

WASA DAILY

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Mothers Day

Helsingin Sanomat and AI

ALMA

Porn: Sin or Pleasure?

Finland Streamlines Reception System

Nilla Kjellsdotter

WASA DAILY



HERE WE ARE:

vpress.ovh

38 pages

TODAY

The role of artificial intelligence in newspaper journalism – Helsingin Sanomat as an example

Artificial intelligence will cause a revolution in journalism,

Technological advances have changed the practices of journalism faster than ever before. Artificial intelligence (AI), in particular, has become a significant tool in media houses around the world. It can be used to speed up content production, enhance investigative journalism and offer readers new interactive services. However, the use of AI also involves ethical challenges, such as the reliability of sources, the impartiality of information, and changes in jobs.

Helsingin Sanomat (HS) is Finland's leading newspaper, and it has adopted artificial intelligence in a variety of ways, while keeping journalistic responsibility and ethical principles central. In this editorial, we examine the impact of artificial intelligence on journalism globally and the concrete uses of HS.

Artificial intelligence as a tool for journalism around the world

Many international media houses, such as The Guardian, The Washington Post and Reuters, have incorporated artificial intelligence into their editorial work. The most common applications include:

Automatic News Generation – From data traffic, sports scores, and reports, simple news can be quickly generated. For example, the Associated Press uses artificial intelligence to process business results.

Data Analysis and Investigative Journalism – AI can go through massive amounts of data, such as government documents, to reveal potential flaws.

Personalized content – Algorithms recommend articles based on the reader's interest (e.g., Wikipedia). Recommenders like Netflix).

Diversification – Translating, recording and condensing text make the workflow more efficient.

However, there are problems: the misleading "hallucinations", deep-fakes and biases of information in artificial intelligence are threats to

journalistic reliability. That is why ethical guidelines and human supervision are essential.

Helsingin Sanomat as a pioneer in artificial intelligence

HS has integrated artificial intelligence into its delivery processes in a transparent and responsible manner. The magazine reports on this in an article published on 6 May. The magazine's principles emphasise that the journalist is always responsible for the content, whether it is artificial intelligence or another tool. The most important thing is truthfulness and the trust of readers.

Key applications of artificial intelligence in HS

Journalistic recommendation – The recommendations on the front page of HS and at the end of the articles are based on both the editors' choices and the reader's previous behaviour.

AI voice – Almost every article can be read by a robotic voice, which makes life easier for readers on the go, for example.

Transcription of interviews – AI converts speech into text, but the result is reviewed and corrected by the editor before publication.

Abstracts – Many articles begin with an AI-generated summary that is fine-tuned by the editor.

Information retrieval – The watchdog system searches for news in municipal documents, and the journalist makes the final news.

AI assistant and story assistant – The tools help you create story drafts, translations, and video scripts.

Illustrations and keywords – The AI suggests elements for illustrations and keywords for articles, but the final decision is up to the editor.

Ethical boundaries: when is AI not used?

HS has set clear limits:

AI images are not published (except in exceptional cases when they are the subject of the news dissemination itself).

Data security is a priority – the

materials are not used outside Sanomat.

Transparency – The more AI affects the content, the more accurately it will be communicated to the reader.

Future challenges and opportunities

The development of artificial intelligence continues and its use in journalism will only increase. Important questions include:

How can we ensure that the information produced by artificial intelligence is reliable?

What to do when AI accidentally spreads misleading information?

How can journalistic professionalism be maintained when routine work is automated?

Helsingin Sanomat has taken a step forward in the utilisation of artificial intelligence, but has

kept human judgement and journalistic principles at the centre. This is a model that other media companies should also follow.

Artificial intelligence helps, not replaces

Artificial intelligence is changing journalism, but it is not replacing journalists – at least not yet. The benefits (speed, efficiency, new services) are significant, but human judgment and ethical responsibility are invaluable. Helsingin Sanomat's approach, in which artificial intelligence is a tool instead of a decision-maker, is a step in the right direction.

Readers' trust is at the heart of journalism, and maintaining it requires AI to be used wisely – not cheaper or faster, but better.

Photo Supplement

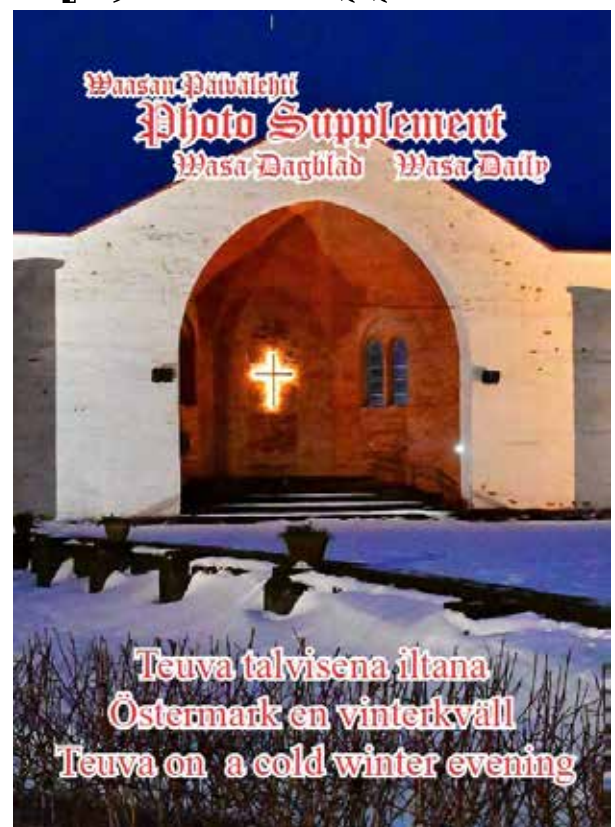


Photo Supplement - bpress.ovh

Cover: Rainbow

NEWS

LITERATURE

Crime Writer Nilla Kjellsdotter from Oravais Sells Over 390,000 Copies – New Thriller "Not Your Child" Explores Motherhood's Dark Side



The Swedish-speaking crime queen from Finland's west coast has achieved a remarkable milestone – Nilla Kjellsdotter's Murders in Ostrobothnia series has now sold over 390,000 copies across Nordic countries.

The fourth installment, *Not Your Child* (original Swedish title *Inte ditt barn*), will be published in Finnish by Gummerus on May 28, promising another psychologically intense thriller that grips readers from the first page.

International Acclaim for Regional Crime Stories

Kjellsdotter's novels featuring police inspector Mija Wadö have gained unexpected international traction, with translations now available in Norwegian, Danish, and Estonian alongside the original Swedish and Finnish versions. The series' unique blend of Ostrobothnian landscapes and complex character-driven plots has established Kjellsdotter as one of Scandinavia's most compelling crime writers.

"I'm constantly surprised by readers' emotional connection to these stories," Kjellsdotter remarks. "Though set in specific locations, they speak to universal fears about family, belonging, and the darkness that can hide behind closed doors."

A Missing Child Case That Hits Too Close to Home

Ei sinun lapsesi (*Not Your Child*) opens with every parent's nightma-

re: ten-year-old Albine fails to return home for dinner during the first winter storm. As the search for the reliable, conscientious boy intensifies in Mija Wadö's hometown, the pregnant detective faces her own crisis of identity:

"The idea of maternity leave filled her with equal parts longing and dread. She wanted her child desperately, yet feared losing her professional self – that essential part of her identity forged through police work. Taking early leave seemed almost unbearable."

When investigative threads begin pointing toward Mija's own inner circle, she must confront painful questions about motherhood, trust, and the secrets even loved ones keep.

Recognition for Bringing Ostrobothnia to the

World

Last year, Kjellsdotter received the Ostrobothnian Swedish Cultural Foundation Award for her role in putting the region on the literary map. Critics praise her ability to weave intricate crime plots with profound examinations of human nature and razor-sharp social observation.

"I don't just write about crimes," Kjellsdotter explains. "I write about people – their contradictions, their quiet heroism, and the moments when ordinary lives fracture."

Ei sinun lapsesi will be released on May 28 in hardcover and audiobook formats (narrated by Krista Putkonen-Örn). The Finnish translation is by Anna Heroja. The Swedish name of the book is *Inte ditt barn*.

Source: Gummerus

NEWS

YOU CAN READ THIS NEWSPAPER ANYWHERE



You can read this paper wherever You are. Like here on the shore

MEDIA

Some Helsingin Sanomat Articles Partially Produced by AI

Helsingin Sanomat, Finland's leading newspaper, has begun using artificial intelligence as a tool in its journalism, though all published content is reviewed by human journalists and editors.

The newspaper states that AI helps improve reporting quality, speeds up workflows, and enables more efficient news discovery. However, the final responsibility for content always lies with people, not machines.

"Writers, photographers, and all journalists are accountable for the content they produce. Any potential errors are made by humans, not algorithms," Helsingin Sanomat emphasizes.

The publication uses AI transparently and discloses its role, particularly when it significantly influences the final output.

