



SUOMI  
FINLAND

# Finland in the World Media

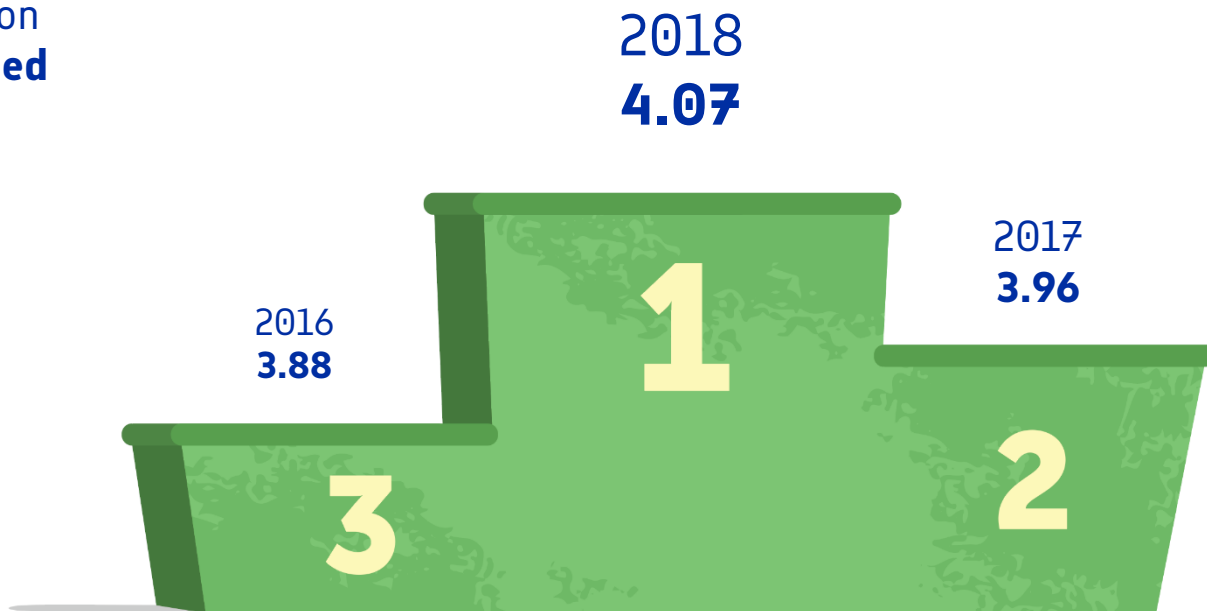
Ministry for Foreign Affairs review of 2018



According to a UN report, Finland is the happiest country in the world. The high standard of living is the result of modern healthcare and social support. – LITHUANIA

# Finland's overall rating

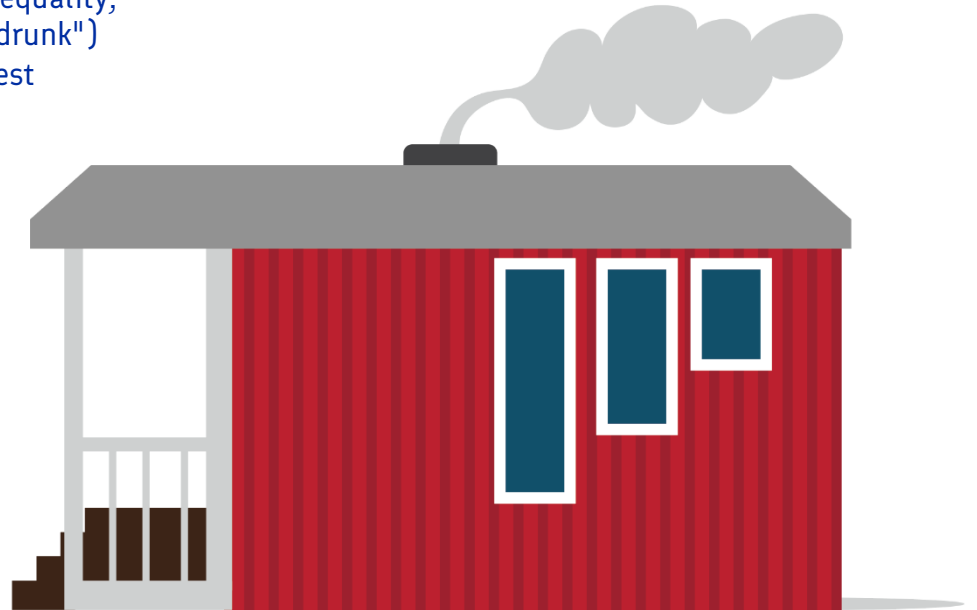
In 2018, Finland's reputation in the world media **continued to improve**, surpassing 4 for the first time on a scale from 1–5.



# Finland – the happiest country in the world!

” According to the World Happiness Report, Finland became the happiest country in the world, and this prompted newspapers and magazines to explore the reasons for the northern happiness [...]. The tongue-in-cheek reasons included nature, sauna, equality, coffee, sisu, financial stability, kalsarikännit ("pantsdrunk") and brotherlike competition (Finns are at their happiest when they beat Sweden at ice hockey). – AUSTRIA

” Finland has received the reputation of being the happiest and safest place on Earth, a title that has echoed throughout media coverage this year as Australians plan their trips abroad. – AUSTRALIA



# In 2018, education and the #HELSINKI2018 summit were the most talked topics in the world media

2018



2017



2016



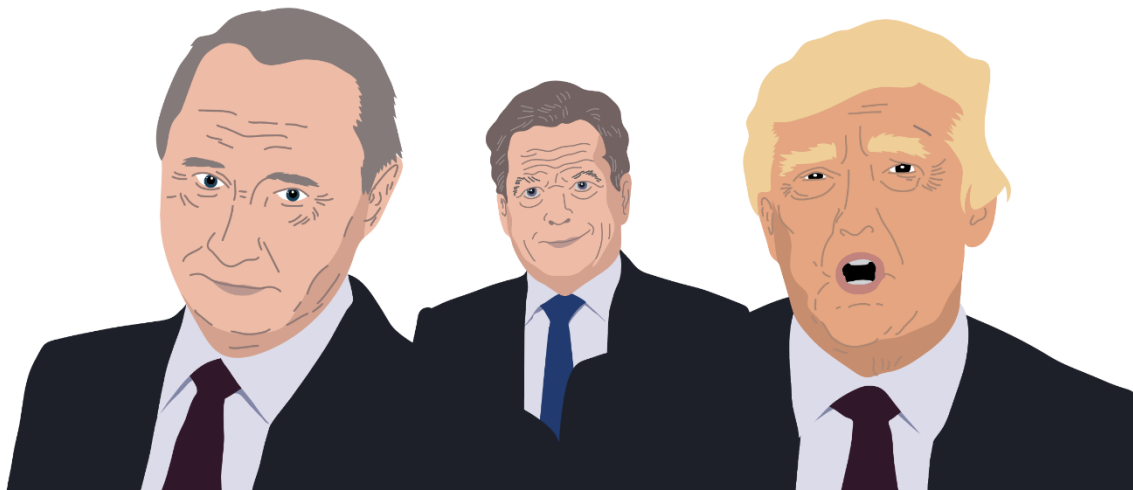
# The Trump-Putin meeting (#HELSINKI2018) strengthened Finland's reputation as an international facilitator

” Finland was very visible in the United States during the second half of 2018, thanks to the Trump-Putin meeting in Helsinki [...]. Not only did the Trump-Putin meeting bring a huge number of important TV broadcasters to Helsinki, but the outcome of the meeting also kept Helsinki in the minds of both journalists and the public for months.

