

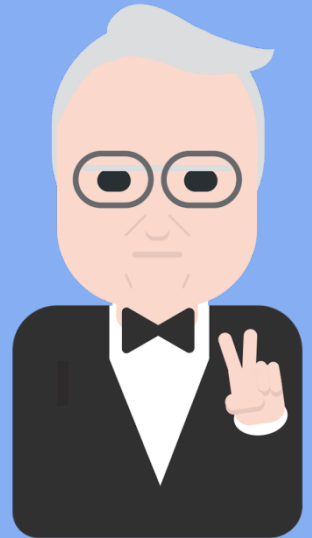


MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

Finland in World Media

Ministry for Foreign Affairs review of 2015

” Finland enjoys a positive reputation overall but remains little known.



Finland's overall rating

In 2015, Finland's reputation in media remained broadly **unchanged**.



2014 average 3.69

Finland remains associated with the same topics as in the **previous year**.
An enduring favourite is the Finnish education system.

2014

School system

PISA food **Katainen**

Niinistö Russian sanctions

Santa Claus design nature

Tove Jansson Lapland

Patria Maternity pack **START-UP**
Equal marriage act **SOFI OKSANEN**

Anti-corruption **Ice Hockey World
Championship**

2015

Maternity package

NATO Santa Claus food

Sibelius migration
nature Katja Kettu

Basic income pilot

START-UP reservist letters

parliamentary election

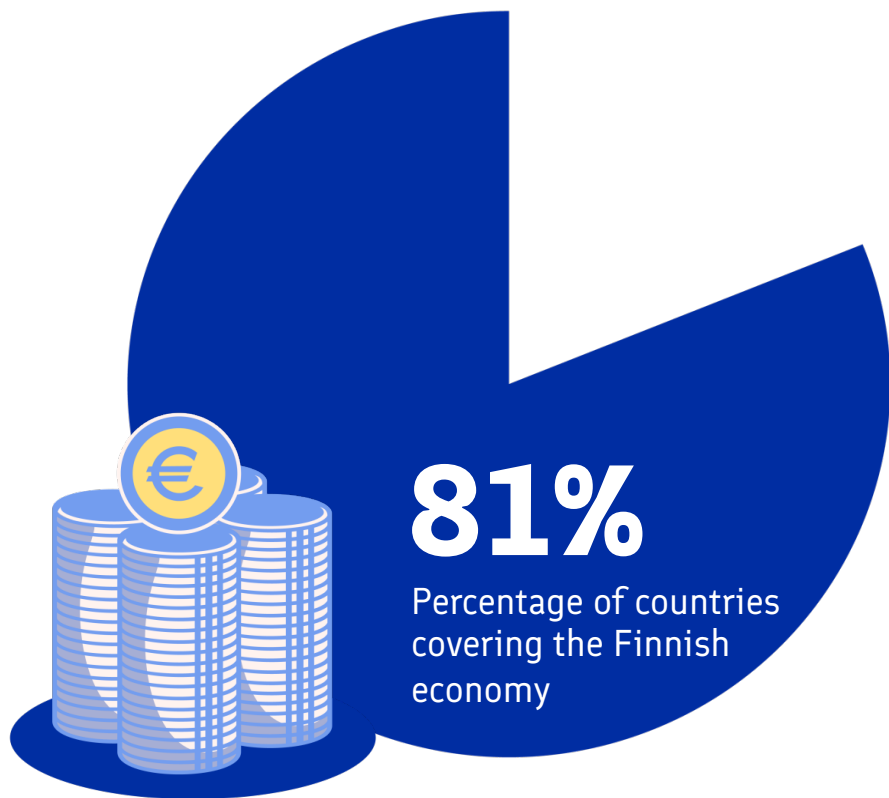
design **economic crisis**

Stubb Sipilä Soini
schools Lapland



” **Finns would be surprised at the extensive and positive coverage they receive in Sweden.** –SWEDEN

In addition to our neighbouring countries, there is above average interest in Finland in Japan, South-Korea and Chile. In general, the further the distance the lower Finland’s profile. Being a small country, Finland is often rather invisible.



Finland is often seen as **part of Europe** – Europe's challenges are Finland's challenges. However, Finland also receives coverage in her **own right**.

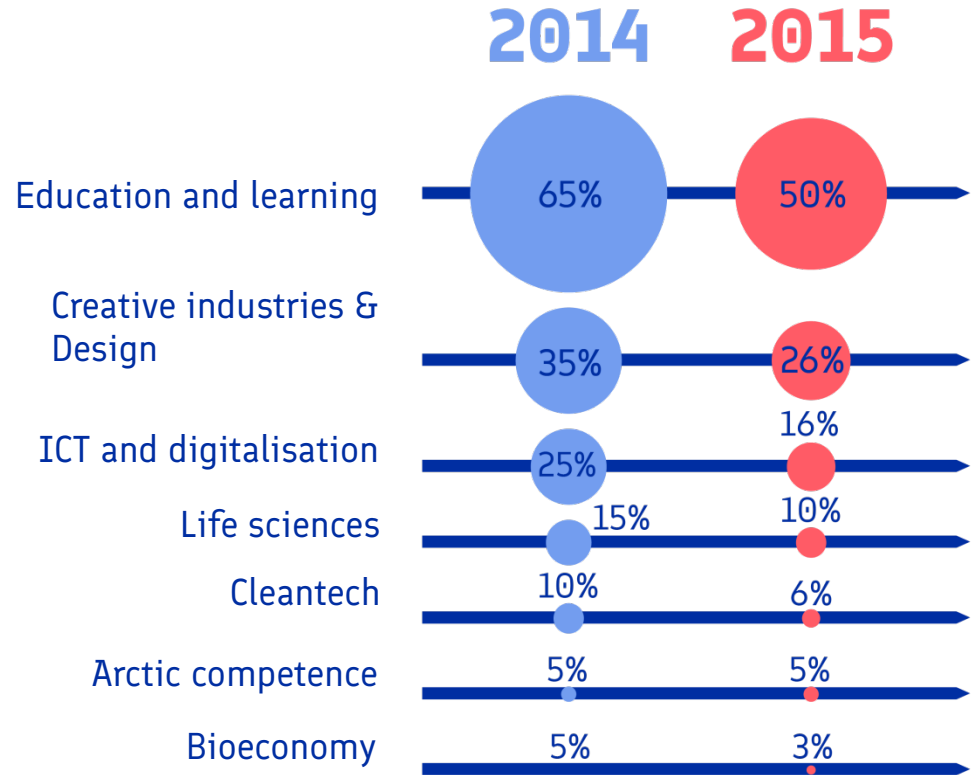
” From innovative and sophisticated model state to cautionary tale.

” Finland’s weak economy is a topic that has attracted the most extensive attention in the Singapore **media**. Finland used to be seen as a sophisticated and innovative economy but that reputation has now shifted somewhat. Commentators have noted that there has been no economic growth for many years, there are cuts to pensions and annual leave entitlements and Finland remains in recession. This is of interest, as Singapore is also a small country, and Finland is now used as a cautionary tale. **Overall, Finland’s reputation remains positive**; Finland is admired and considered a success. **-SINGAPORE**



The thematic priority industries set out in the Team Finland strategy appear to have lost some visibility in 2015.

Finland, and Finland's strengths and weaknesses, continued to receive coverage but less of this focused on actual industries, particularly in the mainstream media.