Helsingin Sanomat adheres to the guidelines of the Council for Mass Media (JSN) regarding the labeling of AI-generated content. The goal is to maintain readers' trust and ensure published information remains reliable. "Our aim is for readers to always trust the content published by HS," the newspaper states.

AI adoption is becoming increasingly common in media, and Helsingin Sanomat has outlined its key applications in the newsroom. According to the paper, AI does not replace journalists' professional judgment but serves as a tool to enhance and streamline news reporting.

MOTHERS DAY on May 11

Chamber Music and Sweet Treats for Mother's Day – Special Offer Delights Concertgoers in Vaasa City Hall

Get ready to celebrate Mother's Day in a truly special and sensory way! On Sunday, May 11th at 15.00, the musicians of the Vaasa City Orchestra invite you to an atmospheric chamber music concert in the beautiful halls of the City Hall.

To honour all the wonderful mothers, they have created an exclusive offer: a concert ticket including coffee with a delicious pastry during the intermission – all for the favourable price of €25.

This memorable concert promises a journey through diverse musical landscapes, focusing on the intimate and expressive world of chamber music. The concert will begin with two captivating duets, both bearing clear influences from neoclassicism. First on the program is André Jolivet's sonatina for flute and cla-

rinet, a work where the two instruments engage in a playful and equal dialogue. Following this, the audience will enjoy Rebecca Clarke's thoughtful and at times melancholic duet for clarinet and viola. This piece was composed in the USA, a time when Clarke herself felt a strong longing for her homeland, which is reflected in the music's sincerity.

After the enchanting atmosphere created by the initial duets, concertgoers will be treated to a welcome intermission. Here, they will have the opportunity to savour a cup of steaming coffee together with a flavourful pastry, which is included in the special offer. This provides a perfect moment for reflection on the opening music and pleasant socializing with fellow music lovers.

The second part of the concert will take the audience on a deep dive into the passionate world of Slavic



Romanticism. The esteemed string quartet of the Vaasa City Orchestra will then perform Alexander Borodin's String Quartet No. 2. This masterpiece is not only filled with beautiful melodies and rich harmonies but also carries a personal dedication from the composer to his beloved wife. Borodin's Second Quartet is known for its emotional intensity and heartfelt expressions, making it an ideal piece to celebrate love and family ties on Mother's Day.

This special offer presents a unique opportunity to combine a high-quality cultural experience with a mo-

ment of convivial gathering and a delightful treat. Experiencing the musicians of the Vaasa City Orchestra in such an intimate chamber music setting is a rare pleasure, and being able to do so on Mother's Day with a favourable price makes the event even more appealing.

Don't miss the chance to give your mother – or yourself – a memorable and enriching experience on Mother's Day. Let the beautiful sounds of chamber music and the sweetness of pastries create a moment of joy and harmony in Vaasa City Hall. Tickets for this special event can be purchased via the Vaasa City Orchestra's website or directly at the entrance, subject to availability. However, it is advisable to book in advance to secure your place for this guaranteed to be appreciated concert. Celebrate Mother's Day with music – a gift that touches the soul!

Source: vaasa.fi

NEWS

ALMA

New Skills and Friends Through Hobbies – Enrollment for Vasa Adult Education Centre Alma's Courses Begins in May



Are you interested in learning a new language, developing your creative skills, or enhancing your well-being?

Vasa Adult Education Centre Alma is once again opening its doors to new learners for the academic year 2025–26. Enrollment for the next academic year's wide range of courses will begin on Thursday, May 15th at 3:00 PM. The most eager can explore the course selection and register already now at uusi.opistopalvelut.fi/vaasa, where a large portion of the spring 2026 courses are already available for booking.

Alma has established itself as a significant centre for adult learning in the Vaasa region. Annually, the centre's over 1000 courses attract approximately 16,000 participants across ten different subject areas. Operations are not limited to Vaasa; Alma also organizes courses in Vähäkyrö, Laihia, and Isokyrö. In line with modern times, the selection of online and cre-

dit-based courses is also extensive, enabling studies regardless of time and place.

The adult education centre's courses and lectures are open to everyone, regardless of age or prior education.

The upcoming academic year once again brings exciting new additions that complement Alma's already rich offerings. New features include courses where you can try sewing with fish leather, find peace with prenatal yoga, delve into the secrets of the Old Norse language (norrønt) online, and discover balance through mindfulness and the well-being-promoting effects of music.

The selection of the most popular courses, such as Finnish at various levels, versatile sewing courses, and different massage techniques, has been expanded to meet the increased demand. Particularly, ceramics and shoe-making courses have traditionally filled up quickly as soon as registration opens, so prompt action is advisable. The course offerings in the Kyrönmaa region have also been

strengthened with new yoga courses, bringing well-being closer to the area's residents.

In addition to traditional hobby courses, Alma also invests in professional development by offering various qualifying training programs. An example of this is the Mental Health First Aid courses, upon successful completion of which participants receive an official certificate of competence. These courses provide valuable skills both for individual well-being and in working life.

"Although the majority of the courses for the academic year 2025–26 will be published in May in connection with the registration, it is good to remember that we continuously update our offerings throughout the year," reminds Sannasirkku Autio, the principal of Vasa Adult Education Centre Alma. She emphasizes the importance of adult education centres not only as an environment for learning new skills but also as a vital meeting place for community and new friendships. "It is paramount for us to offer diverse learning opportunities

for people of all ages and in different life situations. Learning is not just about acquiring new skills; it is also a way to enrich life and promote well-being."

In addition to online registration, Alma also offers more traditional registration methods. Interested individuals can register for courses in person at Alma's service points in Vaasa at Raastuvankatu 31 (tel. 0400 868 110, open Mon-Fri 8 AM–4 PM) and Raastuvankatu 33 (tel. 040 6299 133, open Mon-Thu 10 AM–2 PM). At the service points, knowledgeable staff will be happy to assist with course selections and answer any questions.

Now is an excellent time to explore Alma's wide range of courses online and plan the upcoming academic year with new, interesting hobbies and learning experiences. Whether your interests lie in languages, art, exercise, well-being, or practical skills, Alma's diverse selection is sure to offer something for everyone. Seize the opportunity and register to enrich your life with new skills and friends!

Source: [Vaasa.fi](https://vaasa.fi)

NEWS

EU

Henriksson at the European Parliament: Ukraine's Fight is Europe's Fight – Remembrance of WWII's End Reinforces Support for Ukraine



Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the Renew Europe group, Anna-Maja Henriksson (Swedish People's Party of Finland), delivered a powerful speech at the European Parliament during a debate held in honour of Victory in Europe Day.

This day, May 8th, 2025, marked the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. In her address, Henriksson reminded the assembly of Finland's own distinct "Victory Day" on April 27th, 1945, when Nazi Germany's forces were expelled from Lapland and

Finland was once again an independent and free nation.

Henriksson shared a personal recollection of her father, who fought alongside his Finnish comrades-in-arms for Finland's freedom and independence. She emphasized the remarkable achievement of Finnish soldiers in successfully halting the Soviet Union's massive occupation and invasion attempts twice – first in the Winter War and then in the summer of 1944. Henriksson stated that this defensive victory was a unique achievement also for the democracy of the whole of Europe.

The focus of her speech then shifted to the current and grave situation in Euro-

pe. Henriksson underscored Ukraine's ongoing struggle for its existence amidst Russia's war of aggression. "Today, Ukraine is fighting with a knife to its throat. This is also our fight, the fight of all of Europe," she stressed. Henriksson made it clear that Europe must support Ukraine in its battle so that the country can achieve a defensive victory on its own terms. Simultaneously, she called for Russia to be held accountable for its unprovoked aggression and the brutal destruction it has caused.

Henriksson reminded the European Parliament of the European Union's historical roots as a peace project in the aftermath of the Second World War. She appealed

to the parliament and all of Europe that this foundation must never be forgotten. "Let us always remember this and do everything we can so that Ukraine can one day join the European Union," Henriksson concluded her speech with a strong message of unity and hope for the future. Her words garnered widespread attention and support in the parliament, highlighting Europe's shared commitment to peace, democracy, and Ukraine's independence. Henriksson's speech served as a potent reminder of the lessons of history and the obligation to support those who are currently fighting for European values.

Source: SFP

NEWS

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

»Pornography – Sin or Pleasure?« Groundbreaking Study from University of Eastern Finland Reveals Christians' Complex Relationship With Porn

In a surprising revelation, actively religious Finnish Christians consume pornography at remarkably high rates despite considering it morally wrong and sinful, according to a pioneering doctoral dissertation by MTh Pia Rendic at the University of Eastern Finland. This contradiction causes deep shame and spiritual distress among believers, the study finds.

Young Religious Women Emerge as Unexpected Active Users

The research, surveying over 500 self-identified Christian porn consumers, uncovered striking gender patterns:

Young women actively involved in church life were overrepresented among regular users

Primary reason for initial use: curiosity and sexual interest (68%)

Most common reason for continued use: masturbation (82%)

Only 12% reported porn improved their relationship

»The most unexpected find-

ing was how many young women regularly view porn despite knowing it conflicts with their faith,» Rendic reveals.