– UNITED STATES

” In its role as organiser of the Trump-Putin summit meeting, Finland received a lot of visibility in the Danish media. Finland was referred to as an experienced summit host. The news said, among other things, that Finns were proud to be hosting yet another summit. Finland's role as an international facilitator was seen to have been strengthened by the summit. – DENMARK

” The #HELSINKI2018 summit in July and President of the Republic Sauli Niinistö's visit to Russia in August were the most talked single news events related to international politics and Finland in Russia. Both topics were mainly dealt with in a positive way in the media, and Finland was given a kind of bridge-builder role in improving the tense relations between Russia and the United States. – RUSSIA



# The Trump-Putin meeting and the growing tourism boosted Helsinki

” There have clearly been more articles about Helsinki than before (Amos Rex art museum, Oodi library, New Children's Hospital, Allas Sea Pool), but the city's brand could be modernised. [...] although there is a clear increase in trendiness.

– SWEDEN

” The biggest media topic concerning Finland was the Trump-Putin meeting in Helsinki in July. The biggest TV-channels broadcast the most beautiful scenery in Helsinki to American living rooms. CNN, Fox News, CNBC, ABC and CBS sent live broadcasts during the midnight sun and sunny days. The star broadcasters spotlighted Helsinki in their live broadcasts. CNN's Anderson Cooper began his broadcasts several times with: "Welcome to beautiful Helsinki".

– UNITED STATES

” Helsinki is often presented as a destination of culture and design as well as a functional capital, where nature is always present.

– MEXICO



# Finland is increasingly brought up as a world leader in education

” The success of the Finnish education system is frequently brought up in many news articles. How education system in Finland has evolved and how it affected Finland's development is analysed in many articles. It is also quite frequently used as an example in articles about the Turkish education system. Finnish education experts were invited to Turkey for various events in the past year and their statements are also published by media outlets. – **TURKEY**

” Articles and news about the topic were outright glorifying [...] Many local decision makers [...] compared the education systems of Finland and their own country in interviews and news about various meetings, and they wanted to apply features of "the best education system in the world" in their own programmes. The features mentioned included respect for teachers and demanding teacher training, free education, early childhood education based on play and the child's interest as well as break times. Finland was presented as the best country in which to raise and educate children, as well as being the country with the most skilled workforce in the world. – **NIGERIA**



# Finland's Chairmanship of the Arctic Council made the arctic location and expertise visible

” Considering that the Arctic and Arctic policies are still relatively unknown in India, positive developments can be seen to have taken place in 2018 [...]. There has also been limited interest in the potential future trade routes in the Arctic [...]. Finland's second, stronger Arctic identity in India is linked to Lapland and winter tourism. – **INDIA**

” Finland's Chairmanship of the Arctic Council roused interest in China because China is an observer of the Council and is very interested in using the Arctic region, e.g. the Northeast Passage, in both its foreign trade and its data links. The possible construction of the Arctic Railway is also a topic of interest in China. – **CHINA**

” Finland's Chairmanship was more visible in spring 2017, when Finland took over the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. In Canada, Finland is known as an Arctic country, which for example carries out tests on intelligent transport systems in Arctic conditions. A story about the Aurora project was published in the spring. – **CANADA**

” Great attention has been paid to the transition of the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council from Finland to Iceland in the spring of 2019. – **ICELAND**





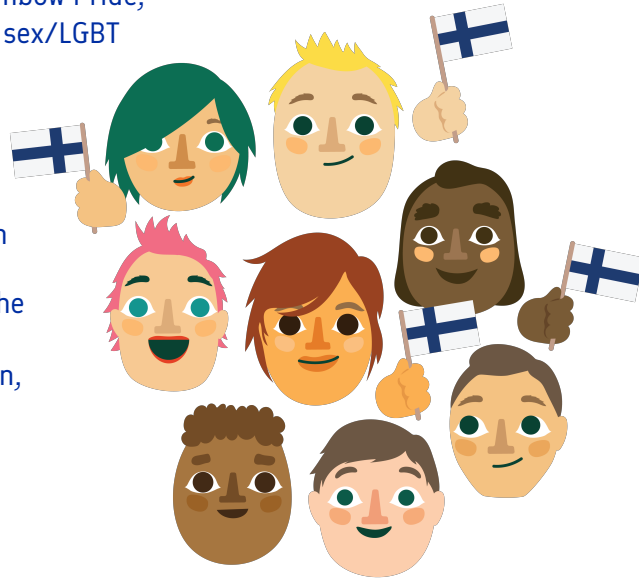
# Finnish equality and equal opportunities are already deeply rooted concepts

” The Japanese media recognises Finland as an advanced country in terms of gender equality. The Embassy also promoted gender issues by holding a press conference on LGBT/gender issues, participating in the Tokyo Rainbow Pride, and arranging five interviews when a sex/LGBT education expert from the University of Helsinki came to Tokyo last year.

– JAPAN

” Equality became a topic of debate, especially in relation to the decline in homelessness. Finland received a lot of attention in the British media as the only European country where the number of homeless people has fallen, in contradiction to the general trend.

– GREAT BRITAIN



” Education that is open for everyone highlights Finland as a country of equal opportunities. During a local training event early in the year, there were several news items about how education in Finland is public and free and how the few private schools are not any better than state schools.

– ARGENTINA

” The fact that the President of the Republic's baby was born in a public hospital attracted respect and astonishment in a few articles.

– NIGERIA

# Many European countries were still interested in the basic income pilot

” The basic income pilot attracted attention in the British media throughout the year. The views varied and, especially in the spring, the pilot was criticised. There were also many misconceptions about the interruption to and failure of the basic income pilot. On the other hand, several newspapers corrected certain false perceptions. [...] However, the issue was mainly dealt with by presenting facts and from a number of different perspectives. – GREAT BRITAIN



” Finland's basic income pilot was covered in the Italian media again on several occasions throughout the year. In the spring, the Five Star Movement (M5S) chose the basic income as one of its election themes. – ITALY

” The announcement in April 2018 that Finland would not continue its basic income pilot after two years was reported quite prominently in the Belgian press. De Standaard asked if the basic income pilot was already dead and stated that for the participants, the basic income pilot was like "manna from heaven." – LUXEMBOURG

# President Niinistö's election for a second term was widely reported

” The presidential elections in January received some coverage, and Niinistö seemed to have been an agreeable choice for the Chinese media as he had met Chinese President, Xi Jinping, in the last year of his first term, which had been widely covered in China. – CHINA

” The Finnish presidential election and the re-election of Sauli Niinistö were covered to the usual extent in Sweden. The reach of the various news items in online and social media was about 36 million people. – SWEDEN



” Sauli Niinistö continued as President of the Republic of Finland after receiving more than 60 percent of the votes. "Finland's pragmatic President, Sauli Niinistö, who won the voters' hearts with his ability to build relations with both Russia and the West, continues as President of Finland." – LITHUANIA

# Alexander Stubb re-emerged in the media spotlight in his campaign for a top job at the European Commission

” Vice-President of the European Investment Bank Alexander Stubb's bid to become the president of the European Commission was widely covered in Denmark in the autumn. Stubb's profiles and other campaign-related articles were published in the mainstream media. Stubb was also described as a "hard worker, "an iron man" and "the most extroverted Finn in the world". - DENMARK



” -- Alexander Stubb's competition with German politician Manfred Weber in the EPP lead candidate election was widely covered in the media. Stubb was described as "a Finnish iron man" and "the EU's poster boy." - GERMANY