”

In the spring of 2015, in conjunction with the Swedish royal couple's visit to Finland, **there was an expectation that the Finnish economy was heading for a recovery.**

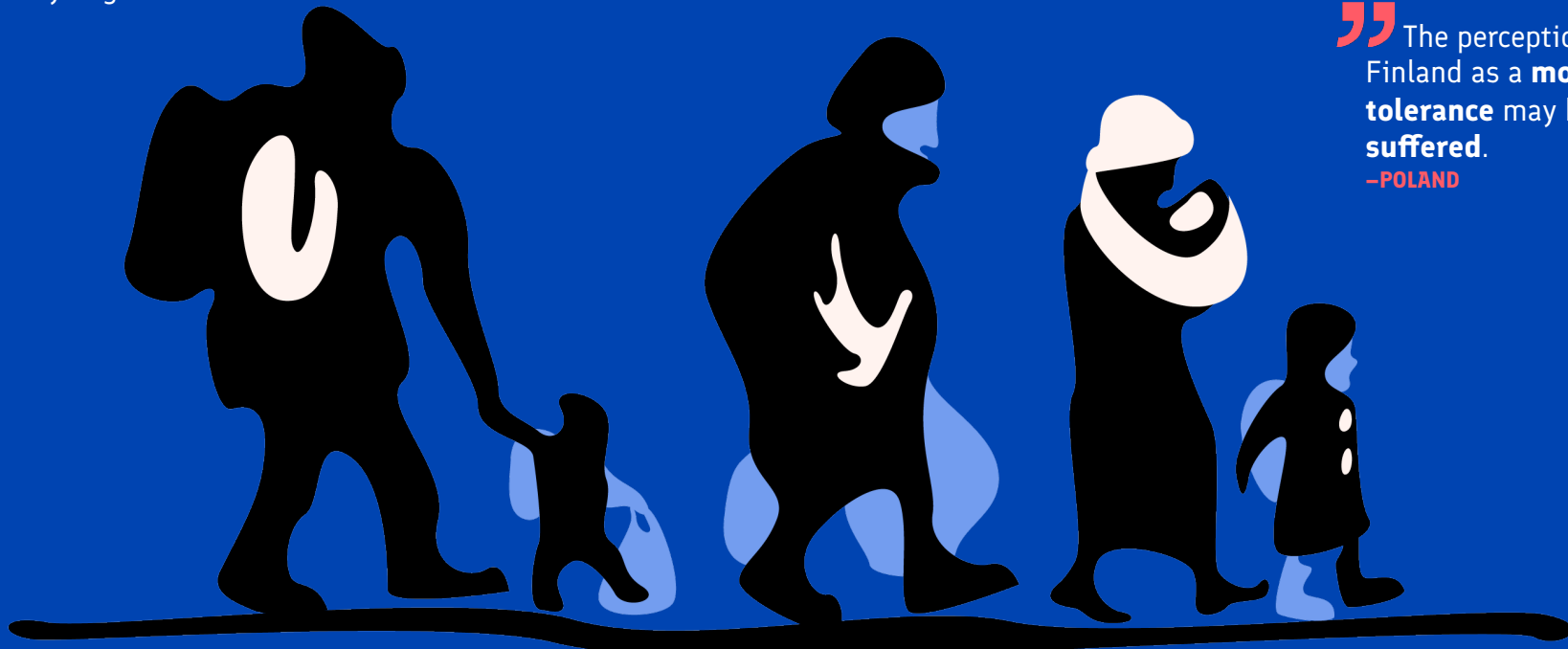
Swedish business leaders travelling with the royals expressed their desire to invest in Finland, and the country was judged to be over its worst economic woes.

-SWEDEN



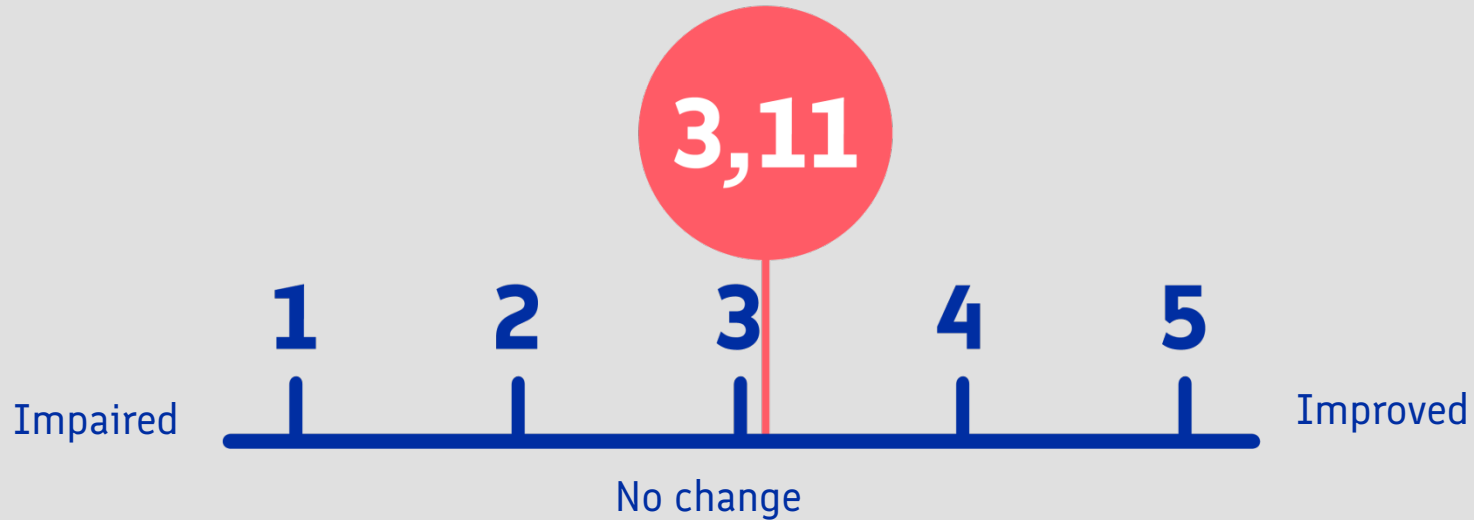
” In the latter half of 2015 especially, media coverage on Finland, along with other countries, focused particular attention on the refugee crisis. In comparison with our neighbours Sweden and Denmark, Finland’s policy and handling of the crisis have been perceived as consistent and largely more positive, in contrast with Sweden’s early open doors approach and Denmark’s staunchly negative line. . –CANADA

” The perception of Finland as a **model of tolerance** may have suffered. –POLAND



” United States media have followed the European refugee crisis closely, and Finland has received a fair share of the coverage. The most high-profile story was published on the front page of the Washington Post on 26 November. The extensive report follows a group of asylum seekers as their make their way from the Finnish border to Siilinjärvi and the local residents as they prepare for the new arrivals. The article represents the views of all the parties and tone is neutral and factual. –UNITED STATES

Has Finland's role in the handling of the refugee crisis affected Finland's image overall?



” Although the European **refugee crisis** has been closely watched in the United States, and the reporting has included negative aspects, including Olli Immonen's Facebook post and the anti-refugee rally in Lahti, **the overall perception of Finland has remained unchanged**. News items have been neutral in tone and **Finland's solid reputation, particularly in education, prevails**.

—UNITED STATES

” Finland's image has shifted somewhat in the past twelve months. With regard to Finland's policies on economic sanctions and the refugee crisis, Finns continue to be seen as tolerant, cautious and patient but **also as more decisive. In some respects, Finns are thought to be undergoing a change**.