Moral Anguish and Relationship Strains

The study documents pornography's psychological and social impacts:

Internal conflict: 89% experienced guilt after use

Relationship effects: 76% reported negative intimacy consequences

Religious conflict: 68% felt like »worse Christians» due to porn use

»Many become trapped in a cycle of temporary abstinence followed by relapse,» Rendic explains.

The Church's Silent Crisis – New Approaches Needed

Rendic's findings identify critical needs:

Churches must develop more contemporary support methods

Religious communities require better sex education

Porn addiction prevention



should become part of diaconal work

»When 40% sought professional help for porn-related issues but only 8% turned to their congregation, we have a clear problem,» Rendic states.

Dissertation Sparks Necessary Dialogue

The public defense will occur on May 16, 2025 at the Joensuu campus, with live streaming available. Professor Marjo Kolehmainen from University of Turku

serves as the opponent.

»This research breaks taboos and provides tools for more constructive dialogue about sexuality in religious contexts,» says Professor Kati Tervo-Niemelä, the dissertation supervisor.

The study forms part of UEF's broader examination of religion in modern soc

Source: University of Eastern Finland

ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Ida Silfverberg

23.1.1834, Helsinki - 20.12.1899, Firenze, Italia

Paimentyttö, 1867

EVENTS

TIKANOJA THE ART EVENT OF THE YEAR!



The exhibition covering the entire career of the masterful nature and portrait photographer Eero Järnefelt (1863–1937) will be on display until 25.5.2025 at the Tikanoja Art Museum - so there is still plenty of time.

Järnefelt is connected to Vaasa in that his father Alexander served as the governor of the province of Vaasa from 1888 to 1894. Alexander lived on Rantakatu and the family rented Tottesund Manor in Maksamaa for the summers of 1891–1892. Eero Järnefelt's sister Aino married Jean Sibelius there. The exhibition has been curated by Timo Huusko, Chief Curator of the Ateneum, and the exhibition at the Tikanoja Art Museum has been produced by the Ateneum Art Museum / Finnish National Gallery in cooperation with the Vaasa Museums.

DIANDRA MOTHER'S DAY CONCERT

11.5.2025 at 17.00

Romeo

Pitkätatu 53, 65100 Vaasa

Vaasa City Theatre

<https://www.vaasankaupunginteatteri.fi/>

ELLY SIGFRID'S TORI

Spring Market

16.5.2025 at 15.00 – 19.00

Mustasaarentie 65610, Korsholm

Korsholm kuntakehitys-0444240300johanna.langskog@korsholm.fi

<https://korsholm.fi/utveckling>

WASA SINFONIETTA

Vaasa City Hall 18.5. at 14.00

Save the Trees - charity concert

The proceeds from the Save the Trees charity concert will be donated to the Vaasa City Garden for the purchase of trees as an environmental deed in the playgrounds and yards of the daycare centres in the City of Vaasa, for the benefit of the children of Vaasa. <https://wasasinfonietta.net/>

VAASA CHOIR FESTIVAL XXXI 22-24.5.2025

Vaasa Choir Festival is a significant international choral music event. The joyful and social closing celebration of the singing season is open to all choirs.

ILMAJOKI MUSIC FESTIVAL

"BIG Wrath 1713-1721"

6.-15.6.2025

"This powerful and topical opera brings the years of hatred and the fates of our ancestors back to the banks of the Kyrönjoki River.

Big Wrath is a shaking and nourishing story about family ties, maternal love, perseverance, and the power of cooperation during a time, when Russia's brutal war of aggression against Finland burned Ostrobothnia to black soil."

www.musiikkijuhlat.fi

EVENING MUSIC

In Vaasa Church – enjoy the atmosphere of a classic summer evening

Feel the atmosphere of summer evenings with high-quality music in Vaasa Church. The Evangelical Lutheran parishes are once again offering free classical music concerts, which have already established themselves as the pearls of the city's summer programme over the years.

Classical evening music on Wednesdays from 4.6.25 at 19.30

4.6. Kamarikuoro Canticum Maris.

11.6. Serene Erhie, sopraano ja Anna Roos, piano.

18.6. Monica Heikius, sopraano ja Karolin Wargh, urut.

25.6. Jonna Pirttijoki-Helander, harmonikka, laulu ja Sauli Perälä, piano, laulu.

2.7. Erica Nygård, huili ja Niels Burgmann, urut.

9.7. Loviisa Tuomisto ja Valtteri Tuomisto, urut, piano ja laulu.

16.7. Jenny Sandelin, sopraano ja Anton Ylikallio, piano.

tiistai 22.7. kello 18.30 Péter Sakari, urut. Yhteistyössä Korsholman Musiikkijuhlien kanssa.

6.8. Inka Pärssinen, trumpet ja Hanna Koljonen, urut.

13.8. Noora Karhuluoma, sopraano ja Marco Bonacci, sembalo.

AMOX REX Helsinki

12.6.25

FREE admission throughout the Helsinki

Day

www.amorex.fi

KASKINEN'S SUMMER OF MUSIC

9-12.7.25

A classical music festival in Finland's smallest town.

"The proximity of the sea, the history of the city of Kaskinen, bilingualism, the beautiful wooden house environment"

Artistic directors Anna-mari and Samuli Peltonen

LOHTAJA CHURCH MUSIC FESTIVAL

22-27.7.25

Church music from thousand-year-old traditions

www.kirkkomusiikkijuhlat.fi

NÄRPES THEATRE

"Maskinisterna (The Machinists)", a Swedish-language play about the Wickström Brothers and their engine factory, with a script and direction by Erik Kiviniemi.

World premiere 28.6.25 klo 19

Other events:

1-.7 at 7 pm

3.7. at 7 pm

7.7. at 7 pm

8.7. klo 19

10.7 at 7 pm

13.7. at 5 pm

15.7. at 19

16.7. at 19

17.7. at 19

19.7. at 19

KORSHOLM MUSIC FESTIVAL 23.7.–30.7.2025

"Korsholm Music Festival 2024 and Tove Teuvalla Opera are over and autumn is approaching. Now we are already working on the Summer 2025 Music Festival. However, we want to return to the warm days and festival atmosphere of July and August."

A greeting from festival director Viktor Nygård: "I am very much looking forward to working with the Korsholm Music Festival and I have many exciting ideas for how we can continue to develop the festival. I can already promise that next year it will be a fantastic festival with something for everyone."

Korsholm Music Festival will be held next summer 23.–30.7.2025.

RITZ

25.7.25 at 7 pm

MARI PALO – TANGO

One of Finland's most sought-after sopranos dives into the world of tang.

Korsholm Music Festival

VAASA CITY HALL

27.7.25

CONCERT ROYAL

Amélie goes to Belgrade with her friends

Korsholm Music Festival

WASA FUTURE FESTIVAL

11-16.8.2025

The Wasa Future Festival 2026 is set to take place from 11th to 16th August.

This event gathers knowledgeable and motivated individuals from the business world, universities, regional decision-making bodies, and ministerial corps to focus on solving issues in Vaasa and across Finland. The event can be followed on Wasa Future Festival YouTube channel.

Wasa Innovation Center
Gerbyntie 18

65230 Vaasa

<https://wasafuturefestival.fi/>

WELFARE REGION

Ostrobothnia Welfare Region Reforms Healthcare Access – Treatment Now Available at Other Health Centers Too



Starting this fall, residents of our region will have significantly more flexibility in accessing healthcare services.

A new reform by the welfare region will allow patients to receive short-term care at any health station or social and healthcare center in the region if their usual facility has long wait times. The changes will take effect by September 1, 2025, aiming to speed up access to care and improve service availability.

Shorter Wait Times – Care Available Beyond Home or Workplace

Under the new system, patients can seek treatment at the nearest

available health center if their usual location has extended queues. However, this applies only to short-term care, such as acute illnesses or pain management. Long-term illness treatment, maternity care, and child health clinic services will remain with the patient's regular provider, as continuity of care is crucial in these areas.

– This is a change that patients have been asking for. Now, a single health issue can be addressed, for example, at a health station near your workplace if appointments are available there sooner, says Sofia Svartsjö, Director of Health Center Operations for the Pohjanmaa Welfare Region.

Staff Can Direct Patients to

Other Units for Faster Care

The reform also allows healthcare professionals to refer patients to another facility after assessing their needs—if wait times are shorter elsewhere. However, the distance must not exceed 50 kilometers, and patients retain the right to decline and wait for an appointment at their usual health station.

This change is now possible because the entire Pohjanmaa Welfare Region uses a unified patient record system, ensuring seamless information sharing between different units.

Booking Appointments Digitally or by Phone

Assessments for care needs

will continue via phone, either through the general health helpline at 06 218 9000 or the dental care line at 06 218 9100. In Kristinestad, assessments are conducted via 06 218 6019. Appointments can also be booked digitally, and the new digital healthcare reception system is already available to half of Pohjanmaa's residents.

Long-Term Care Facility Can Be Changed Every Six Months

Another major change allows patients to switch their long-term care or maternity clinic facility every six months—previously, this was possible only once a year.