# Finland has permanently become one of the most popular winter tourist destinations

” Finland is becoming more popular as a tourist destination among Bulgarians and there are more publications nowadays describing the tourist attractions available in Finland. In December, around Christmas time, the focus is on Lapland and Santa Claus as well as the Northern Lights, which can be observed in Finnish Lapland. – **BULGARIA**

” The most significant media topic related to Finland in India was definitely Finland's profile as a rising and trendy tourist destination. With export efforts and targeted visits to Finland (travel agencies and journalists), Finland and especially Lapland featured in lifestyle magazines (the most recent example of which is Vogue India) and in travel and feature articles in the biggest English-language newspapers. – **INDIA**

” Santa Claus and Rovaniemi are Finland's best-known tourist brands in Greece. – **GREECE**

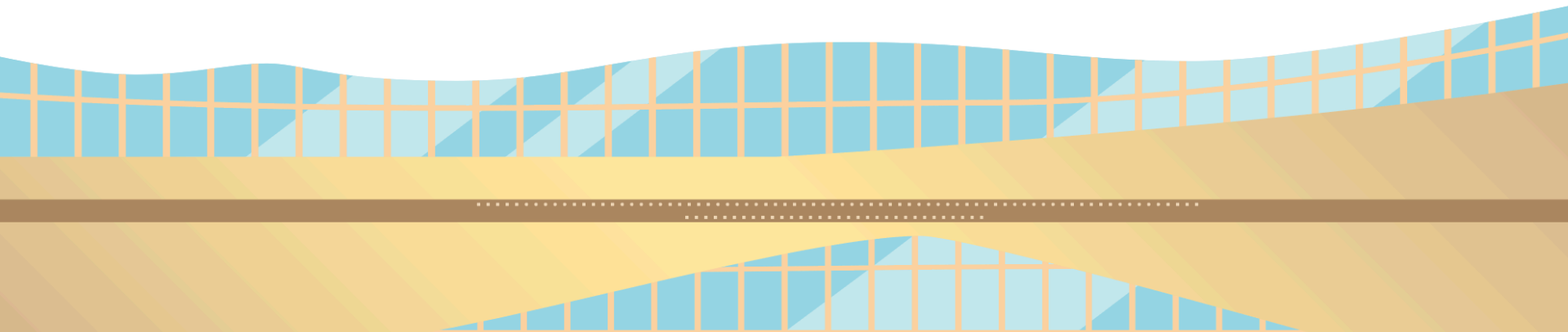


# Architecture rose to the headlines, thanks to Oodi and Amos Rex in particular

” The art museum Amos Rex featured in the British media especially at the time of its opening in late summer. Modern architecture, the use of digital features and interactivity brought positive visibility to Helsinki. – GREAT BRITAIN

” In August and September, the opening of Amos Rex was described in a positive light in design and architecture publications (e.g. Exibart, Il Giornale dell'Architettura, Artribune, Il Giornale dell'arte, Design Diffusion, Arte Sky) and also in daily newspapers, such as Viaggi - Corriere della Sera. – ITALY

” The opening of Oodi Library was mentioned by many media outlets very positively. School architecture was also mentioned as an example in education-related news. – TURKEY



# The image of Finnish food and culinary culture began to improve slowly but surely

” It’s important not to pass over the significance of Finnish culinary culture in Poland and consequently in the Polish media. The embassy cooperated with "Food and Friends" magazine, which visited Helsinki in June, resulting in a lot of material on Helsinki’s top restaurants. – **POLAND**

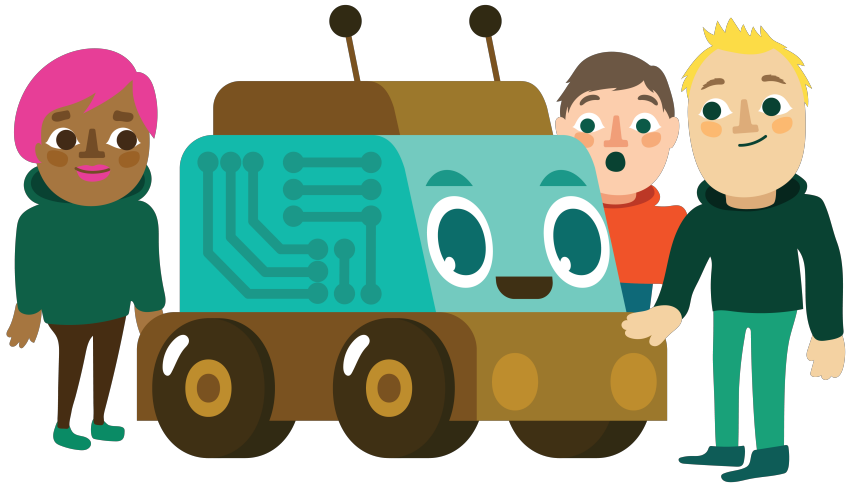
” The Finnish education system and Finnish food culture featured relatively regularly in the French media. – **FRANCE**



” There were positive articles about the Finnish food industry, especially during Minister Jari Leppä's visit to China. The articles highlighted pure and healthy products and resulted from the more proactive efforts by the Food from Finland growth programme. – **CHINA**

” [...] Finnish pure and healthy food has started to trend. – **KOREA**

# Start-up culture is more strongly associated with Finland with the start-up event Slush paving the way



” In November 2017, a journalist from Dinheiro Vivo took part in Slush and published a double-page spread feature about the experience in January 2018, entitled "Finland. A creative ecosystem based on an unparalleled education system." The article examines the strengths of the Finnish education system and how the start-ups that emerge from Finns' good education and know-how use these features to succeed. "Everyone wants to be the next Nokia, Rovio or Supercell. It's no wonder that half of the top 10 most popular games are Finnish". – PORTUGAL

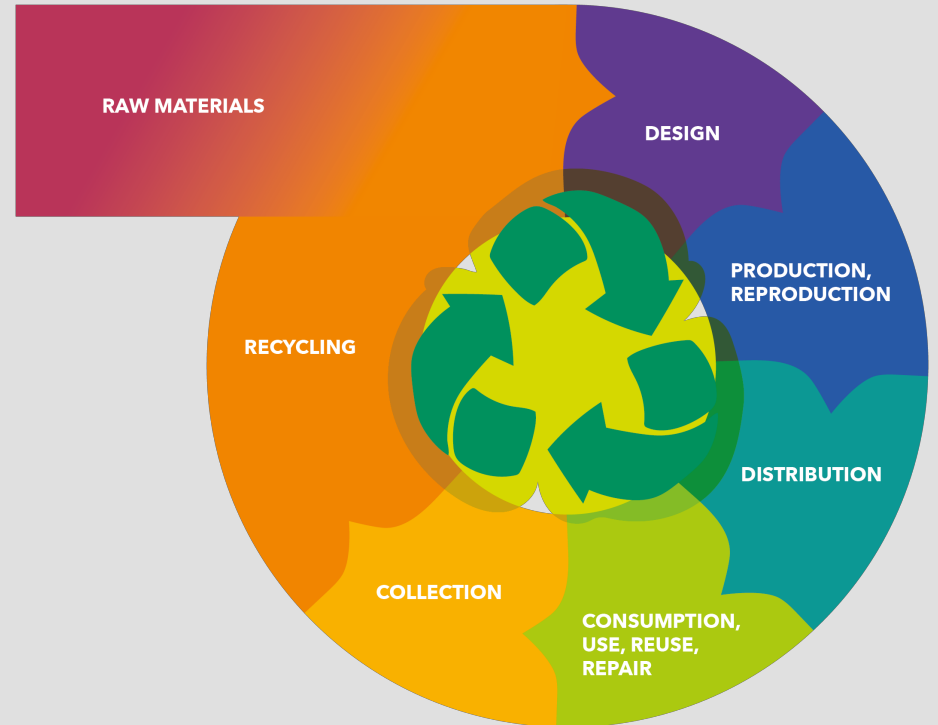
” Ireland is a technology and start-up country larger than its actual size, thanks to the multinational technology companies that have their headquarters here. This is why Irish technology and science media, such as Silicon Republic, are read across the world. The publication has often featured articles about Finnish start-ups and technological innovations such as self-driving cars. – IRELAND