—UKRAINE

Among Finnish politicians, Sipilä, Stubb and Soini enjoyed the most extensive personal coverage.

” Finland's millionaire prime minister offers his home to refugees.



Juha Sipilä



Alexander Stubb

” Finland is the new sick man of Europe.”
- Alexander Stubb

” The most noteworthy aspect of Finland’s new government was the appointment of Timo Soini as Foreign Minister.



Timo Soini

” The November visit by the Finnish president generated extensive television and newspaper coverage. According to local media analysts, **only the state visit by president Obama exceeded this level of coverage.** The reporting focused on **energy sector collaboration** between Finland and Indonesia and our bilateral relations generally. President Niinistö gave separate interviews to two television channels, Metro-TV, the largest national channel, and CNN Indonesia. **-INDONESIA**



Sauli Niinistö



” Mexico’s capital city México recently introduced Finnish-style maternity packages for low-income mothers. **The high-profile publicity campaign generated an unexpected degree of media coverage for Finland across the media, often cited as the birth place of the idea.** This campaign, more than any other, has brought the Finnish **welfare state** to the general public’s attention and given a **considerable boost** to Finnish image-building in Mexico.

—MEXICO

” **Basic income.** Kela’s basic income pilot study received **extensive positive coverage** in newspapers and online media. However, across a number of media, this was reported something definite pending roll out, rather than a pilot study.

—POLAND



MOST OFTEN MENTIONED FINNISH PUBLIC FIGURES (EXCLUDING POLITICIANS):

Kimi Räikkönen
Valtteri Bottas
Jean Sibelius
Katja Kettu
Sofi Oksanen
Isac Elliot
Signmark
Jaakko Kuusisto
Teemu Selänne



Kimi Räikkönen



Jean Sibelius



Katja Kettu



Isac Elliot

” Finns are considered honest. We are known for our sporting achievements **but, latterly, Lithuanians have also become aware of our artistic achievements and expertise in other areas.**

-LITHUANIA



Jean Sibelius

” Due to the many events surrounding the 150th Sibelius anniversary, Finnish culture remained in the headlines throughout 2015, with **more than 1,000 media hits for Sibelius.**

–RUSSIA

” During the Sibelius 150 anniversary year, Sibelius’s music was adopted as the theme for a number of music festivals across Norway. The NRK radio stations regularly play a wide range of Finnish classical music.

–NORWAY

” The Helsinki Symphony Orchestra visit to Mexico comprised the entirety of Sibelius’s symphonic catalogue across three concert performances. This was judged **the most significant musical event in Mexico for decades.**

–MEXICO

” The jubilee year has received reasonable public attention. There have been a number of concerts and events in addition to those initiated by Finnish organisations. However, Paris’s largest classical music venues opted not to feature Sibelius in their programming and, as such, it cannot be said that there has been significant national media attention. Sibelius is well-known in musical circles in France but public awareness is much lower than in the anglophone world.

–FRANCE



Katja Kettu

” In April, the author Katja Kettu received significant publicity **across all the main newspapers** for her novel *Kättilö*. The coverage included large colour photographs, interviews and reviews. The coverage was consistently **extensive and positive**. This can be considered **significant**, particular in comparison with the publicity given to the Finnish state visit in 2013, which was extremely modest.

—DENMARK

” Isac Elliot, a teenage Finnish-Swedish musician, currently enjoys megastar status in Norway, where he is known as Finland’s Justin Bieber. NRK, the national radio station ranked him among Norway’s ten greatest fans, alongside Nelson Mandela and Denmark’s Queen Margrethe.

—NORWAY



Isac Elliot

” In terms of the creative industries, **the presence of Finnish writers and book reviews in the local media, including NPR and Publishers Weekly, is a new phenomenon**. Leena’s Krohn’s Collected Fiction was included in the New Yorker’s Books We Loved in 2015 list.

—UNITED STATES



Culturally-speaking, *Miekkailija*, a Finnish-Estonian joint film production, attracted **the most attention** in late 2015. In Estonia, it was mainly cited as an Estonian film but the Finnish team received mentions too. The export foray by the Finnish contemporary circus sector also received attention. **Overall, Finnish cultural tends to be positively received.** In literature, Sofi Oksanen continued to dominate. In music, Pertti Kurikan Nimipäivät, Finland's Eurovision Song Contest entry, received a lot of attention. The response was not as enthusiastic as in Finland but, in this context, it was noted that **Finland is exactly the sort of country** where people with disabilities can go on to achieve this sort of thing. The idea was adopted in Estonia and in the autumn the ERR channel began broadcasting a series charting the life of a band comprising musicians with disabilities. They also visited PKN in Finland. **This is an excellent example of successfully exporting a social concept.**

–ESTONIA



PKN

Finland emojis – a global hit



In a single month (November-December 2015) the emojis attracted

more than
2,000

articles and inserts across key media outlets globally

Most significant exposure in USA, UK, Sweden, Germany, Japan, Italy, Russia



LIMITED SOCIAL MEDIAL REACH

15
million



MEDIA REACH
153.7
million

» *Kalsarikännit*, the Finnish term for getting drunk alone at home, was voted the world's most beautiful word in Germany. According to the Germans, this single word beautifully encapsulates the Finnish approach to life and makes the Finns seem even more likeable.

”The two faces of Finland”

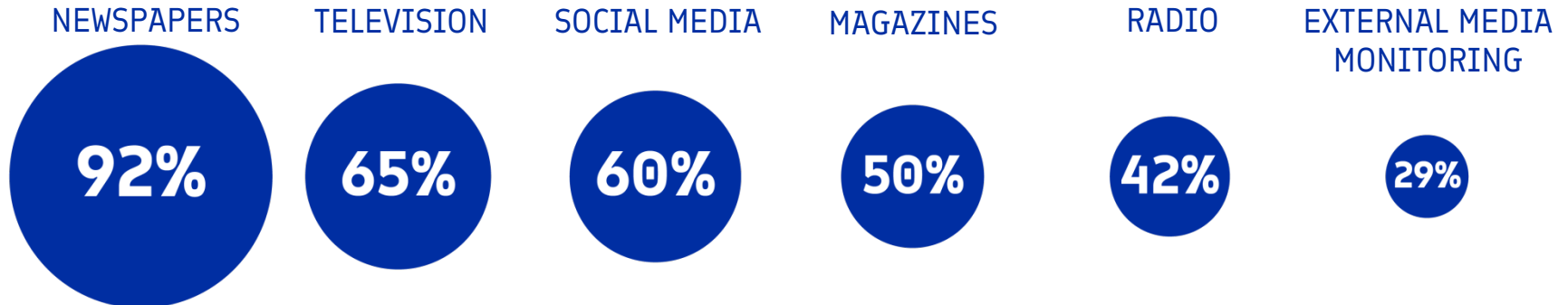
” Finland is known as a country of equal opportunity and high levels of education. With the refugee crisis and the economic downturn, media coverage has also featured **Finnish attitudes to refugees**, including the solidarity marches and the Ku Klux Klan figure, as well as **refugee living conditions and the rise in youth unemployment**. In the news it has been noted that the risk of poverty-related harm for children is low. The **maternity package** has also received positive coverage. The **basic income** pilot has also been noted in the media.