RUSSIA

MEDVEDEV

Medvedev's Nuclear Threat Against New NATO Members – Empty Words or Dangerous Escalation?

Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of Russia's Security Council, has once again issued threatening comments directed at the newly joined NATO members Finland and Sweden.

In a statement widely quoted by the Russian state-owned news agency TASS on April 29th, Medvedev warned that every new NATO membership automatically makes the country a target for Russian armed forces, "including potential retaliatory strikes and even the nuclear component."

Medvedev also questioned what security Finland and Sweden had actually gained through their NATO membership. He argued that their previous non-aligned status provided them with "certain international advantages" given their geopolitical position. By now being part of a "bloc that is hostile to us," they have, according to Medvedev, "simply placed themselves in the sights of our armed forces." He concluded by asserting that these are "political games" and that most people do not understand the consequences.

Analysis: Rhetorical Play for Domestic Consumption?

It is crucial to analyze Medvedev's statements in light of the ongoing geopolitical situation and his own history of provocative remarks. While threats involving nuclear weapons should always be taken seriously, there are several reasons to view these particular comments with a degree of skepticism, at least in terms of an immediate escalation.

Firstly, Medvedev is known for his sometimes aggressive and highly rhetorical style. His

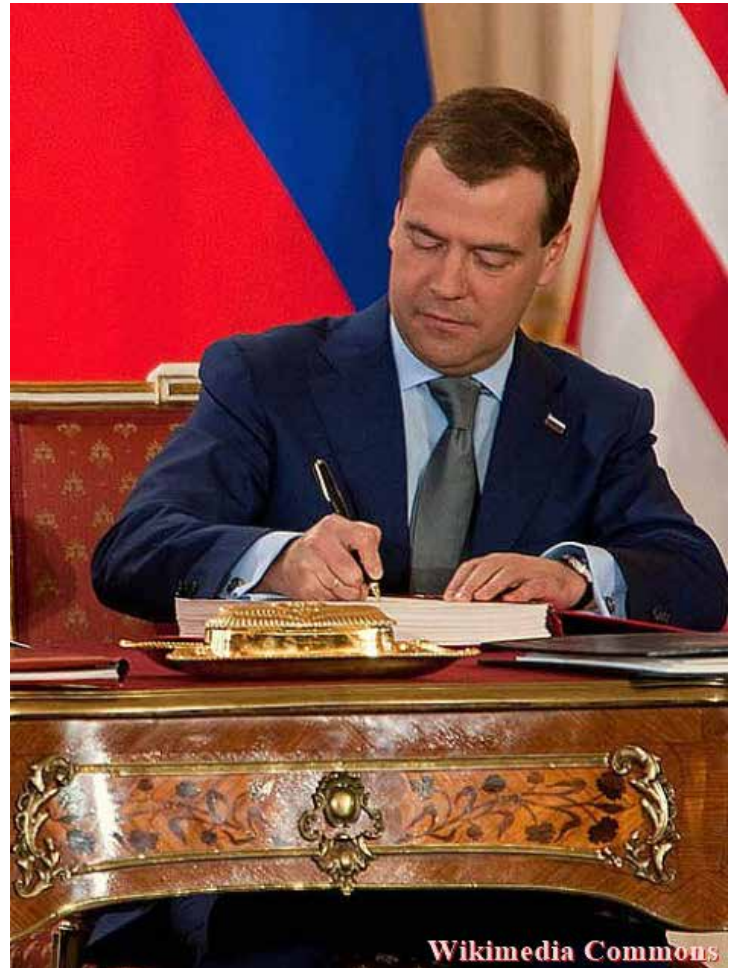
statements often serve the purpose of signaling strength and deterrence, primarily aimed at a domestic Russian audience that needs reassurance about the country's assertiveness towards the "West." In Russian state media, NATO's expansion is consistently portrayed as an aggressive move that threatens Russia's sphere of security, and Medvedev's words contribute to this narrative.

Secondly, it is unlikely that Russia would currently initiate a military attack against a NATO country, including the use of nuclear weapons. Such an action would trigger Article 5 of the NATO treaty, entailing a collective defense from all member states. The consequences of such an escalation would be catastrophic and far outweigh any potential "benefits" Russia might conceivably gain.

Finland and Sweden's Security Strengthened by NATO

Contrary to Medvedev's claims, Finland and Sweden's decision to seek and obtain NATO membership has rather stemmed from an increased sense of insecurity in their immediate vicinity, particularly after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The non-aligned status no longer offered the security deemed necessary in a changed security policy landscape.

NATO membership entails a significant strengthening of the countries' security through the collective defense guarantee. Belonging to the world's strongest military alliance deters potential aggressors in a fundamentally different way than a neutral position. While Medvedev's words aim to create anxiety and uncertainty, the long-term effect is likely to be the oppo-



site – a further consolidation of NATO and an increased awareness of the need to stand united against Russian aggression.

No Reason for Panic, but Vigilance is Required

In conclusion, Dmitry Medvedev's latest pronouncements about new NATO members becoming Russian targets should not be ignored, but it is important to contextualize them. They likely form part of a broader Russian information war and an attempt to psychologically influence public opinion in the affected countries and within NATO.

Finland and Sweden have made a sovereign choice based on their own security interests. NATO membership is a response to a changed and more

threatening security environment. While threatening rhetoric from Moscow is regrettable and unacceptable, there are currently no indications of an imminent military escalation against NATO countries. However, it is crucial for NATO to continue to show unity and resolve in its support for Ukraine and in its own defense, which in itself is the strongest response to the Kremlin's aggressive rhetoric.

Medvedev's words may be quoted in Russian newspapers, but in the broader global context, they lack the weight and substance that would justify panic. Vigilance and continued support for Ukraine are all the more important.

MEDVEDEV

Медведєв і ядерна загроза новим членам НАТО – порожні слова чи небезпечна ескалація?

Заступник голови Ради безпеки Росії Дмитро Медведєв знову виступив із загрозливими коментарями, спрямованими на нещодавно приєднані до НАТО Фінляндію та Швецію. У заяві, яку широко цитувало російське державне інформаційне агентство ТАСС 29 квітня, Медведєв попередив, що кожне нове членство в НАТО автоматично робить країну ціллю для російських збройних сил, "включаючи потенційні удари у відповідь і навіть ядерний компонент".

Медведєв також поставив під сумнів, яку безпеку насправді отримали Фінляндія та Швеція завдяки своєму членству в НАТО. Він стверджував, що їхній попередній позаблоковий статус надавав їм "певні міжнародні переваги" з огляду на їхнє геополітичне становище. Тепер, будучи частиною "блоку, який вороже налаштований щодо нас", вони, за словами Медведєва, "просто поставили себе на приціл наших збройних сил". Він завершив, стверджуючи, що це "політичні ігри", наслідки яких більшість людей не розуміє.

Аналіз: Риторична гра для внутрішнього споживання?

Важливо проаналізувати заяви Медведєва у світлі поточної геополітичної ситуації та його власної історії провокаційних висловлювань. Хоча до загроз, пов'язаних із застосуванням ядерної зброї, завжди слід ставитися серйозно, є кілька причин розглядати ці конкретні коментарі зі значною часткою скептицизму, принаймні з точки зору негайної ескалації.

По-перше, Медведєв відомий своїм часом агресивним і вкрай риторичним стилем. Його заяви часто слугують меті сигналізувати про силу та стримування, насамперед спрямовані на внутрішню російську аудиторію, яку необхідно запевнити в рішучості країни щодо "Заходу". У російських державних ЗМІ розширення НАТО послідовно зображується як агресивний крок, що загрожує сфері безпеки Росії, і слова Медведєва сприяють цьому наративу.

По-друге, малоімовірно, що Росія наразі ініціює військовий напад на країну-члена НАТО, включаючи застосування ядерної зброї. Такий крок призведе до активації статті 5 Північноатлантичного договору, що передбачає колективну оборону всіх країн-членів. Наслідки такої ескалації будуть катастрофічними та значно переважають будь-які потенційні "вигоди", які Росія могла б собі уявити.

Безпека Фінляндії та Швеції зміцнилася завдяки НАТО

Всупереч твердженням Медведєва, рішення Фінляндії та Швеції подати заявку та отримати членство в НАТО радше впливає зі зростаючого почуття незахищеності в їхньому безпосередньому сусідстві, особливо після повномасштабного вторгнення Росії в Україну. Позаблоковий статус більше не забезпечував тієї безпеки, яка вважалася необхідною в умовах зміни безпекової політики.

Членство в НАТО передбачає значне зміцнення безпеки країн завдяки гарантії колективної оборони. Належність до найсильнішого військового альянсу світу стримує потенційних агресорів принципово іншим чином, ніж нейтральна позиція.



Wikimedia Commons

Хоча слова Медведєва спрямовані на створення тривоги та невизначеності, довгостроковий ефект, ймовірно, буде протилежним – подальша консолідація НАТО та підвищення усвідомлення необхідності стояти єдиним фронтом проти російської агресії.