# Finland is also recognised as a pioneer in circular economy

” This year Finland developed as the forerunner of circular economy initiatives when Australia took to debating recycling policy. – AUSTRALIA

” Finland is a country that embraces circular economy. People in Finland recycle and reuse things as much as possible. Else Hukkanen is a Finn who has set up a shop selling food products for which the "best before" date is coming up very soon or has even expired, but the food is still perfectly edible [...] The shop only opened a month ago and the feedback has been purely positive. – LITHUANIA



# "Raking" and jingfen spread the word about how Finns are positively different

” The raking stories (Finland rakes its forests), which originated from comments made by President Trump when he visited an area of wildfires in California [...] certainly had an impact on how Americans see Finns and their sense of humour. – UNITED STATES

” The Finnish Nightmares cartoon, which had already attracted attention around the world, was translated into Chinese in early summer 2018, and it became one of the biggest, if not the biggest, social media and internet phenomenon related to Finland in China: Jingfen, "spiritually Finnish". The phenomenon spoke to Chinese millennials in particular, many of whom identified themselves as "jingfens" and said that they needed their own space and peace in large and hectic Chinese cities. – CHINA



# In many countries, Finnish heavy metal is overtaking Sibelius in popularity

” Lemi, a small municipality in south-eastern Finland, was proclaimed [...] the world capital of metal after it won a competition for the world's most "metal" country that measured the number of heavy metal bands in relation to the population in different locations. – PORTUGAL

” Finland was described as a country of sauna, tango and heavy metal, where you can enjoy beautiful nature. – GERMANY

” Finnish heavy metal is a long-time favourite in Mexico. – MEXICO

” Finnish heavy metal bands are popular in Chile. – CHILE



” Numerous articles were published about Finnish heavy metal bands and musicians such as Nightwish, Apocalyptica, Tarja Turunen. [...] Finnish heavy metal music is popular in the country therefore there were many local media publications about new albums and concerts by Finnish heavy metal musicians. – BULGARIA

” Popular Finnish heavy metal occasionally featured in news in Argentina. – ARGENTINA

” The Capital of Metal campaign received some visibility, for example in an article in The Paper. – CHINA

# The death of the beloved writer Arto Paasilinna was acknowledged throughout Europe

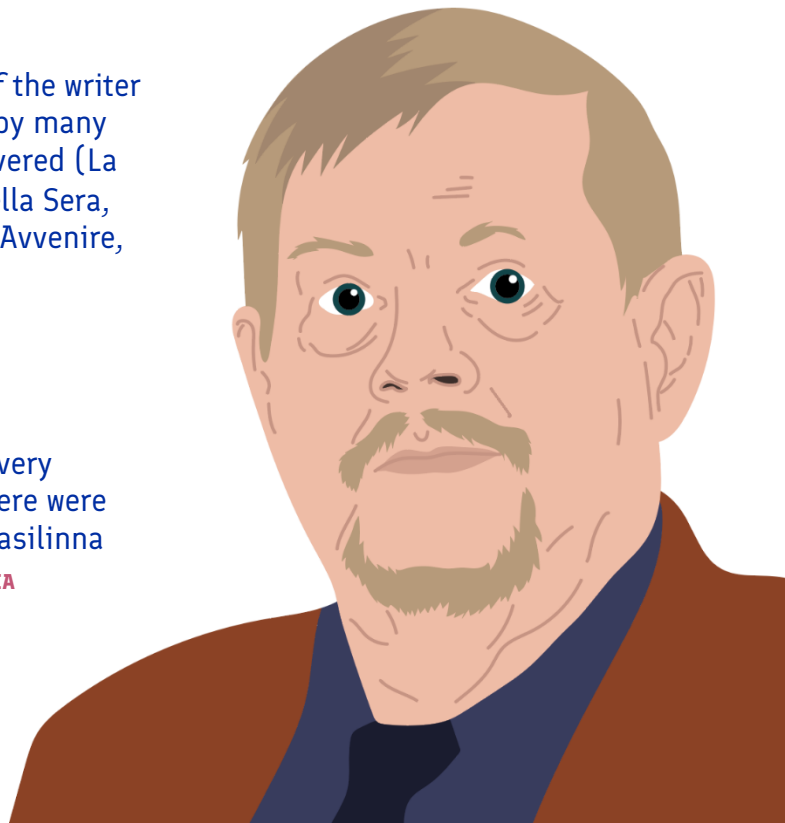
” The death of Arto Paasilinna, who was a very popular writer in France, was widely covered in the French media. All the major newspapers and magazines remembered Paasilinna's colourful character and wrote about his works. Paasilinna's books sell very well in France and he was very well liked there. – FRANCE

## Most often mentioned artists:

Arto Paasilinna, Aki Kaurismäki, Tarja Turunen, Sofi Oksanen, Kaija Saariaho, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Susanna Mälkki, Tove Jansson

” The death in October of the writer Arto Paasilinna, loved by many Italians, was widely covered (La Repubblica, Corriere della Sera, ANSA, Il Messaggero, l'Avvenire, Il Post. – ITALY

” Paasilinna's books are very popular in Slovenia. There were many articles about Paasilinna after his death. – SLOVENIA



# Year after year, Kimi Räikkönen is by far the most talked-about Finnish sportsman, but football is starting to trend



” The most prominent sport was F1, and especially Kimi Räikkönen, who is by far the best-known Finn in China. – CHINA

” People in Brazil are not familiar with Finnish sports or Finnish sportsmen other than Kimi Räikkönen and Mika Häkkinen. – BRAZIL

” Finnish football also gained coverage in the Greek sports media as Greece and Finland played in the same group. A few Finnish referees also found themselves in the headlines as they were tasked with refereeing Greek games. – GREECE

## Most often mentioned sportsmen:

Kimi Räikkönen, Lauri Markkanen, Kaisa Mäkäräinen, Huuhkajat (Finland football team)

# What image of Finland is portrayed in the media?

” Finns are constantly present in the media, either as tourists, as neighbours or simply as partners. The image is diverse and mainly positive. Estonians no longer have an inferiority complex even though Finland is still a richer country. – **ESTONIA**