-CYPRUS

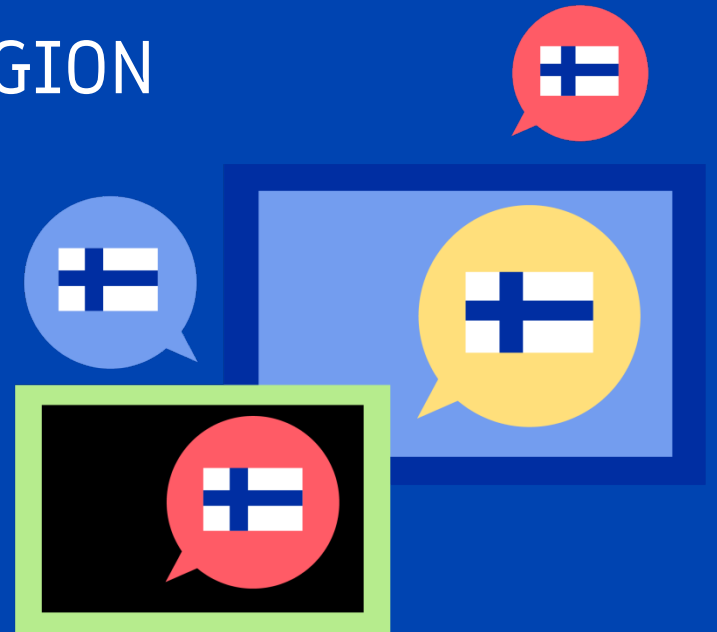


Finland in the world media – 2015 in brief

- 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 is based on assessments submitted by the Finnish missions and, in the case of some countries, on externally sourced media monitoring reports. In around two thirds of the missions, media-related activities are conducted alongside other work.
- The Webropol survey was conducted between December 2015 and January 2016
- A total of 62 out of 89 missions submitted a response.



FURTHER INFORMATION BY REGION



NORDIC COUNTRIES

” Finland enjoys a high profile across Swedish media and Finland receives mentions daily. In 2015, there were 17,500 articles on Finnish politics, 7,400 articles on the Finnish economy and 7,000 articles on Finnish culture. –SWEDEN

” The centenary of Finnish independence received excellent advance publicity when the **proposal to gift the peak of Halti fell to Finland spread like wildfire through the media**. The idea, originally put forward by a retired surveyor, was widely admired across the world. –NORWAY

” Many newspapers highlighted research findings by the Happiness Research Institute suggesting that Finns are happier than the Danes. The Danes have traditionally ranked among the happiest people in the world. –DENMARK

” Finnish health technologies received positive coverage in DN, the national daily, and on Swedish radio. The gist has been that the industry is due to enjoy an export boom and Swedes should learn from this. –SWEDEN

” An enduringly popular topic throughout the year has been **defence cooperation** between Finland and Sweden. The majority of reports have struck a positive tone. This is also a hot topic on social media. –SWEDEN

Parliamentary elections, immigration, economy, defence cooperation,

Sipilä, Soini, social contract, Guggenheim, basic income, design, happiness, NATO, Katja Kettu, Halti.

RUSSIA AND FORMER CIS NATIONS

”Finland’s reputation is broadly unchanged and it remains good. A few dents have been introduced by the worsening economic situation and, towards the end of the year, by the asylum seeker situation. **Ordinary Russians have been surprised at Finland’s economic crisis and recession and evaluations of the Finnish economic model have been put forward.** The Finnish refugee policy has been judged as too soft by some. [...] **The key media item in 2015 was asylum**, which picked up steadily from June onwards.

. –RUSSIA

” The **Finnish education system** receives positive media coverage, in the context of a review of Ukraine’s own system. Changes are currently underway and there is wide ranging debate, particularly online, on the feasibility of importing some of the Finnish principles.

–UKRAINE

” Imported Finnish products still enjoy high social cachet in Russian media. For example, **people still miss** genuine Valio products. –
RUSSIA

” Finnish summer festivals and the Restaurant Day event are of interest. A notable event is the **Flow Festival** which, for Russians, **represents the ideal, well-organised music event.**

–RUSSIA

” In the Russian media, the topics subject to disinformation ranged from distorted reports of President Niinistö’s speeches to children’s care orders and Finland’s defence policies. In the Pravda news section, Finland and Sweden’s defence cooperation was dubbed “an anti-Russian military alliance”. Johan Bäckman continued to spread disinformation about care orders for children. One of his key messages has been that “children from Russian backgrounds are being hunted down so that they can be sold for big money to private children’s homes”. The reporting on the refugee crisis focused on how Finland as an EU member state had been plunged into chaos by the flood of asylum seekers. This story was reported throughout Russian media from the smallest to the largest outlets.

–RUSSIA

**asylum seekers,
Sibelius, economy,
basic income, education, NATO,
Finnish-Swedish defence collaboration,
Slush, submarines, reservist letters,
cleantech, Lapland, parliamentary
elections, Santa Claus,
Sipilä, Soini,
Räikkönen.**

EUROPE, EXCLUDING OTHER NORDICS

” In general, there has been confusion and concern over the **rapid deterioration** of the Finnish economy. In the Spanish media, the Finnish economy has been seen as an example to others. This is how Finland is generally reported. There has also been coverage citing Finland as a good destination for international investors, as in Expansión on 16 Nov 2015, ”Finlandia, un país clave para los inversores extranjeros”.

–SPAIN

” As the two countries enjoy a **close relationship** across all sectors, it is **difficult to identify any one portrayal** that would encapsulate the Estonians’ perception of Finland. Due to the closeness of the relationship between the two nations, Finland features **daily** in Estonian media (**largely through borrowed content**). In Estonia, Finland is seen as a super power.

–ESTONIA

” Finnish culture sector professionals are highly rated in Portugal, particularly among other sector representatives. Finnish classical music figures are reasonably well-known. Contemporary music figures, such as Kimmo Pohjonen also enjoy a degree of publicity. Traditionally, Finnish culture is primarily associated with architecture and design. In the gaming industry, mentions tend to go to Rovio and Supercell, which are widely considered to have picked up Nokia’s mantle.

–PORTUGAL

” [--] Immigration and the **asylum seeker situation** in Finland, attracted extremely extensive attention in Latvian media. The coverage was frequent and diverse. Items that made the news included the prime minister’s decision to make his private home temporarily available to asylum seekers, the shift in public mood, the economic aspects as well as the social security entitlement for asylum seekers.

–LATVIA

**parliamentary elections,
migration, education,
economic crisis, Sipilä the
millionaire, Stubb, Soini,**

basic income, nuclear power, curriculum,
freedom of speech, emojis, Nokia,
fashion+Marimekko, racism, Pekka
Kuusisto, Sofi Oksanen, Räikkönen,
Santa Claus+
economy+bankruptcy, Lapland, Helsinki,
Hyypiä+football, PKN, maternity
package, NATO, reservist letters,
submarine.

EUROPE, EXCLUDING OTHER NORDICS

” Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, **included Finland in a list of rich nations that are closing their borders and putting self-interest above solidarity** (other countries on the list included Britain, Ireland and Denmark). [···] Overall, Finnish attempts at managing the refugee crisis were conveyed as **realistic and pragmatic** in the German media. [···] Several German broadsheets reported that Finland may consider withdrawing from the Euro zone, thus risking the stability of the joint currency. Finland is said to be worse off than Greece, **a former EU model pupil has become a trouble maker, the Greece of the North.** [···] **Finland is a pragmatic and innovative nation, with the courage to make its own decisions**, including the basic income pilot, nuclear power and nuclear waste storage. Finland is seen as a world leader in digitalisation and well-placed for the fourth industrial revolution.