Немає причин для паніки, але пильність потрібна

Підсумовуючи, останні заяви Дмитра Медведєва щодо того, що нові члени НАТО стають російськими цілями, не слід ігнорувати, але важливо контекстуалізувати їх. Вони, ймовірно, є частиною ширшої російської інформаційної війни та спробою психологічно вплинути на громадську думку у відповідних країнах та всередині НАТО.

Фінляндія та Швеція зробили суверенний вибір, виходячи з власних інтересів безпеки. Членство в НАТО є відповіддю на змінене та більш загрозливе безпекове середовище. Хоча загрозлива риторика з Москви є жалюгідною та неприйнятною, наразі немає жодних ознак неминучої військової ескалації проти країн НАТО. Однак, вирішальне значення має те, щоб НАТО продовжувало демонструвати єдність і рішучість у своїй підтримці України та у власній обороні, що саме по собі є найсильнішою відповіддю на агресивну риторику Кремля. Слова Медведєва можуть цитуватися в російських газетах, але в ширшому глобальному контексті їм бракує тієї ваги та змісту, які б виправдовували паніку. Пильність і подальша підтримка України є ще важливішими.

HEALTHY DIET

Higher Intakes of Canola, Soybean, and Olive Oils Are Good for You. But Not Butter!



New Study Links Butter to Higher Mortality, While Plant-Based Oils Reduce Risk

A groundbreaking new study published in JAMA Internal Medicine reveals that consuming more plant-based oils—such as canola, soybean, and olive oil—is associated with a lower risk of death, while higher butter intake is linked to increased mortality. The research, led by Dr. Dong D. Wang and a team of scientists from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, provides strong evidence that replacing butter with healthier plant-based fats could significantly improve longevity.

Key Findings from the Study
The study analyzed dietary data from 221,054 participants across three large U.S. cohorts—the Nurses' Health

Study, the Nurses' Health Study II, and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study—tracking their health for up to 33 years. Key findings include:

Butter intake increases mortality risk: Those who consumed the most butter had a 15% higher risk of total mortality compared to those who ate the least. Butter was also linked to a 12% higher risk of cancer death.

Plant-based oils lower mortality risk: Higher intake of oils like canola, soybean, and olive oil was associated with a 16% lower risk of total death, an 11% lower risk of cancer death, and a 6% lower risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) death.

Substituting butter with plant oils has major benefits: Replacing just 10 grams per day of butter (about two teaspoons) with the same amount of plant-based oils was estimated

to reduce total mortality by 17% and cancer mortality by 17%.

Why Plant-Based Oils Are Healthier

Unlike butter, which is high in saturated fats, plant-based oils contain unsaturated fats, which have been shown to improve heart health, reduce inflammation, and lower the risk of chronic diseases.

Olive oil (rich in monounsaturated fats) has long been associated with Mediterranean diet benefits.

Soybean and canola oils provide omega-3 fatty acids, which may help protect against cancer and heart disease.

Expert Recommendations
Dr. Walter Willett, a senior author of the study and professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard, emphasized:
"This study reinforces the im-

portance of choosing healthier fats. Swapping butter for plant-based oils like olive, soybean, or canola oil is a simple dietary change that could have a major impact on long-term health and longevity."

The findings support current dietary guidelines recommending the replacement of saturated fats (like butter) with unsaturated fats (like plant-based oils). For those looking to improve their diet, small changes—such as cooking with olive oil instead of butter—could lead to significant health benefits over time.

Reference:

Zhang Y, Chadaideh KS, Li Y, et al. "Butter and Plant-Based Oils Intake and Mortality." JAMA Intern Med. Published online March 6, 2025. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2025.0205

Kuva: AI:lla luotu kuvituskuva

HEALTH

Up to 11 million new HIV infections anticipated following cuts



By: Dann Okoth

[NAIROBI] Global deaths from HIV/AIDS and new infections could soar to levels unseen since the start of the century if planned funding cuts to foreign aid are sustained, undermining years of progress, experts warn.

A study published in the journal *The Lancet HIV* estimates there could be 4.4 million to 10.8 million additional new HIV infections by 2030 in low- and middle-income countries and 770,000 to 2.9 million HIV-related deaths in children and adults.

The administration of US President Donald Trump has severed support for humanitarian work worldwide—including withdrawing the US from the World Health Organization and freezing funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

"[We] will see it come back and we [will] see people dying the way we saw them in the 90s and in 2000s."

Winnie Byanyima, UNAID executive director

Other major international donors, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, which together with the US, account for over 90 per cent of international aid, have also announced plans to implement sig-

nificant cuts to foreign aid.

Collectively, it could lead to a 24 per cent reduction in global international HIV funding by 2026, according to the researchers.

Progress unravelled

Historically, the US has been the largest contributor to the global HIV response, investing more than US\$100 billion through the PEPFAR since it was established in 2003.

However, cuts to PEPFAR and USAID-supported programmes have already severely disrupted access to essential HIV services, including for antiretroviral therapy and HIV prevention and testing, says Debra ten Brink of the Burnet Institute, Australia, co-lead author of the study.

"Looking ahead, if other donor countries reduce funding, decades of progress to treat and prevent HIV could be unravelled," she said.

"It is imperative to secure sustainable financing and avoid a resurgence of the HIV epidemic which could have devastating consequences, not just in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, but globally."

'Ten-fold increase'

Separately, the head of the UN agency coordinating the fight against HIV-AIDS warned that an additional 6.3 million people will die in the next four years, unless support is reinstated. This represents a "tenfold increase" from the 600,000 AIDS-related deaths recorded globally in 2023, she said.

"We will see a ... real surge in this disease," UNAIDS executive director Winnie Byanyima told journalists in Geneva on Monday (24 March).

"[We] will see it come back and we [will] see people dying the way we saw them in the 90s and in 2000s."

She also predicted an additional 8.7 million new infections—up from 1.3 million new infections globally in 2023.

Mathematical model

The authors of *The Lancet HIV* study used a mathematical model to estimate the effects of anticipated international aid reductions in 26 countries, including the immediate end to support from PEPFAR in all countries currently dependent on foreign aid to support programmes to diagnose and prevent HIV.

They found there could be between a 1.3- to six-fold increase in new infections for people at higher risk of acquiring HIV, compared to if funding levels remained as they were.

The greatest impact would likely be in Sub-Saharan Africa and among vulnerable populations, including people who inject drugs, sex workers, men who have sex with men, and children, according to the researchers.

They called for a multipronged approach to help offset the effects of sudden funding cuts and build long-term sustainability.

HIV integration

"Integrating HIV care with other primary healthcare services may improve efficiency and leverage shared resources," said Rowan Martin-Hughes, a senior researcher at Burnet Institute and co-author of the study.

He noted that in Vietnam, this integration along with health insurance to cover HIV services, centralising antiretroviral therapy procurement and mobilisation of domestic resources, has resulted in an increase in domestic financing of the HIV response from 32 per cent in 2013 to 52 per cent in 2022.

"Introducing a modest HIV-specific tax levy or incorporating HIV services into a broader health insurance mecha-

nism may provide additional domestic funding streams," he told SciDev.Net.

"Such measures, although challenging, have been successfully tried in some Sub-Saharan African countries."

In many countries, HIV services have existed separately from the rest of the government-funded health system, because of the international focus on the disease, Martin-Hughes explains, adding that healthcare workers, infrastructure, and other basic pillars of health systems in many resource-poor countries have been supported by HIV funding.

"These are the countries that are being most acutely affected by the immediate pausing of that aid," he said.

Angela Muvumba Sellström, senior researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, believes the findings are credible.

She says the short-term result of the withdrawal of this much aid will be an increased disease burden on weak health infrastructure, especially in Africa.

"And of course, we expect large levels of deaths as people living with HIV and without access to medicine become more vulnerable to HIV-related illnesses," she told SciDev.Net.

She challenged international large-scale financing actors like the African Development Bank, World Bank and the IMF to commit more to financing for health and ease the debt burden by rescheduling payment for some African governments.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

HOT SUMMERS

THL Warns - Future Heatwaves Are Dangerous for Seniors: Prevention of Heat-Related Illnesses Should Be Prepared for in Advance Throughout the Country

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) has raised serious concerns about the health effects of future heatwaves, particularly for the elderly and individuals with chronic illnesses.

With climate change, Finland is expected to experience increasingly frequent prolonged and oppressive heat periods, which at worst can lead to hundreds of additional hospital admissions and premature deaths. Therefore, THL emphasizes that welfare regions and municipalities must now wake up and take concrete actions to combat the harmful effects of heat well in advance of the summer season.

While sunny weather is often perceived as purely positive, prolonged and intense heat poses a real health risk. Those over 65 years of age and individuals with pre-existing chronic diseases are particularly vulnerable to severe health problems. Infants and young children, pregnant women, and those performing physically demanding work in hot conditions also belong to risk groups. It is therefore crucial that society as a whole understands the potential dangers of heat and takes preventive measures.

Preparedness of Social and Healthcare Services Is Key
According to THL, a large proportion of deaths associated with heatwaves occur precisely in hospital wards and health center inpatient departments, where the most vulnerable individuals are cared for.