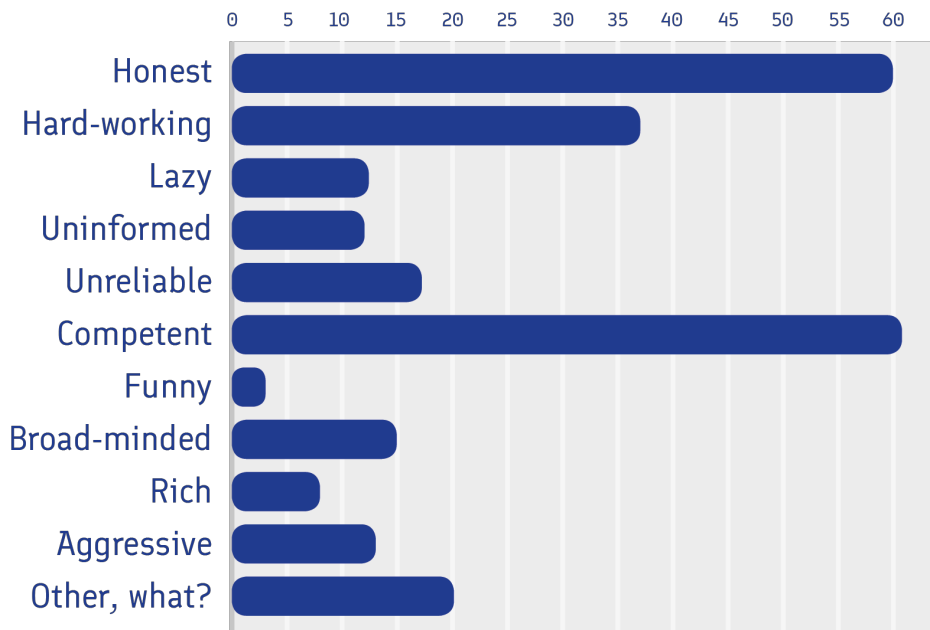
” The idea of Finns being a bit strange was enhanced, partly due to a TV2 programme that presented cultures from other countries. When in Finland, the programme's presenters witnessed, for example, sitting in an anthill – "a sport in Finland". [...] "I will always remember Finland as the country with the weirdest sense of humour ever," said Søs Egelind. – **DENMARK**



” Before 2017, the image of Finland as a nation was rather narrow. There was one Finnish celebrity in Korea, Taru Salminen, but other Finns were not well known. Taru was known to be a smart and down-to-earth person. Petri and his friends, who featured in the "Welcome, First Time in Korea" programme, showed Korean audiences what Finns are like and now Finns are often seen on TV. – **SOUTH KOREA**

” Finns are seen as innovative, hard-working and courageous people. – **SOUTH CAUCASUS**

# In the opinion of foreign media, we are still competent, honest and hard-working



# Topics in politics and economy followed by the Ministry (2018)

Assess the visibility of the following content in the host country's media. On a scale of: 1 not at all visible – 5 very visible.



● 2018 ● 2017



# Embassy's media efforts and media visits to Finland

## EMBASSY STAFF

"In 2018, the embassy managed to organise two events with perfect timing in Ireland – one about early childhood education and the other about Finland's approach to homelessness – and these attracted a lot of publicity. Both events enforced the ideas that the media already had." – **IRELAND**

"Finland inadvertently found itself in the media spotlight concerning the Catalan situation, which is a sensitive issue in Spanish domestic affairs. A Finnish politician campaigning for the independence of Catalonia, the visit to Finland by the exiled President of the Government of Catalonia Carlos Puigdemont, and the dismissal of Finland's honorary consul general in Barcelona kept Finland in the media in the first half of the year.[...] The embassy openly shared Finland's views in various events, and the media also used the embassy's bulletins in their articles." – **SPAIN**

"The Unknown Soldier was shown at the Nordic Film Festival organised by the Nordic embassies at the Nordic House in Reykjavik in late spring. A full-length three-hour version of the film was shown to a full house." – **ICELAND**

"The ambassador's visits to the provinces have strongly increased Finland's visibility outside the capital. Articles published during the visits and interviews with the ambassador brought about a lot of positive publicity. The ambassador's views on the differences and similarities between Finland and Chile were sought and appreciated. [...] The increased and diversified media visibility is the result of the embassy's and Business Finland Chile's activities to enhance the image and export efforts." – **CHILE**

## MEDIA VISITS

"An energy-themed media visit to Finland in October brought about a lot of media coverage, and nuclear energy was particularly prominently covered." – **KOREA**

"During the past year, the embassy has sent journalists on two media visits (related to the Arctic and energy), organised by the Department for Communications. The visits have been seen as a useful way to establish contacts with journalists, and they have resulted in a number of articles about Finland and Finnish know-how that have been more extensive than usual." – **KAZAKHSTAN**

"Finnish know-how and solutions in cleantech and circular economy featured positively due to the fact that a Polish journalist took part in the media visit organised by the Ministry's Department of Communications during autumn 2018." – **POLAND**



# Finland in the world media

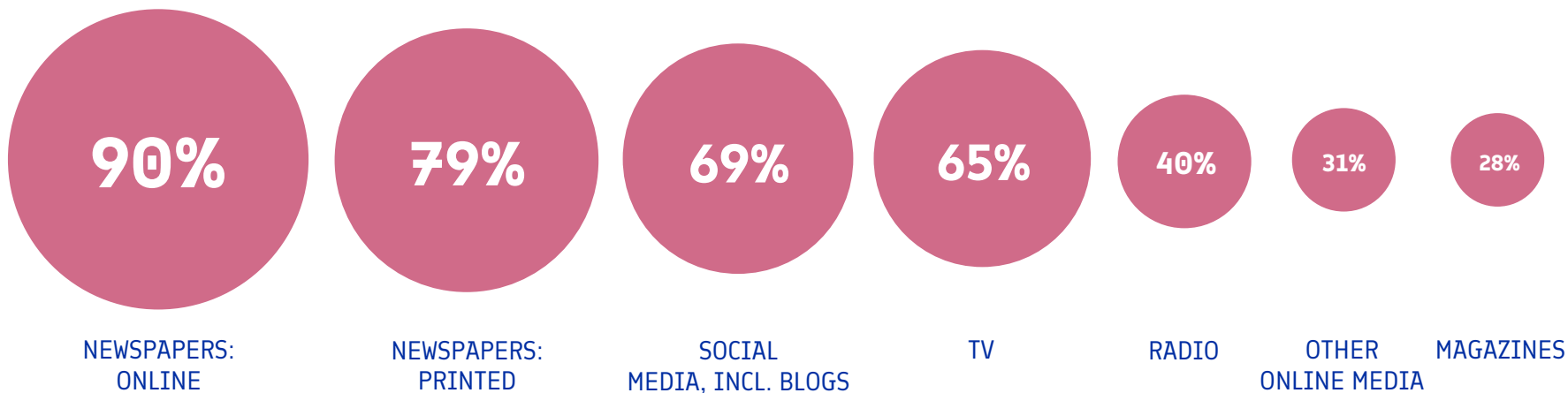
This survey was designed to examine the topics associated with Finland in international media coverage. It comprised all media, with a particular focus on newspapers.

The data are based on assessments submitted by the Finnish missions and, in the case of some countries, on externally sourced media monitoring reports. In two-thirds of the missions, media-related activities were conducted alongside other work.

The Webropol survey was conducted between December 2018 and January 2019.

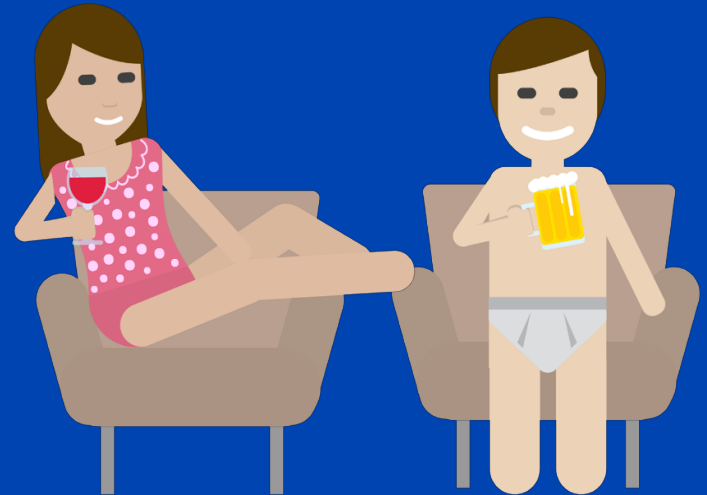
A total of 75 out of 90 missions responded to the survey. Most of these were embassies. 12 answered in English.