–GERMANY

” Finnish design, fashion and food. Several articles, particularly on blogs, specialist publications and online. These were prompted by the Paris embassy’s media tours of Finland. The approach is enthusiastic, positive and marked by its desire to discover something different. The traditional design classics by Aalto, Artek and Wirkkala enjoy enduring popularity in France. Everyday design and architecture, particularly using wood, is of interest. With regard to fashion, Marimekko’s first ever show at Paris Fashion Week attracted significant attention. [···] Finland is seen as different and exotic.

–FRANCE

” Finland continues to be seen as an understanding and, to some extent, like-minded though critical, friend. There was speculation that Finland’s policy on the EU may change after the election. The tone is generally positive – EU reform and, to some extent, EU-critical views, are viewed positively in Britain. The Telegraph newspaper, for example, gave fairly neutral coverage to Paavo Väyrynen’s citizen’s initiative on Finland’s Eurozone membership.

–GREAT BRITAIN

**parliamentary elections,
migration, education,
economic crisis, Sipilä the
millionaire, Stubb, Soini,**

basic income, nuclear power, curriculum,
freedom of speech, emojis, Nokia, fashion
+Marimekko, racism, Pekka Kuusisto, Sofi
Oksanen, Räikkönen, Santa Claus+
economy+bankruptcy, Lapland, Helsinki,
Hyypiä+football, PKN, maternity package,
NATO, reservist letters,
submarine.

NORTH AMERICA

” The potential **basic income pilot** received **fairly extensive attention** in late 2015, across Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Bloomberg, Business Insider, Washington Post, Fox News and CNN. **The coverage struck a positive and sometimes even admiring tone, with the newspapers noting that ”Finland does it better”.**

–UNITED STATES

” A number of opinion pieces and blog articles expressed the view that Finland’s current economic malaise was attributable to **Eurozone membership**. [...] It was also noted that Finland had suffered a bout of bad luck with simultaneous downturns for **Nokia, the forestry sector and Russian trade**. [...] Simon Nixon took a different view, arguing that Finland’s financial woes were not due to the Euro but to the country’s **structural issues, including the unresponsive labour market and high employment costs**.

–UNITED STATES

” Finland is seen in an extremely positive, even idealised, light with regard to good governance. The Finnish education system remains a topic of interest but media exposure is down on previous years. [...] At the end of the year, **a pilot project was launched in the province of Alberta to distribute maternity packs** to low-income mothers, which generated **significant positive publicity for Finland across the country**. [...] Ice hockey players were the most high-profile Finnish public figures in Canada, and they always contribute to positive perceptions of Finland.

–CANADA

” With regard to exports, coverage in the American media focused primarily on Finnish start-up companies, Nokia’s Ozo camera and the Here maps. **Admiring references were made to the Finnish start-up culture.**

–UNITED STATES



**education,
ice hockey, parliamentary
elections**
day care, play, maternity
package, Euro, basic income,
Sipilä, Guggenheim, Stubb, Soini,
Selänne, Rovio,
Supercell.

ASIA, OCEANIA, EXCLUDING CHINA

” The Jakarta visit by Signmark, the sign language rap artist and Ministry of Foreign Affairs special representative on disabilities, was of **significant interest to the Indonesian media**. He gave two separate interviews to two television channels, Metro-TV, the largest national channel and Berita Satu. Both interviews were screened during prime viewing time. In addition, several newspapers and social media outlets carried articles about Signmark, which covered his life story and highlighted human rights issues for minority groups, music and Finnish education. In Indonesia, Signmark is viewed as an **excellent example of high-quality Finnish education provision and equal opportunities**.

–INDONESIA

” **Slush Asia was held in Tokyo in April 2015, attracting significant media attention. The PR company counted 207 articles, out of which 193 were online. Some newspaper and magazine articles also talked about the Slush event in Helsinki in November.** –JAPAN

” Thanks to the **excellent** country image Finland enjoys, it is considered and portrayed as a desirable destination country for Korean young people wishing to emigrate. Many dream of moving to Finland or other Nordic countries and there is some incorrect information in the public domain about the feasibility of this. –SOUTH-KOREA

Slush, Signmark, Fintan, Moomins, Santa Claus, maternity package,

minorities, human rights, equality, music,
education, Onkalo, ICT+service sector,
Sibelius, Aurora Borealis, Ikumen, Marimekko,
Iittala, Finlayson, Ivana Helsinki,
Rajeev Suri, Räikkönen, national emojis, basic
income, Helsinki, Sipilä, Soini, Stubb,
Paananen, Vesterbacka,
Liukas.

CHINA

Finland continues to enjoy an excellent, possibly even a somewhat idealised, reputation in China. Finland is considered an old friend.

” Finland’s **cleantech** expertise, across the forestry, paper, engineering and energy industries, is a regular feature in Chinese media. In late 2015, additional coverage was prompted by a small number of Finnish companies in these sectors entering the consumer market.

” The no-nonsense line of reporting on the Finnish **basic income pilot study**, prevalent internationally, is an interesting and important international media phenomenon that, indirectly, reached all the way to Hong Kong [...] As the Chinese media have it: “this will make the Finns even lazier...”

” These are “turbulent” times for the welfare state. [...] With regard to the Finnish situation, the focus across the Chinese media is on highlighting **questions** and issues, not on providing answers.

” Finnish schooling and **education**. Much of the reporting is focused on why Finnish provision is the best in the world. This theme emerges almost daily in our media monitoring. **No other single topic achieves the same coverage.**

” Finland, like the other Nordic countries, is increasingly attractive to Chinese **tourists**, and travel-related references to Finland appear in the Chinese media **at least on a weekly basis.**



**schooling/education,
Lapland,
basic income, cleantech,
Slush, PreHelsinki, Santa
Claus, design, bioeconomy,
ICT, tourism.**

NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

Finland (continues to) enjoy a positive, if superficial, reputation in North Africa and the Middle East.

” Egypt would like to reform its education system and **Finland is again being cited as an excellent model by many, including those in the top echelons of government.** –EGYPT

” Finnish **innovations and exports** in newspapers, online publications and social media: collaboration on education, Nokia’s ”comeback”, Finnair’s route network expansion and new stock, **Dubai’s Burj Al Arab hotel’s new North Deck, designed and developed in Finland.** The Finnish Ambassador as figurehead for the **Cycle to Work** day campaign. The overall thrust is very positive. –DUBAI

” **Finnish vocalist Stina sings in a Berber language that is not the official language of Algeria but is spoken by millions as their mother tongue. Stina’s concerts received excellent coverage across all media and she attracted tens of thousands of followers on social media. She was even featured in a cartoon in Algeria’s main broadsheet.** –ALGERIA

**Sibelius,
Pasi Sahlberg,
Lapland,**

Anttonen, North Deck, Finnair,
Nokia, nature lover, stability,
tranquillity, enlightened
central government.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Namibia is Finland's number one fan in Africa

” Finland and the Finnish embassy received extensive coverage in early March as a partner for Namibia and for their efforts to promote gender equality, especially through a seminar to empower and inform Namibia's new **female parliamentarians**. Finnish business visiting Namibia have attracted media attention with their innovative solutions and cleantech products. **-NAMIBIA**

” In November 2015, the Finnish embassy organised a health and well-being themed business event. **In Nigerian media, coverage on Finnish expertise in health and well-being is second only to migration-related issues.** Of the 85 references to Finland in the sample gathered by the embassy, just under 25% are health-related. In the media, health and well-being-related topics and Finnish expertise have often been introduced using the **maternity package concept**, something that has proved very interesting to Nigerians.. **-NIGERIA**



Ahtisaari, Haavisto,
Niinistö, **equality**,
empowerment, **health**,
well-being, maternity
package,
cleantech.

