutiset/onnibus+tilasi+20+uutta+bussia+kaikilla+herkuilla++tulossa+60+uutta+tyopaikkaa/a2283919>

⁶ <http://www.koivistonauto.fi/etusivu/36-etusivu/894-briefly-in-english>

⁷ <http://savonlinja-yhtiöt.fi/eng/index.html>

⁸ <http://www.vainionliikenne.fi/en/www/>

⁹ <http://www.ess.fi/uutiset/kotimaa/2014/12/29/bussien-kovaan-hintakisaan-uusi-kaanne---taalla-saa-nykyista-edullisempia-lippuja-kohta-suoraan-kuljettajalta>

¹⁰ <http://www.vainionliikenne.fi/fi/www/page.php?cat=65>

¹¹ <http://summa.talentum.fi/article/te/uutiset/121697>

¹² <http://www.linja-autoliitto.fi/fi/>

¹³ <http://www.hel.fi/www/uutiset/en/helsinki/terminates>

¹⁴ <http://www.finlandtimes.fi/business/2014/12/19/12569/Helsinki-metro-cancels-major-contract-with-Siemens-on-automation>

¹⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%C3%A4nsimetro>

¹⁶ <http://www.railway-technology.com/projects/helsinki-metro/>

¹⁷ <http://lansimetro.fi/en/information-on-the-project/questions-and-answers.html>

long faces¹⁸ as the intent was to ride all the way from the East to the West without problems.

Siemens also aims to sue HKL either in court or through arbitration.¹⁹ Arbitration would naturally decrease the amount of bad publicity of a project gone wrong. In this sense, the parties still seem to have some common interest: the joint www.automaattimetro.fi is now "page not found".

2. The night Metro trial ended at New Year in Helsinki. Low patronage among other things were cited as reasons.²⁰
3. The Finnish Transport Agency published another City Rail Loop-line (Pisara-rata) survey in November. An earlier cost estimate of 900 million euros²¹ has now risen to 1.900 million²² and the benefit-cost ratio of 1,54²³ is now 0,58 at most (pages 53 and 54²⁴). That is well below the socio-economic break-even point of 1,0 and a socio-economic loss of altogether 458 million euros is also forecast (page 48). It is also explicitly told that Pisara is basically a local project only.

The report also tells that long-distance train services would benefit from capacity enhancements with a cost estimate of 311 million euros. That, in turn, is far less than any Pisara version and also less than the socio-economic loss forecast of 458 million.

Despite these new facts, the Government aims to go ahead with Pisara. They also want to have 20 per cent of EU funding²⁵ (TEN-T²⁶). One can only wonder if the project fulfils the qualifications, as the new details relegate its effects to only local level.

Pekka Salmi, chairman of Pro Rautatie ry (Pro Railway Association)²⁷ and deputy mayor of the City of Tampere²⁸ writes in Aamulehti (one of our biggest newspapers²⁹) that Finland is obliged to construct roads belonging to the TEN-T network, but can't have EU funding for them. On the other hand, one can get EU funds for the rail network that one is not compelled to construct as part of the TEN-T.

Salmi deduces that we could receive 600 million euros for the railways and such a sum should be received. If his conclusions are correct, it is even goofier to throw precious money to a project that essentially is only a big hole in Helsinki.

4. "Kuningaskuluttaja", the consumer programme of the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation YLE estimates that VR was to lose 600.000 long-distance journeys in 2014.³⁰ The programme also notes, that train ticket prices have risen 50 – 70 per cent during the last 10 years while other consumer prices have risen 21 per cent in average during the same time.³¹

NOTE: Google translator might help with the text links unless you ask details from us. This time, there are many links in English, though.

¹⁸ <https://helsinginmetro.wordpress.com/2014/12/19/hammennysta-loppun-asti/>

¹⁹ http://yle.fi/uutiset/siemens_haluaa_valimiesoikeuteen_karajaoikeuden_sijaan/7702780

²⁰ <https://www.hsl.fi/en/traffic-bulletins/2014/night-metro-trial-end-year-end-5927>

²¹ http://portal.liikennevirasto.fi/sivu/www/f/hankkeet/suunnitteilla/pisara/tietoa_pisarasta/Pisara_rata_lukuina#.VH9K7jGsUY0 (page visited 3rd December, 2014; last update 22nd May, 2014)

²² http://www.lvm.fi/tiedote/4424851/pisara_radan_rahoytusmallit_kartoitettu

²³ http://portal.liikennevirasto.fi/portal/page/portal/f/hankkeet/suunnitteilla/pisara/tietoa_pisarasta/Pisara_YSn_tiiivistelmaraportti_netti.pdf (page 27)

²⁴ <http://portal.liikennevirasto.fi/portal/page/portal/f/hankkeet/suunnitteilla/pisara/Pisara%20hankearviointi%20Oratasuunnitelmavaiheessa%2012.11.14.pdf>

²⁵ http://www.lvm.fi/tiedote/4424851/pisara_radan_rahoytusmallit_kartoitettu

²⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/index_en.htm

²⁷ <http://www.prourautatie.fi/english>

²⁸ <http://www.tampere.fi/english/index.html>

²⁹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aamulehti>

³⁰ http://yle.fi/uutiset/kuningaskuluttaja_vr_menettamassa_jopa_puoli_miljoonaa_matkaa/7588045

³¹ http://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2014/10/30/karkottiko_vrn_hintauudistus_matkustajia