**According to the missions, the most important media events were distributed in the media as follows:**



” The Finnish minimalist way of life, relaxation and Finland as the happiest country in the world were humorously associated with "kalsarikännit" ("pantsdrunk").

– GREAT BRITAIN



# Further information by region



## Sweden

"The Finland 100 celebrations featured very significantly during the previous year. We have now returned to so-called normality, where there is daily media coverage about different topics but nothing extra related to Finland. Finland's reputation as portrayed by the media is rather unchanged: sometimes romanticised, sometimes critical, sometimes involving comparisons between Sweden and Finland, but the tone is mainly neutral." – SWEDEN

"The biggest media topic or phenomenon related to Finland in the Swedish media was the transfer of Nordea's headquarters to Helsinki. The subject was dealt with extensively and for a long time. It was analysed, in part, through soul-searching and in part through severe criticism of Nordea and its management. Finland itself was not shown in a negative light as such, but the general tone was undeniably negative. Finns, being pragmatic people, may not have quite understood how big a topic this was in the Swedish media. For a long time after the decision, the embassy received questions about how the decision has been regarded in Finland, and Swedes have been surprised to realise that very few Finns have seen this as a competition between the two countries." – SWEDEN

"The former director of Ateneum Susanna Pettersson and actor/director Maria Sid made headlines when they were appointed heads of Swedish cultural institutions: Pettersson as Director General at Nationalmuseum and Sid as Deputy Manager of the Stockholm City Theatre." – SWEDEN

"[...] there is a lot of debate on social media about Finland's decisions regarding asylum seekers, and comparisons are being made with the situation in Sweden. Finland is often pointed out as a "sensible" state from the (far-right) point of view. This idea may have suffered a blow when far-right movements were made illegal by a court decision in Finland." – SWEDEN

## Other Nordic countries

"Finnish guest stars of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra saw a lot of media attention in both advertisements as well as top reviews. In addition to Mattila, Mäkelä, Rouvali and Vänskä, Petri Sakari, who celebrated his 60th birthday last year, was particularly praised. In addition to celebrating Sakari's birthday, the celebrations commemorated the thirty years that Sakari and the Iceland Symphony Orchestra have worked together." – ICELAND

"Finland received a lot of visibility in the Danish media as the organiser of the Trump-Putin summit meeting. Finland was referred to as an experienced summit host. The news said, among other things, that Finns were proud to be hosting yet another summit. Finland's role as an international facilitator was seen to have been strengthened by the summit." – DENMARK

"Helsinki and President Niinistö received a lot of positive media coverage in relation to the Helsinki 2018 summit, which brought Finland to the scene of international politics. For example, Aftenposten, the Norwegian equivalent to Helsingin Sanomat, published an article over a couple of spreads in its weekend supplement with references to events such as the meeting between Ford and Brezhnev and between Clinton and Yeltsin. The article highlighted Finland's position between the East and the West and as a facilitator of dialogue." – NORWAY

## The Baltic countries

"Finland received a lot of positive attention during the Finland 100 jubilee year. It was clear that this would not continue in 2018, but the tone of the coverage remained unchanged, i.e. positive. The main reason was that Finland and Finns celebrated Estonia's 100 years of independence. It was important for Estonians and did not go unnoticed in the media." – ESTONIA

"The decreasing number of Finnish tourists visiting Estonia became a topic in a number of media outlets. The debate was partly accelerated by the fact that the Estonian hotel and restaurant industry lobby used it to demand a reduction in alcohol taxes. But the debate also became more analytical, and the quality of service was discussed. The tone was neutral but it was positive that the topic was talked about because Finnish tourists have been taken for granted up until now." – ESTONIA

"Finland-Latvia 100. The embassy gave Latvia Louhimies's film "The Unknown Soldier" as a gift to be shown on Latvian TV within a week of Latvia's independence day – 18 November." – LATVIA

"Finland's high level of primary education continues to receive attention in Lithuania. In 2018, a campaign entitled "A Teacher for Lithuania" was organised in Lithuania, in which a number of Lithuanian teachers visited various schools in Finland and became acquainted with Finnish comprehensive schools, free school meals, the library system, etc. The editor of the news portal Delfi followed the teachers on the trip and wrote about the teachers' experiences. The tone of the written articles was informative and mainly very positive." – LITHUANIA

## Russia

"Politically, Finland is considered a middle-of-the-road country in the EU by the Russian media: it is seen as a western country in the common front, but one that is willing to maintain a dialogue with Russia and to help to find solutions to tense situations arising from international policies. Among the western countries, Finland is clearly treated more favourably than some others, e.g. the United States or the United Kingdom, but it is not considered quite as close as certain other countries that are seen or presented as close allies." – **RUSSIA**

"The chairmanship of the Arctic Council gained visibility in the Russian media, mainly towards the end of the year, when speculations began to arise around the possibility of holding an Arctic Council summit in Finland. The main point of interest regarding the meeting has been the possible private meeting between Presidents Trump and Putin. Statements by the President of the Republic Niinistö about the ecology of the Arctic region also received some coverage in the Russian media." – **RUSSIA**

"In the Russian media, immigration to Finland has mainly been described through negative examples. It is described as uncontrolled, and its side effects are emphasised. Immigration is seen to erode traditional Finnish values. Progress has been made in the way that issues concerning children's rights and especially the status of families with Russian backgrounds is reported, but there are still individual cases – mainly coming from a single source – that are treated in a one-sided, exaggerated way and for which blame is placed on the Finnish authorities." – **RUSSIA**

"The most significant media topic related to Finland in the Murmansk region was the Finland event and the Arctic Cooperation – The Environment and Sustainable Development seminar organised by the embassy in April. The Finland event received extensive attention in the local media in Murmansk as well as at the federal level. The seminar days, the delegation's meeting with the governor and the cultural programme were especially well covered. The topics highlighted in the news included the continued cooperation between Finland and the Murmansk region, economic prospects, environmental issues, the situation of the mining industry and black carbon. The news also covered the extensive cultural programme aimed at local people organised by the embassy as part of the Finland event." – **RUSSIA**

"In St. Petersburg, the panel discussion on circular economy and waste organised by the Finnish Innovation Forum was widely covered. The subject made headlines in several media outlets, the point being that St. Petersburg could learn from the waste management systems in Finland." – **RUSSIA**



## Europe, excluding the Nordic and Baltic countries

"Lapland and winter tourism remained the top Finland-related topics in the media. Early in the year, there were articles full of admiration for Lapland, which was called the 'winter wonderland'. The Northern Lights, Santa Claus, skiing, reindeer and the Game of Thrones snow hotel were at the heart of travel news. Towards the end of the year, the lack of snow in Lapland featured in many articles. Tourists were disappointed with the exceptional weather conditions." – **GREAT BRITAIN**

"The termination of the tax treaty between Finland and Portugal was widely covered in the Portuguese media, as it had been written about by dozens of different media outlets in previous years. The content of the news reports was mainly very neutral and focused on facts. [...] The situation was described as Finland's "ultimatum" and a sign of impatience with the slowness of decision-making, yet the news also highlighted Finland's desire to implement "fair tax policies". In general, Finland was not held responsible for the situation in the news, but rather the discussion focused on the reasons for Portugal delaying the process, and, at the end of 2018, the reasons why Portugal did not ratify the new agreement signed in 2016 by the deadline." – **PORTUGAL**