Therefore, it is essential for care institutions and 24/7 care units to assess the risks that hot weather can pose to patients, residents, staff, and the overall operation. It is also of utmost importance to prepare clear and written instructions for staff on how to effectively prevent the harmful effects of heat.

One central measure is to prevent the overheating of premises. Expert Virpi Kollanus from THL emphasizes that passive cooling methods, such as solar shading for windows and ventilation of spaces at night, may not always suffice. In such cases, hospitals and care units should strive for mechanical cooling to protect the most vulnerable patients and residents from extreme heat.

Preparedness should not be limited to enclosed spaces. Open care services and emergency departments within social and healthcare also need to be ready for the potential strain caused by heat periods. Clients of open care services should be informed well in advance about how to prevent heat-related illnesses so that they know how to protect themselves in their own homes.

The Role of Municipalities in Preventing Heat-Related Illnesses

Municipalities also have a significant role in preventing heat-related illnesses, especially through the planning of urban environments and the operations of daycare centers and schools. It is paramount

to prevent the overheating of premises and adapt to heat, particularly in these important environments for children and young people.

Kollanus stresses that daycare centers and schools need to think about safe operating practices during heat in advance and prepare written instructions for staff. This ensures that children and young people can spend summer days safely and healthily.

In addition, municipalities should invest in the planning of outdoor areas to create sufficient shaded areas using various structures, sun protection, and vegetation. This allows for outdoor activities even on the hottest days without excessive exposure to the sun.

Occupational Safety and Authority Supervision

Preventing heat-related illnesses and ensuring adequate sun protection are also important from an occupational safety perspective, especially in outdoor work. Employers must ensure that employees have sufficient opportunities to protect themselves from heat.

Valvira (the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health) has emphasized in its guidance that health protection authorities should closely monitor thermal conditions in 24/7 care units of social welfare, daycare centers, schools, and housing during heatwaves. This ensures that at-risk groups live and reside in healthy and safe conditions even in hot weather.

Long-Term Solutions in Urban Environment Planning

In the long term, municipalities can significantly combat heat-related illnesses through strategic urban environment planning. Green and water construction, surface materials that reflect solar radiation, shading structures, and solutions that promote ventilation in the urban environment are all important ways to adapt to a changing climate and its challenges.

National Action Plan Under Preparation

Climate change and the aging population together significantly increase the risk of heat-related illnesses in Finland in the coming decades. Therefore, the need for societal preparedness is constantly growing. Preventing harmful effects requires planned and rapid action, and in the long term, efforts should be made to prevent the overheating of buildings in particular.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health established a working group in February this year to promote this work. The task of the working group is to prepare a national action plan to prevent the harmful health effects of heat in Finland. Virpi Kollanus, who chairs the working group, says that the aim of the action plan is to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different actors in heat preparedness and to guide the implementation of preparedness measures in welfare regions and municipalities.

CLIMATE EFFORTS

VAASA

City of Vaasa Invites Companies and Organizations to Join Climate Efforts



The City of Vaasa is launching a new initiative to accelerate the path toward a carbon-neutral future. Through the Vaasa Climate Commitment, businesses and organizations in the region are challenged to take concrete steps toward sustainability and demonstrate their commitment to climate action.

The aim is to build strong cooperation, with each partner setting its own climate goals, openly reporting on progress, and inspiring others to follow suit. Companies and organizations that have already joined include major players such as Westenergy, Danfoss, Wärtsilä, VEO, Port of Vaasa, Stormossen, and Visit Vaasa. “We welcome both pioneers and organizations just starting

their climate work. Together, we can create real impact,” says Johanna Punkari, Climate Expert at the City of Vaasa.

Participants are encouraged to implement practical measures such as improving recycling, promoting the circular economy, enhancing energy efficiency, and developing sustainability reporting. Every action, no matter how small, makes a difference.

Organizations can join by registering on the city’s website or by contacting Project Manager Hanna Malkamäki at VASEK or Johanna Punkari at the City of Vaasa.

“It’s easy to get involved, and every action helps us move closer to a more sustainable Vaasa,” Malkamäki emphasizes.

Networking and Student

Support

The initiative is backed by VASEK, the University of Vaasa, and Vaasa University of Applied Sciences (VAMK). Students from both institutions will provide fresh expertise, assisting companies in setting and developing climate targets through project work and theses.

“This offers students valuable real-world experience while providing companies with concrete support in their climate efforts,” says Mirja Andersson, Lecturer at VAMK.

Taina Tukiainen, Research Director at the University of Vaasa, highlights the importance of evidence-based methods: “We are studying how climate budgeting and agreement-based models can lead to more effective and equitable solutions. Through science and collaboration, we are building a more

sustainable future for Vaasa.”

A Shared Goal for Carbon Neutrality

Vaasa aims to achieve carbon neutrality during this decade, a target that requires collective action from businesses, residents, and other stakeholders. The main sources of emissions—traffic, heating, electricity consumption, and waste—are areas where everyday choices make a significant impact.

Through initiatives like the Vaasa Climate Commitment and close cooperation with the region’s strong energy technology cluster, the city aims to promote sustainable development while also strengthening the competitiveness of local businesses.

“Together, we are building a greener and stronger future,” concludes Johanna Punkari.

TRAFFIC

VAASA

Vaasa Leads the Way in Active Mobility: Comprehensive Investments Create Smoother and Safer Pedestrian and Cycling Routes



Image: City of Vaasa/Mikael Matikainen

The City of Vaasa continues its determined efforts to transform the city into a more accessible, safe, and inviting place for everyone who chooses to travel on foot or by bicycle.

This year's ambitious plan includes both innovative new projects and thorough upgrades to existing infrastructure, clearly signaling the city's commitment to sustainable and active mobility. With an investment representing 13 percent of the municipality's total expenditure on municipal engineering, the priority of pedestrian and cycling routes in urban development is underscored.

This year's only entirely new addition is the long-awaited cycle path along Kronvik Road. This project, with a total budget of EUR 1.6 million, of which EUR 400,000 is allocated for 2025, will complete an important link in the city's cycling network. Once the section is finished with its new asphalt surface and well-planned green areas, the entire route will offer a safe and pleasant thoroughfare for cyclists.

In parallel with the new development, the Roparnäs Road cycle path is undergoing a comprehensive and much-

needed improvement. On sections affected by frost damage, the underlying layers are being renewed, and the remaining part of the cycle path will receive a new, smooth asphalt surface. This two-year project, with a total cost of approximately EUR 900,000, of which EUR 500,000 is being invested this year, will significantly raise the standard and safety for the many who use this important cycle route daily.

Major renovations are also planned for the street area at Teir Road. Here, not only will the street structures and stormwater drains be thoroughly renewed, but parking arrangements will also be reorganized with a clear focus on improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. This comprehensive upgrade is estimated to cost EUR 800,000 and will contribute to a more harmonious and functional urban environment.

A specific project is the reconstruction of the paper bridge in Metviken. The existing bridge is deemed to be in poor condition and also too narrow for safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists. Therefore, the city has decided to demolish the old structure and build a new, wider, and safer bridge in its place. The construction work for this project, with a budget of EUR 250,000, half of which is covered by state subsidies, will be put out to tender to ensure a cost-

effective and high-quality solution.

The City of Vaasa's innovative collaboration model, the cycling alliance, continues to generate positive results. Through close cooperation between the city, planners, and contractors, the alliance has, during its two years of operation, been able to implement projects cost-effectively and to a high standard. A shining example is the renewal of Sandö Road, which was transformed into an inviting environment for both pedestrians and cyclists at a significantly lower cost than initially estimated. Project Engineer Samuli Huusko emphasizes that the cost per square meter for Sandö Road was EUR 173, well below the original estimate of an index-adjusted EUR 195 per square meter. In addition, the city received a state subsidy of approximately EUR 900,000 for this successful project. Huusko also addresses incorrect media reports about the costs and clarifies that the price per meter of cycle path was actually a fraction of what was claimed.

Although the cycling alliance will not undertake any entirely new construction projects this year, the important planning and road maintenance work continues. The planned improvements for this year are somewhat smaller in scope, and an extremely high level of quality is not being pursued in all

details. For example, the amount reserved for the improvement of Teir Road has been reduced by 20 percent, which may be noticeable in the finishing of the surfaces.

The deliberate investments in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure in Vaasa have already yielded clear results. The enhanced winter maintenance of pedestrian and cycling routes has received much positive feedback, even at the national level. User satisfaction has increased significantly due to the high standard of winter maintenance, from 2.98 to an impressive 4.32 on a scale of 1–5. In addition, the number of people traveling on foot or by bicycle during the winter months this year increased by approximately 25 percent compared to the previous winter. This clearly underscores that Vaasa's strategic investments in active mobility not only create a smoother and safer city but also encourage more residents to choose sustainable modes of transport. With these continued investments, Vaasa is solidifying its position as a leader in promoting pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Source: City of Vaasa

NATURE

Finland's Spiders Finally Get Finnish Names – Collaboration Facilitates Easier Observation and Research!