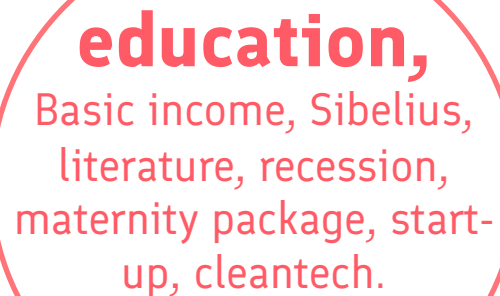
SOUTH AMERICA

Finland's good reputation in South America improved in 2015.

” Finland enjoys an excellent reputation in Chile. Finnish society and expertise are highly valued. Finland's recession received extensive coverage in conjunction with election-related analysis. It is not an exaggeration to say that Chilean media interest in Finland is due to **our country's long-held position as a model nation**. The political sector uses developments in Finland for its own ends, with regard to education reform, for example. Pasi Sahlberg visited Chile in early 2015 and gave a number of interviews to newspapers. Innovation, cleantech and digitalisation all emerged as key discussion topics. Towards the autumn, Slush highlighted Finland's role in promoting innovation, start-ups and high technology. Robotics were also noted. Finland's participation at the Santiago international book fair in October and November generated extensive and positive publicity that has served to highlight **a lesser known aspect** of Finland. **-CHILE**

” The (in parts incorrect) reporting on the plans for a **basic income** in Finland sparked a **surprising amount of coverage** in the Brazilian media.

-BRAZIL



education,
Basic income, Sibelius,
literature, recession,
maternity package, start-
up, cleantech.

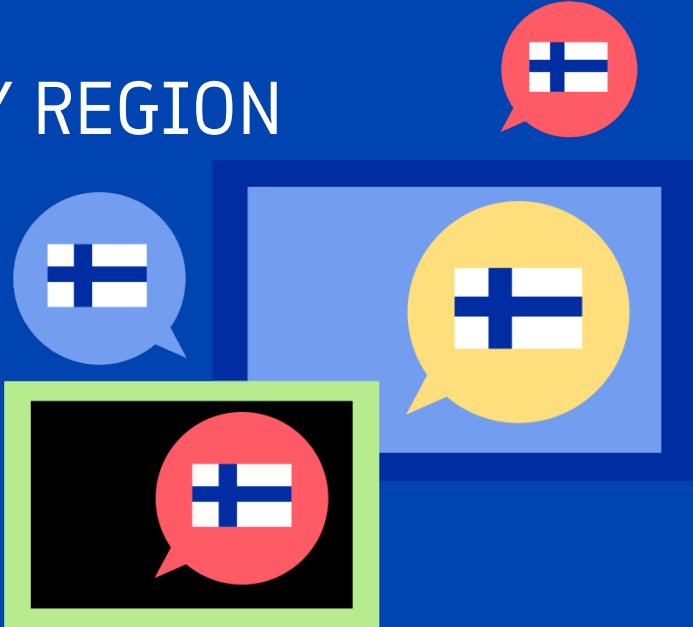


MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

2015

Unit for Public Diplomacy, e-mail: VIE-50@formin.fi

EXCERPTS FROM RESPONSES BY REGION



NORDIC COUNTRIES 1/2

”Finnish pragmatism and roll-up-your-sleeves mentality are well-known concepts that also featured in the Swedish media in 2015. Examples of this include the speed with which the coalition government was assembled, the willingness to include a populist party in government, the Slush event, the Finnish education system, the Finnish defence forces, the social contract negotiations to an extent and the social welfare and healthcare reforms. [...]”The international economic crisis has hit the small, export-reliant country hard.” – SWEDEN

”The cultural pages were full of Guggenheim-related reporting that also discussed the history of the Helsinki museum project and the criticisms levelled at the Guggenheim ”concept” (McGuggenheim), drew comparisons with the Danish museum sector and introduced the winning architects.” –DENMARK

”The parliamentary elections and the inclusion of the Finns Party in government received a moderate amount of coverage in Denmark, bearing in mind that Finnish domestic politics rarely feature in the Danish media. Before the elections, the media covered Finland’s NATO debate and economy. After the election, many newspapers ran biographies of Juha Sipilä, where he was described as a non-partisan character, whose background could well be beneficial in managing the crisis situation in Finland.” –DENMARK

”In her latest book, Katja Kettu, punk singer and author, writes about Finland in World War II.” Katja Kettu also appeared on the front pages of Weekendavisen, Politiken and the Berlingske. This is a highly noteworthy degree of publicity, especially considering that it did not come off the back of a literary prize nomination. In music, Pertti Kurikan Nimipäivät secured a number of articles in the main newspapers, on television and radio, along with several other bands, including Jaakko Eino Kalevi.” –DENMARK

” A popular and enduring theme in Norwegian media is Finland’s highly successful education system that is referenced by politicians across the spectrum, and by sector professionals, in a variety of contexts.” –NORWAY

” St1’s acquisition of 420 Shell petrol stations in Norway proved interesting to the Norwegian media, which began expressing their hopes for cheaper fuel.” Leading newspaper Aftenposten’s journalist Liv Berit Tessem’s two articles gave good marks to the Finnish education system. Her article ”School is not for PISA, it’s for life” discussed Finnish education reforms, the curriculum and digitalisation. The second article focused on children who drop out of school. A third of all young people in Norway fail to complete their secondary education. The article highlights the example of Otavan opisto and how students are encouraged to remain in education until graduation.” –NORWAY

” Awareness of ordinary Finnish products and brands is low because many businesses choose not to focus on their Finnishness in their marketing efforts. Examples of this include Fiskars, Wärtsilä, MacGregor, Kone and Caverion.” –NORWAY

NORDIC COUNTRIES 2/2

” Finnish elections and the new government. This generated hundreds of articles in Sweden, the majority of them neutral. Before the election, the media were particularly interested in prime minister Sipilä as a person, his popularity and the Finns Party. Biographies on Sipilä and Soini. The key messages on Sipilä were his business background, pragmatism and popularity. The key messages on Soini were his persona and comparisons with the Swedish populist party, the Sweden Democrats, the differences in the two parties’ backgrounds were highlighted and the Finns Party’s SMP (former countryside party) past. Many column-inches were dedicated to Finns Party members’, including Teuvo Hakkarainen’s, anti-immigration comments. After their election success, some editorials with a “warning” message were published, appealing to Sipilä not to give the True Finns seats in government. Their subsequent inclusion in the government prompted some very negative and pointed articles. At the time of the election, a number of articles appeared that focused on the differences between the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats, highlighting the lack of past fascist links of the Finns Party. In general, the Finns Party image diversified during this time. Following the formation of the government, the consensus was that the government would have a rocky and difficult time, not least because of Finland’s challenging economic situation. The prediction was that the government would be forced to make deep, painful cuts. It was suggested that Finland’s foreign and defence policies would remain unchanged during the new term. In late 2015, publicity was given to the demonstrations against the government’s new *pakkolaki* legislation and the difficulties faced by the government in negotiating a new social contract.” –SWEDEN