"Stories about the allegations of the corruption related to Patria have finally disappeared from the Croatian media, so there were no negative news reports about Finland in 2018." – **CROATIA**

"Finland's top ranking in the UN World Happiness Report was widely quoted in the French media. Several newspapers and magazines as well as television channels reported on the subject, some on the basis of stories published by news agencies, but many also published reports written on site. The stories considered the reasons behind Finns' happiness and the success of Finnish society as well as the differences between Finland and France." – **FRANCE**

"The state visit to Finland by German Federal President Steinmeier on 17-19 September 2018 received more attention than usual in the German media. Steinmeier's visit to Finland was covered by various German media over the course of a week. The top themes included the shared concerns of Germany and Finland about the future of democracy, security and the future of Europe's unity, as well as the close relations and functional collaboration between the two countries. Finland's strengths that were focused on were education, schools and digitalisation." – **GERMANY**

"Generally, themes related to the Finnish welfare system, society, equality and school system, received the broadest coverage. It is hard to select one particular topic from among them but overall, it can be said that Finnish society is of interest in Serbia, be it the President sitting on a staircase during the book fair, the basic income experiment, or the new curriculum at Finnish schools." – **SERBIA**

## Japan

"We have been enjoying good media coverage on Finland in the past few years, but there was yet another great leap in volume. The Finnish Embassy in Tokyo was involved in making 1,116 articles (newspaper, magazine, online) and TV broadcasts in 2018, whereas this number was 675 the previous year (the year before that, in 2016, it was around 350). The tone of the media coverage about Finland remains very positive." – JAPAN

"2018 can be described as the "sauna year" in Japan. There is a clear "sauna boom" in Japan, and the Embassy's Press Section receives media enquiries almost daily, asking if they can visit and report on the Embassy sauna (which is unfortunately being renovated). Visit Finland started the sauna campaign targeting Japanese tourists in September 2018, and many sauna and ofuro (Japanese bath) combined events took place last year. A book entitled "Finland, the country of public sauna" was released at the end of last year, which is receiving a lot of attention. By searching for "sauna"-related articles [...] there were 1,473 articles, the highest number of hits for a particular topic related to Finland." – JAPAN

"There were many Moomin-related topics in 2018. The year began with Japan's university entrance exam including the question, "Where is Moomin Valley located?" The Embassy's Twitter account "Fintan" responded by saying "it's in the heart of everyone who loves the stories." This went viral and kept phones ringing for one whole week by media asking for interviews. [...] This "issue" came to an end when Foreign Minister Soini visited Tokyo in February 2018, and was asked the same question by one journalist during a press conference. Minister Soini commented that "Moomin is in everyone's heart" and the Japanese Foreign Minister Kono also referred to this in the bilateral press conference; the Japanese media finally reported that now the "problem is solved" [...] Another big Moomin topic was "Metsä" recreational park and commercial facility, which is being built in Hanno City, Saitama Prefecture, featuring the Nordic lifestyle. In 2019 they will open a connected "Moomin Valley Park" which will be the world's first Moomin entertainment park outside of Finland." – JAPAN

"MaaS was a new subject that was popular in the Japanese media, actually receiving [...] the second highest number of hits in relation to Finland, after sauna. [...] MaaS is a hot topic, especially in the Japanese automobile industry, with big companies such as Toyota coming out with MaaS strategies." – JAPAN

## China

"Some articles about Finland published in the Chinese media highlighted Finland's role as an Arctic country. Finland's chairmanship of the Arctic Council roused interest in China because China is an observer of the Council and is very interested in using the Arctic region, e.g. the Northeast Passage, in both its foreign trade and its data links. The possible construction of the Arctic Railway is also an interesting topic in China." – CHINA

"In January 2018, two pandas were transferred from the Sichuan province in China to Ähtäri Zoo in Finland, and this was widely covered in the Chinese media. The pandas living in Ähtäri are the northernmost pandas in the world, and they have also been nicknamed "snow pandas". In China, the media coverage was almost exclusively positive, and the event was seen as a sign of good relations between the two countries. The pandas' arrival in Finland was also widely covered in the Finnish media, in which the reporting was much more polarised compared to that in China: there were people who were happy about the arrival of the pandas while some warned Finns of the perils of China's panda diplomacy." – CHINA

"Almost 100 Finnish companies took part in the China International Import Expo (CIIE) trade fair held in Shanghai in November, and the event was also attended by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Anne-Mari Virolainen. The trade fair was opened by President Xi Jinping and was attended by an estimated 2,800 companies from 130 countries, so the media coverage was extensive. Finland got its share of the attention, with Minister Virolainen, the ambassador and the consul general among those who were interviewed by media such as CCTV4 and the People's Daily newspaper." – CHINA

"In China, Finns are seen as reliable, hardworking, honest and fairly introverted. This view has not really changed over the past few years, and the Jingfen phenomenon mainly enhanced the stereotype of Finns as harmless, sympathetic and shy people. Good relations between Finnish and Chinese people are often emphasised, both at the personal and national levels." – CHINA

"Finland's good reputation seems to have remained unchanged. Much of the news coverage is positive, with a particular focus on tourism, winter and various elements related to well-being in Finnish society (happiness, education, early education, etc.)." – HONG KONG

## Asia, Oceania, excluding Japan and China

"The most significant media topic related to Finland in India was definitely Finland's profile as a rising and trendy tourist destination. With export efforts and targeted visits to Finland (travel agencies and journalists), Finland and especially Lapland featured in lifestyle magazines (the most recent example of which is Vogue India) and in travel and feature articles in the biggest English-language newspapers. Finland also received awards at several national tourism award events, which also brought about media visibility." – **INDIA**

"Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Anne-Mari Virolainen visited Jakarta with a business delegation in October 2018. Virolainen's meetings with Indonesian ministers and discussions on the development of commercial and economic collaboration between Finland and Indonesia went well and became the subject of several news reports. The visit highlighted the potential for increased collaboration and the expertise that Finland can offer to Indonesia, especially in energy production and green economy solutions." – **INDONESIA**

"The topic that brought Finland the most media coverage was education. With the first change of government in the history of Malaysia, Maszlee Malik became Minister of Education. He has shown great interest in the Finnish education system and wants to import some of its elements to Malaysia. This interest has spread to the media and the people, and also seems to be fuelling a state-level interest (for example, there has been interest in the Finnish education system in the Sarawak state on Borneo)." – **MALAYSIA**

"Finland's reputation of being a little bit crazy from time to time has only grown with the return of the Finnish Crazy Games down under. Australians share our wild sense of humour and are always keen to learn more about us zany Finns. Finland has received the reputation of being the happiest and safest place on Earth, a title that has echoed throughout media coverage this year as Australians plan their trips abroad." – **AUSTRALIA**

"The Finland 100 celebrations and Finnish celebrities in Korea made Koreans aware of Finland. The good reputation created in 2017 continued in 2018, attracting a lot of positive coverage in various media channels. Numerous Finns have featured in popular Korean reality-TV shows in particular. Finland is still praised in the media as a welfare state, and the Finnish education system is often mentioned." – **SOUTH KOREA**

"The various events of the 100 jubilee year gave Finland more positive coverage than usual. However, the interest in Finland has continued even after the anniversary year, and Finland's reputation has remained good. During the jubilee year, the media covered the story of Finland, whereas the news focused more on the Finnish education system and tourism last year." – **SOUTH CAUCASUS**

## North Africa and the Middle East

"Finland's decision to participate in the Dubai World Exposition attracted a surprising amount of coverage. The news highlighted Finland's themes: sustainable development, innovations and nature; themes that are also related to Finland in other contexts in the UAE." – **THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