A historic moment has arrived for Finland's spider world! The Finnish Spider Working Group, together with enthusiastic spider enthusiasts, has undertaken extensive work and created Finnish names for all spider species occurring in the country.

This significant effort has yielded results, with a remarkable 644 spider species, as well as a few species found in neighboring countries, now having official Finnish names.

This new, unified nomenclature is a real cause for joy for researchers, hobbyists, and anyone interested in nature. Previously, referring to many spider species was only possible with cumbersome Latin scientific names. Now, making and communicating species observations will be significantly easier, as there is a clear Finnish name for every species.

The updated names are now available in the Finnish Biodiversity Information Facility's comprehensive laji.fi database.

It is wonderful to note that even the previously lesser-known and perhaps by some even considered frightening or repulsive spiders have now received their own Finnish names. Familiar species groups, such as plants, mammals, and butterflies, have had Finnish names for a long time, which is natural. Now, this disparity has been rectified for spiders, opening up entirely new possibilities for species identification, hobby activities, and research.

Researcher Riikka Elo from the Biodiversity Unit of the University of Turku, who has served as the secretary of the Spider Working Group, emphasizes the great need for a unified nomenclature. She explains how Latin names have been difficult to remember, and many hob-

byists have already developed their own nicknames for the creatures they have observed. Now, this creativity has been given an official and unifying foundation.

Special thanks for this historic reform go to the active enthusiasts whose desire for the development of the nomenclature initiated the process. In particular, the immense groundwork of Markku A. Huttunen has been invaluable. His idea of replacing the long word "hämähäkki" (spider) with the suffix "-kki" has proven to be a functional and natural solution. Spider expert Niclas Fritzén from the Ostrobothnia Australis association explains that previously, only just under a hundred species had an established Finnish name, and even those were often long and difficult to remember.

The long-term work on updating the nomenclature has borne fruit. The first new names were published ten years ago

in Pajarre's work "Hämikki ja seitsemän seittiä" (The Spider and Seven Webs). The book "Suomen hyppyhämähäkit" (Finland's Jumping Spiders), published in 2022, also received Finnish names for all 44 species in the jumping spider family (Salticidae) through the working group's contribution. Now, this groundbreaking work has been completed, and all of Finland's spiders have finally been named in Finnish. The new nomenclature has also been approved by the Nomenclature Committee of the Finnish Entomological Society, which confirms its official status.

These new, short, and clear names have now been stored in the laji.fi database, and they can be used in the future alongside the old scientific names. This is a huge step forward in increasing the knowledge and appreciation of Finland's spiders!

Source: Turun yliopisto

HEALTH

WHO

Historic Breakthrough: World Unites to Strengthen Pandemic Preparedness – WHO Member States Agree on New Accord



Member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) have reached a significant and historic agreement on a new pandemic preparedness treaty.

Following lengthy and complex negotiations, a consensus was finally reached on April 16, 2025, and the agreement is expected to receive its formal seal of approval at the WHO's World Health Assembly in May. This accord marks a critical step towards global cooperation and readiness in the face of future pandemic threats and other international health challenges.

Outi Kuivasniemi, Counsellor for International Affairs and Chair of Finland's negotiation delegation, describes the outcome as a balanced compromise that reflects member states' shared commitment to building a more equitable and sustainable global health system. It is particularly positive that the agreement includes new

provisions regarding, among other things, the "One Health" concept, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health and the need for a holistic approach to managing health threats.

The background to this significant agreement lies in the decision made by the WHO's Special Session of the World Health Assembly in December 2021 to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Body. The task of this body was to prepare a comprehensive agreement on pandemic preparedness and response. The intergovernmental negotiations commenced in February 2022, and Finland actively participated in the process as part of the European Union. Finland's negotiation delegation included representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), underscoring the broad national importance of the issue.

The consensus now reached is a significant achievement for the in-

ternational community. Pandemics know no national borders, and the COVID-19 pandemic starkly demonstrated the world's vulnerability to sudden and rapidly spreading health threats. The new pandemic agreement aims to create stronger structures for information sharing, resource allocation, and joint action in crisis situations. This will not only strengthen preparedness to respond more effectively to future pandemics but also promote global health equity.

It is essential to note that the agreement clearly stipulates that it does not transfer national sovereignty to the WHO. Decision-making power in health matters remains with the member states, which has been an important principle for many countries during the negotiations. The aim of the agreement is precisely to strengthen international cooperation and coordination, not to weaken national self-determination.

The next step is the adoption of the agreement at the WHO's World Health Assembly in May 2025. The Assembly's decisions are

traditionally made by consensus, meaning that the support of all member states will be sought for the adoption of the pandemic agreement. Following this, each WHO member state will consider and commit to the agreement in accordance with its own constitutional framework.

This new pandemic agreement is an encouraging sign that the world's nations can unite their efforts in the face of a common threat and learn from past experiences. It offers hope that in the future, we will be better prepared to face global health challenges and protect the health and well-being of people around the world. The agreement is not merely a legal document; it is also a symbol of the importance of international solidarity and cooperation in ensuring the common security of humanity.

Image
World Health Organization Flag
Author United States Mission Geneva
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HEALTH

Nicotine pouches pose poisoning risk for young children – growing concern at the Poison Information Center



Nicotine pouches are becoming an increasingly common cause of poisoning, with the Poison Information Center receiving nearly daily inquiries about them.

Young children are particularly vulnerable, as they may put nicotine pouches in their mouths while exploring their surrounding, according to the Finnish Medical Journal.

According to Chief Physician and Associate Professor Tuomas Lilius from the Poison Information Center, nicotine poisoning poses a real risk, especially for small children. "Concern is justified, as nicotine

is quickly absorbed through the mouth's mucous membranes and can cause symptoms within minutes," says Lilius. Typical symptoms of nicotine poisoning include stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, tremors, and rapid heartbeat. In severe cases, poisoning can lead to heart arrhythmias and seizures.

By September 2024, the Poison Information Center had received 325 calls about nicotine pouches, half of which involved children under two years old. Lilius emphasizes the responsibility of parents: "Nicotine pouches should be treated like chemicals or medicines – they must be kept out of children's reach."

Among teenagers and young adults, poisoning symptoms often result from overuse of nicotine pouches or accidentally swallowing one. In many cases, other substances are also involved.

Families are advised to keep activated charcoal at home, as it can prevent nicotine from being absorbed if a child swallows a pouch. Lilius also warns that while nicotine pouches sold in Finland are limited to a strength of 20 mg/g, stronger pouches are available from abroad, further increasing the risk.

The Poison Information Center is currently conducting studies on

the toxicity of nicotine pouches, as there is surprisingly little information about their danger.

Want to know more? Read Wasa Daily!

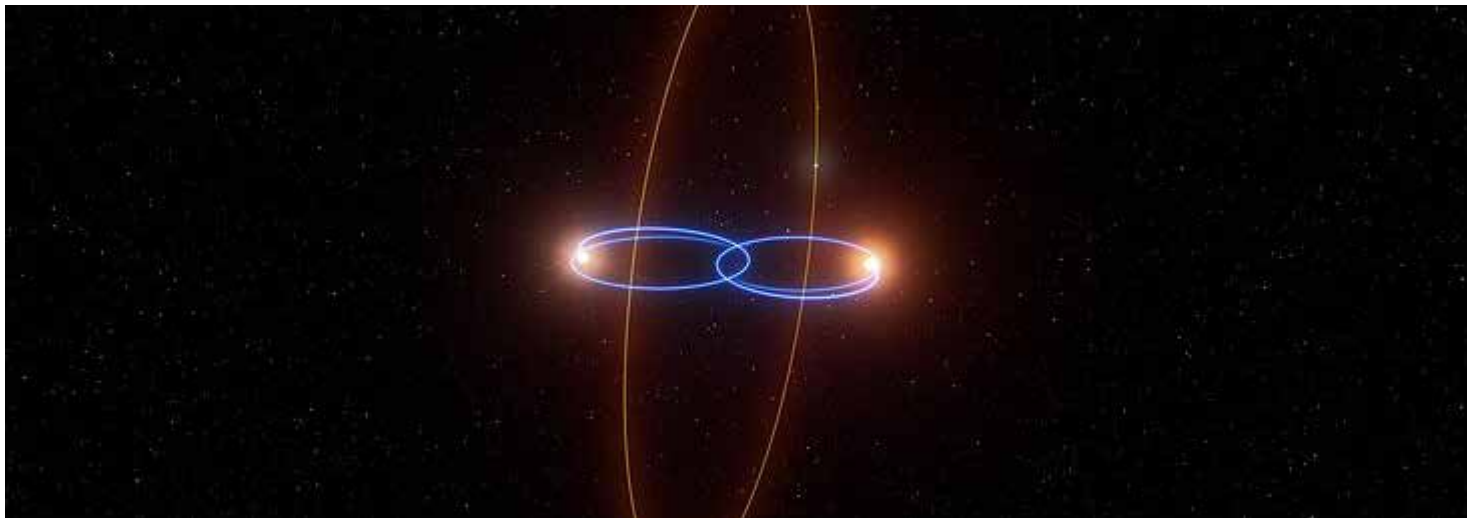
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ASTRONOMY

ESO Press Release

"Big surprise": astronomers find planet in perpendicular orbit around pair of stars



Astronomers have found a planet that orbits at an angle of 90 degrees around a rare pair of peculiar stars. This is the first time we have strong evidence for one of these ‘polar planets’ orbiting a stellar pair. The surprise discovery was made using the European Southern Observatory’s Very Large Telescope (VLT).