” Several Finland and asylum-seeker related topics were covered in the Swedish media in the early autumn. Thousands of hits in September alone. Tone both positive and negative as the narrative contained both positive and negative elements, the negatives dominant.” –SWEDEN

” More than 7,000 articles on Finnish culture and cultural figures in Sweden in 2015! Sibelius received an exceptional degree of publicity due to the anniversary year. The large Moomin exhibition at Junibacken in Stockholm was also noted. Otherwise the range is very broad. [...]” Two news Finnish books, Jörn Donner’s “Sverige – resor i ett främmande land” and Rosa Liksom’s “Sånt är livet” prompted a number of colourful reviews around October/November time. In addition to the reviews, a number of newspaper biographies were published of these well-known writers. Dagens Nyheter described Liksom as the wildest in her class of Nordic writers.” –SWEDEN

” It is noteworthy that the Swedish media have been anticipating an upturn for the Finnish economy for some time and, on a couple of occasions, this has been already been called, once by the Swedish Radio correspondent and again by Dagens Industri.” –SWEDEN

” A particular highlight is the Finnish health tech sector, currently with a turnover of SEK 28 million and with a bright export future ahead. **Sweden is being urged to copy Finland’s health technology exports.**” –SWEDEN

RUSSIA

”There is negative news about immigration situation in Finland. Kazakhstani media stresses that Finnish people are aggressive to refugees coming to Finland, Finnish government has tightened the requirements for family reunification as it anticipates a flood of applications from refugees.”

”On the whole, Finland is seemed to be an oasis of silence and tranquility where the people enjoy living a full and happy life. –KAZAKSTAN

”Innovaatiot, Cleantech, digitalisation all present. Towards the autumn, Slush promoted Finland’s strengths as an innovation, start-up and high tech model nation. Robotics also noted.” –RUSSIA

” In June-July, Finland announced that it would not allow Russian parliamentarians on the EU sanctions list to attend the OSCE event in Helsinki. Finland’s government was criticised in the media for its “spinelessness” and the decision was judged “to have harmed our bi-lateral relations”. The decision was also said to have been dictated by Brussels and the White House. Of all Finland-related news items, the OSCE event attracted the most extensive media coverage in 2015.” –RUSSIA

”Particular attention was given reports of asylum seekers complaining about the food, accommodation and financial support offered to them in Finland, along with reports of asylum seekers crossing the Russian border on bicycles. The overall attitude towards Finland is positive but there is open criticism levelled at the demands made by asylum seekers and Finland’s patience at dealing with them. In general, there is very little understanding towards Finland’s tolerant attitude towards asylum seekers.” –RUSSIA

EUROPE, EXCLUDING NORDIC COUNTRIES

The majority was borrowed content, often from Finnish tabloids, [...] There were a number of significant events, due to Finland's standing in Estonia. [...] The poor state of Finland's economy was clearly communicated across Estonian media. This may have proved confusing to many ordinary Estonians, as it was not reflected in Finnish people's living standards. No deep analyses of the Finnish economy. Through the borrowed media content, Finland's critical public discourse and domestic rhetoric are transplanted into Estonia.[...] –ESTONIA

"The treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers in Finland received high profile coverage in late 2015. The image of the demonstrator in a Ku Klux Klan outfit featured widely, with "Racist attack against bus carrying asylum seekers" the most common headline. In Spain, Finns are viewed largely positively so news items of this kind attracted more attention and generated some confusion. On the other hand, prime minister Sipilä's offer to house asylum seekers at this private residence generated broadly positive coverage." –SPAIN

"British news highlighted the rise of the self-made millionaire to prime minister." –GREAT BRITAIN

"Finnish emojis were enthusiastically received and portrayed Finns in a positive, as well as an unusual and unique, light. They were accepted as a fun and effective publicity stunt with a feel-good factor. The topic was picked up across the media but has not received coverage since." –GREAT BRITAIN

"The financial difficulties faced by Dianordia, managers of the Santa Claus village, received prompt publicity in Portugal. The line taken was that Finland's economic crisis must be serious, if even Santa Claus himself is facing bankruptcy. "We may still be in summer but Santa is nearly bankrupt" "Santa bankrupt – financial crisis to blame", said the headlines." –PORTUGAL

"The maternity package reporting usually takes the tone of "Finland is the best country for mothers".
–FRANCE

"Sami Hyypiä hit the headlines in August when he was appointed manager at FCZ. Since then, he has been watched closely. The tone of the articles is positive. In February, conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen was featured in a number of wide-ranging articles to coincide with his performance in Zürich. The tone of the articles was extremely positive."
–SWITZERLAND

"In early 2015, Finland was referred to in the news as a hardliner in relation to Greece's debt management arrangements." –CYPRUS

"The media picked up on the fire bombing in Lahti, the border controls in Tornio, Sipilä's decision to offer his home to asylum seekers, the disaffected Iraqis and the rising estimates of refugee numbers." –POLAND

"Sibelius's music has featured throughout the year at Spain's most important concert venues and the reviews have referred to the 150th anniversary. Although the publicity has reflected the performance dates across the year, more articles appeared in December. On 5 December, El País dedicated the cover and first four pages of its *Babelia* cultural supplement to the composer's life and works." –SPAIN

"Finnish childcare provision and maternity packages have received wide ranging publicity in Ireland and they have been highlighted positively in the media. In the autumn, a reporter from the Irish Independent visited to Finland to report on childcare arrangements." –IRELAND

NORTH AMERICA 1/2

” Finland’s reputation unchanged in 2015.”

”The Huffington Post and others covered the Junction hackathon, praising the collaboration between established companies and start-ups. Forbes also reported that Finland and the other Nordic countries are the best places in the world for start-ups. Supercell’s Super Bowl advert generated a lot of positive attention.” –UNITED STATES

” The US media have highlighted how former Nokia workers have created new jobs for themselves (New York Times) and how Radio Helsinki secured its future through crowdfunding (Forbes). These have both been positive news items and fostered an image of Finland as an innovative and solutions-oriented nation.” –UNITED STATES

” The Finnish education system attracted widespread attention this year in the US media. The topic is of interest to Americans as education reform is a hot topic at the moment. The most high-profile news items were an article by Finland-based American teacher Tim Walker on Finnish day care centres, where the focus is on play, instead of phonics and other academic topics. Valerie Strauss picked up on this theme in the Washington Post, reporting that Finnish children do not start school until age 7. Both Business Insider and Vox reported on the Finnish education system, asking ”why Finnish schools are better than American schools”. The articles noted that children have more time to play, there are fewer tests and exams, both pre-school and university tuition are free, there is less child poverty and teachers as a profession are highly regarded. The Washington Post covered Finland’s plans to adopt topic areas in favour of traditional academic subjects. The piece compared this with the American system and reported on Finland’s excellent PISA results and the high level of education obtained by teachers.” –UNITED STATES

” As a rule, Finland enjoys a positive reputation in the United States but awareness remains fairly superficial. The Finnish education system is given regular attention in the US media but other topics are covered only sporadically. This year, reporting has focused on the Finnish economic situation as well as Finland’s role in the European refugee crisis. In the New York media, column inches have also been devoted to high-profile Finnish creative figures, particularly in classical music and literature.” –UNITED STATES