"Finland has the best education system in the world. In Finnish schools, teachers prepare children for life more than any other country. Teachers know each and every student and their individual personalities. The annual number of school hours in Finland is 608, however it exceeds 1,275 hours in Iran. Finland was also mentioned as the best country in which to continue on to higher education and post-graduate education due to the quality of the free education system. The country's admission system is easy for Iranian students." – **IRAN**

"Transfer of Finnish high technology to Algeria: Black Donuts entered into an agreement with the Algerian IRIS Group for the manufacture of passenger car tires in Sétif. There are a number of car assembly plants in Algeria, and the aim is to increase production in Algeria. This is great news. Finland is seen a high-tech country." – **SAUDI ARABIA**

"Morocco idolises Finland in various sectors, particularly in environment, health and education. These themes were covered by different media outlets. The most significant theme was the environmental sector, in which Finnish companies demonstrated significant expertise. This especially clear after the visit of the Minister Kimmo Tiilikainen with an important business delegation." – **MOROCCO**

"For years Finland has been described in highly positive terms in the Israeli press. The difference is that more varied subjects are now reported on. Previously the main topic was education, while in 2018 there were also articles on, for example, sustainable circular economy and Finland's approach to sustainable environment." – **ISRAEL**

"In general, Lebanese people are not familiar with individual Finns or Finland as a nation, so it is difficult to say what they think about Finland. In the past few years, however, the Finnish education system has become well known in Lebanon, so the image of Finns may develop into a more positive view if Finns are identified with their education system." – **LEBANON**

"A specially commissioned musical composition, Salute to Finland, was played at Cairo Opera House in June. [...] it was composed in celebration of 100 years of Finnish independence and bilateral relations with Egypt. The event was original and well covered in the press." – **EGYPT**

## Sub-Saharan Africa

"Several media outlets featured new health sciences research results from Finnish universities, such as findings in nutrition and sleep research. Finnish science and research institutions were presented as convincing authorities in their fields. The University of Helsinki's free course on artificial intelligence also received some attention. Let's not forget this fun detail: a bird tagged by the University of Helsinki was caught in Jigawa, Nigeria, and this was also mentioned in the Nigerian media." – **NIGERIA**

"Single events that attracted attention in the media were the high-level visits to Namibia by Finnish delegates. Maria Lohela, Speaker of the Parliament, visited Namibia from 23–28 January 2018. [...] Minister of Economic Affairs Mika Lintilä, in turn, attended a Team Finland visit to Windhoek from 28–30 October 2018 to promote companies' export and internationalisation efforts. This was the first ministerial visit from Finland to Namibia in six years. He was accompanied by a large business delegation of more than 30 people, consisting of companies in the energy, cleantech, mining, education and IT sectors, as well as representatives of research institutes. Both visits were very successful in terms of boosting the country's brand. Finland received a lot of positive publicity when all major media in Namibia reported on the visits on several occasions." – **NAMIBIA**

"The most visible Finland-related media event in 2018 was the 2018 World U20 Championships in Athletics held in Tampere in July 2018. Kenya won more medals than any other country, and the championships were extensively featured in all major media channels. Finland and Tampere, however, were not particularly mentioned in the news stories." – **KENYA**

"Kalle Könkkölä's death featured in the news as Könkkölä's contribution to the development of the disabled community in Ethiopia was fundamental." – **ETHIOPIA**

"The media's approach to Finland has remained roughly the same. Finland is expressly regarded as a donor country due to the long aid collaboration between the two countries, and the image is positive." – **ZAMBIA**

"The second most popular or read about topic related to President Niinistö. The presidential election in early 2018, President Trump's comment about raking and the material of Mrs Jenni Haukio's dress at the Independence Day gala received attention in the South African media." – **SOUTH AFRICA**

## The United States and Canada

"Freedom of speech was one of the topics discussed during the Trump-Putin meeting, thanks to the powerful campaign by Helsingin Sanomat. The campaign also featured in the American media and especially in social media. The news reporting was mainly positive." – UNITED STATES

"The reports about the raking comment [...] also brought up Finland's geographical location, the uniqueness of its nature and Finnish expertise in forest management. For example, the up-and-coming American news website Axios explained in the article "Finland's wildfire management has nothing to do with forest 'raking'" on 19 November that parts of Finland contain permanently frozen soil, while The Washington Post wrote in the article "Why Finland is so good at handling forest fires. Hint: It's not because of raking." (19 November) that Finland has one of the most successful strategies in the world to counter wildfires." – UNITED STATES

"[...] there has been a big change in the image of Finland as a result of the raking debate. Finns are certainly now seen as more humorous than before, thanks to numerous videos, images and jokes published on social media." – UNITED STATES

"In the United States, it is our excellent athletes that make sure that Finland is visible in the media. A special mention goes to Lauri Markkanen of the Chicago Bulls and Meeri Räisänen, the Connecticut Whale player, who, in 2018, was the first Finnish woman to move to the NHL." – UNITED STATES

"News reports about Finland are either neutral or positive, depending on the subject. However, if we focus on the sheer amount of media coverage, one topic beats all the others: ice hockey. The best-known Finns are ice hockey players. The value of ice hockey in creating a positive country image is very high in Canada, and its role as something that connects the two countries should not be underestimated." – CANADA

"Finland is seen in a very positive light, even as an ideal, in terms of good governance. The Finnish school system, which is seen to offer equal opportunities, continues to be of interest, and Finns are considered to have a high level of competence. In many comparisons, Finland ranks at the top, which generates positive coverage (e.g. happiness, quality of life, lack of corruption), even if the reasons for the ranking are not dealt with in detail in the news." – CANADA

## South America

"The Embassy organised a visit on the theme of equality, which was attended by Heli Järvinen, Member of Parliament, as an expert. The main event of the visit was a seminar, organised together with UN Women, for members of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies and Senate on gender perspectives and gender impact assessments in the legislative drafting process. The event was widely covered on social media. [...] Finland was highlighted as a pioneer of equality, and the articles communicated a great interest and willingness to work with Finland in matters concerning equality, such as equality legislation, education and free school meals as well as the childcare system." – **MEXICO**

"A crew from Globo, one of the world's largest media houses, visited Finland in autumn 2018. As a result of the visit, one of Brazil's most important current affairs programmes presented a 45-minute report on Finland during prime time. In the 15 largest metropolitan areas of Brazil alone, Globo's programme was watched by 20.6% of households, and overall, it was watched by about 11.7 million people." – **BRAZIL**

"Finland's good reputation in Chile is unshakeable. Last year's trend of increased and more diverse coverage has continued. The ambassador's visits to the provinces have strongly increased Finland's visibility outside the capital. Articles published during the visits and interviews with the ambassador brought about a lot of positive publicity. [...] Finland has become a point of reference in many respects, especially with regard to the Nordic countries and also the EU. The increased and diversified media visibility is the result of the embassy's and Business Finland Chile's activities to enhance Finland's image and export efforts." – **CHILE**

"This year we sent Vania Massias, one of the best dancers in the world, on a visit to Finland, where she was able to familiarise herself with the Finnish educational and art system, to learn about its development, success and to propose possible supports." – **PERU**

"Minister of Foreign Affairs Timo Soini's visit in March inspired positive discussion about collaboration with Finland and even between the EU and Argentina and the Mercosur. Discussions were also held with Alejandro Finocchiaro, Argentina's Minister of Education, on educational collaboration. Minister Soini's visit also featured in interviews in the largest newspapers, La Nación and Clarín, which covered several themes." – **ARGENTINA**





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Ministry for Foreign  
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