Finnish conductors are given a particularly high degree of visibility in the US media. The New York Times wrote about Esa-Pekka Salonen on a number of occasions and also gave coverage to Susanna Mälkki, Kaija Saariaho and Osmo Vänskä. The local media took a great interest in the Guggenheim project, which was covered in the New York Times and on CNN, among others. –UNITED STATES

NORTH AMERICA 2/2

”Many articles highlighted Finland’s strengths in the technology sector. This was covered in the Washington Post’s extensive article on Linux and news items discussing Finland’s start-up culture. The new Solu computer also featured highly in technology sector media outlets.” –UNITED STATES

”Ice hockey plays a key role in fostering a positive image of Finland in Canada. The junior Ice Hockey World Championship tournament received extensive publicity in late 2015. As the organisers, Finland received excellent coverage, also on non-ice hockey related topics, including tourism.” –CANADA

”The crisis in Ukraine and Russia’s new politics have seen a rise in interest in Finland’s foreign and defence policies. In Canada, publicity has been given to the reservist letters, the air space violations, the depth charges used by the Finnish navy and the closer defence cooperation between the Nordic nations. Finlandisation has been mentioned on a few occasions but it is rarely proffered as a solution to the Ukrainian situation, less often than in 2014. “The Finnish export sector receives relatively little attention. The main focus is on ICT and the gaming sector, as well as engineering and design. Finnish innovations and ICT are also positively covered, Nokia in particular has received much positive coverage of late. The gaming sector is a bit of a mixed bag, on the one hand, there is awareness of Supercell’s success but also the difficulties faced by Rovio. Canada is interested in Finnish expertise with ice breakers, with positive coverage for the journey through the Northwest Passage in the autumn. Kone also receives significant positive attention, also as an investment.” –CANADA

”Finland-related topics of enduring interest for Canadians include education, equality, the welfare state, ICT, including gaming, innovation and design. In terms of column inches, one topic is above the rest: ice hockey. The best known Finns by far are ice hockey players. The value of ice hockey in generating a positive reputation for Finland in Canada is extremely high and it is almost impossible to overestimate its importance as a unifying force between the two countries. The debate surrounding Canada’s insufficient Arctic capacity intensified in 2015 and there is significant interest in Finland’s expertise on ice breakers.” –CANADA

ASIA AND OCEANIA

”In addition to Moomin, ONKALO and other energy related issues are another favourite to the Japanese media, stories related to the final waste disposal site come once in a while since Japan can’t find a solution to the problem and they always look to Finland.”

–JAPAN

”The media often writes and reports about Finns’ similarities with the Japanese such as being shy and reserved, loving nature and functional design, etc. Finnish men being ‘ikumen’ (men actively taking care of kids) and women active in society (gender equality, good work-life-balance).” –JAPAN

”Extremely good. Finland is known in Japan with all the positive elements such as neuvola, gender equality, start-ups, good functional design, Sibelius, Santa Claus, Moomin, xylitol, the Northern Lights. There is almost no negative aspect in the image of Finland in Japan.” –JAPAN

”Fintan, the Embassy’s twitter character, is still very popular with over 125,500 followers, and what he says in twitter are often covered mainly by Japanese online media.” –JAPAN

”The Embassy started a big promotion of childcare related matters (namely neuvola and the maternity package), and the media caught on, especially since the Japanese municipalities now have budget to go forward with the idea. All media were interested, except radio.” –JAPAN

”Finland remains very highly-regarded country in South Korea that is frequently used as a benchmark. A slightly exaggerated picture of Finland as a paradise of high-quality education and good governance prevails. Finland’s promotion of start-ups and Korea’s current economic strategy focusing on creativity have significant synergies and, in the post-Nokia era, have brought Finland to Koreans’ consciousness.” –SOUTH KOREA

”The post-Nokia-Finland is lodged deep in the Korean consciousness. In 2015, articles on Finland were purely positive, focusing on Finland’s success in bringing together the ICT and service sectors.” –SOUTH KOREA

”The Nokia story continues to fascinate Koreans. As the post-Nokia start-up boom is a natural fit with Korea’s rhetoric on the creative economy, it is receiving a lot of media attention. Finland’s economic difficulties are well-reported, along with the governments efforts to manage them. Particular attention has been paid to employment legislation as a similar debate is underway in Korea too.” –SOUTH KOREA

”Prime Minister Sipilä’s announcement that he was making his private residence available to asylum seekers resonated in Korea following reports of the drowned refugee child and received significant publicity. It was judged to represent a humane selflessness, untypical of Korea’s leaders.”

–SOUTH KOREA

NORTH AFRICA AND MIDDLE EAST

”It is interesting to note that Finnish culture weather music, education or architecture were always described also through the underlying values of quality, trust, equality, professionalism. Other topics like tourism, are reported, overtly or covertly, with similar underlying values. This connects the other areas to the civilized culture of Finland.”

–ISRAEL

”Finland’s image has remained positive but the country’s profile is higher than in previous year, thanks to several high profile official visits and the mission’s proactive approach. Finns are perceived as reliable, solutions-oriented, innovative and highly educated people. Finland is considered a good partner.” –ARAB EMIRATES

”Economic stories often start with Nokia’s problems, but continue with exploring how ”from its ashes” is emerging now something new and interesting.” –ISRAEL

”Collaboration around classical music is key to cultural cooperation between Finland and Egypt. For the past nine years, the Egyptian-Finnish Musical Bridge has brought together musicians from both countries, and the event continues to attract positive publicity. The Sibelius jubilee year has prompted additional coverage for Finnish classical music in the Egyptian media.” –EGYPT

”The Finn who got most hits in media was Pasi Sahlberg, thanks to his visit. Other Finns who were mentioned in the Israeli media in 2015 include, among others, Prime Minister Sipilä (offer to house refugees), President Ahtisaari (comments on Syria), Jari Aarnio’s criminal investigation, Eric Seufert from Rovio (though he is actually American), Ambassador Leena-Kaisa Mikkola (speech in women managers’ conference).” –ISRAEL

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

”The Sibelius jubilee received excellent coverage on the Classic radio station in Gauteng, home to Johannesburg and Pretoria. One of their presenters was invited to attend the Sibelius Weeks in Lahti. This led to coverage on the visit, including pieces on non-music topics, such as waste management. They also continued to play plenty of Sibelius’s music for several weeks. We have retained excellent contacts with the presenter since – we supplied them with Finnish Christmas music CDs, which were handed out as prizes on their morning show. The presenter also discussed Finnish Christmas traditions. This is an excellent music journalist contact for the mission.” –SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AMERICA

”In 2015, Finnish classical music enjoyed a high level of public exposure thanks to the Sibelius jubilee year. Unexpectedly, news of the maternity package made the headlines, receiving extensive coverage.” –MEXICO

”Finnish design features almost weekly in the relevant publications. Santiago has a shop selling Nordic design.” –CHILE

”The Finnish education system is written about extensively. One popular angle adopted by journalists is to ask why Finland is changing the best education system in the world. As a counter-reaction, there have also been some articles questioning the usefulness of drawing comparisons between tiny Finland and a country the size of Argentina and why Argentina should aspire to a Finnish-style system.” –ARGENTINA

”A concert by Pekka Kuusisto with Bremen Camera Orchestra got a wide coverage. They were much impressed by his capacity to act as conductor and simultaneously play the violin.” -PERU

” The two faces of Finland = on the one hand, it has a world famous education system, on the other hand it has been in recession for three years” (Chile, El Mercurio), ”End of the Finnish miracle?” (La Tercera).” –CHILE