Several planets orbiting two stars at once, like the fictional Star Wars world Tatooine, have been discovered in the past years. These planets typically occupy orbits that roughly align with the plane in which their host stars orbit each other. There have previously been hints that planets on perpendicular, or polar, orbits around binary

stars could exist: in theory, these orbits are stable, and planet-forming discs on polar orbits around stellar pairs have been detected. However, until now, we lacked clear evidence that these polar planets do exist.

“I am particularly excited to be involved in detecting credible evidence that this configuration exists,” says Thomas Baycroft, a PhD student at the University of Birmingham, UK, who led the study published today in *Science Advances*.

The unprecedented exoplanet, named 2M1510 (AB) b, orbits a pair of young brown dwarfs — objects bigger than gas-giant planets but too small to be proper stars. The two brown dwarfs produce eclipses of one another as seen from Earth, making them part of what astronomers call an eclipsing binary. This system is in-

credibly rare: it is only the second pair of eclipsing brown dwarfs known to date, and it contains the first exoplanet ever found on a path at right angles to the orbit of its two host stars.

“A planet orbiting not just a binary, but a binary brown dwarf, as well as being on a polar orbit is rather incredible and exciting,” says co-author Amaury Triaud, a professor at the University of Birmingham.

The team found this planet while refining the orbital and physical parameters of the two brown dwarfs by collecting observations with the Ultraviolet and Visual Echelle Spectrograph (UVES) instrument on ESO’s VLT at Paranal Observatory, Chile. The pair of brown dwarfs, known as 2M1510, were first detected in 2018 by Triaud and others with the Search for habitable

Planets Eclipsing ULtra-cOOl Stars (SPECULOOS), another Paranal facility.

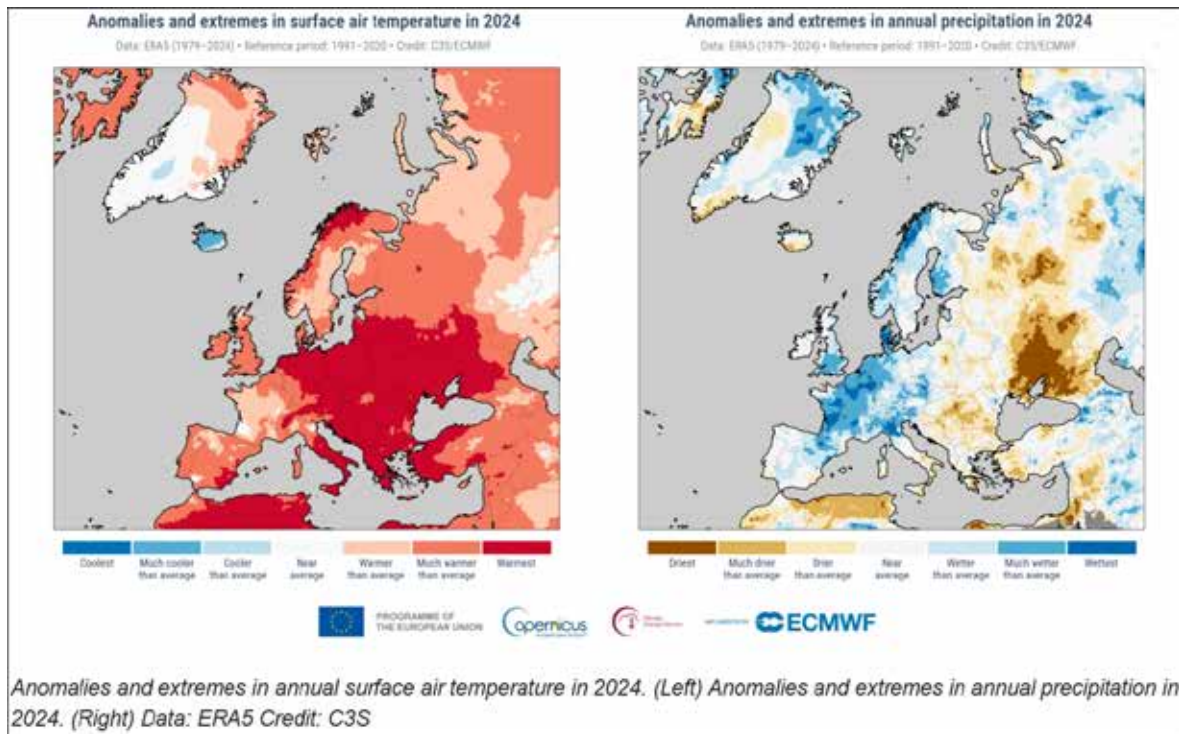
The astronomers observed the orbital path of the two stars in 2M1510 being pushed and pulled in unusual ways, leading them to infer the existence of an exoplanet with its strange orbital angle. “We reviewed all possible scenarios, and the only one consistent with the data is if a planet is on a polar orbit about this binary,” says Baycroft [1].

“The discovery was serendipitous, in the sense that our observations were not collected to seek such a planet, or orbital configuration. As such, it is a big surprise,” says Triaud. “Overall, I think this shows to us astronomers, but also to the public at large, what is possible in the fascinating Universe we inhabit.”

Image&Text; Credit ESO

CLIMATE CHANGE

Copernicus: Europe's Climate in Crisis: Record Heat, Flooding, and Stark East-West Divide in Hottest Year Ever



Europe is heating up faster than any other continent, and the consequences are becoming impossible to ignore.

According to the European State of the Climate 2024 (ESOTC 2024) report, released jointly by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), last year was the warmest on record for Europe, marked by extreme weather events, devastating floods, and a striking climate divide between east and west.

A Continent Under Pressure

2024 saw record-breaking temperatures across central, eastern, and southeastern Europe, while western regions experienced relentless rainfall and flooding. The report highlights a dramatic

contrast: the east suffered severe drought and unprecedented heat, while the west endured one of its wettest years since 1950.

Flooding was widespread, affecting an estimated 413,000 people and claiming at least 335 lives. Nearly one-third of Europe's river network exceeded high flood thresholds—the most extensive flooding since 2013. Meanwhile, heat stress reached alarming levels, with 60% of the continent experiencing more days of "strong heat stress" than average.

Key Findings from the Report

- **Temperature:** 2024 was Europe's hottest year, with nearly half the continent setting new annual records.
- **Sea Surface Temperatures (SST):** European waters were 0.7°C above average, with the Mediterranean 1.2°C warmer—both record highs.

- **Rainfall & Flooding:** Western Europe saw one of its wettest years, while storms triggered catastrophic flooding.
- **Glaciers & Ice Loss:** Scandinavia and Svalbard experienced their highest glacier mass loss ever recorded.
- **Wildfires:** Portugal alone lost 110,000 hectares in just one week—25% of Europe's total annual burnt area.
- **Renewable Energy:** A silver lining—45% of Europe's electricity came from renewables, a new record.

A Call for Urgent Action

Florence Rabier, Director-General of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), emphasized the need for resilience: "Heat stress is rising, and floods are becoming more frequent. With 51% of European cities now having climate adaptation plans, our data is crucial for informed

decision-making." Celeste Saulo, WMO Secretary-General, warned: "Europe is warming faster than any other continent. Every fraction of a degree matters, and adaptation is no longer optional—it's a necessity."

Looking Ahead

The report underscores the urgency of climate adaptation, from strengthening early warning systems to accelerating green energy transitions. As Carlo Buontempo, Director of C3S, noted: "2024 was a year of extremes—record heat, devastating floods, and disappearing glaciers. Understanding these changes is key to preparing for the future."

With Europe's climate shifting rapidly, the message is clear: the time to act is now.

Copernicus Climate Change Service & World Meteorological Organization

ONKILAHTI TRAFFIC PARK

Miniature Vasa open Its Gates – Popular Onkilahti Traffic Park Ready for a New Season!

Get ready for fast-paced adventures and playful learning! The much-loved children's traffic park in Onkilahti is reopening its doors on the second of May, inviting everyone to a summer full of traffic fun.

Following last year's success, where the adjacent pump track already attracted a multitude of visitors, it's now time for this unique traffic park to once again welcome children and their families. From the second of May until the end of September, young road users aged 6 to 12 can zoom around the 640-meter track on go-karts or bicycles. For the youngest ones, aged 4 to 6, there's the opportunity to ride pedal cars with a supportive parent walking alongside.

But it's not just the speed that attracts. Along the track awaits a fascinating journey of discovery through a miniature Vasa. No fewer than twelve carefully recreated models of the city's iconic buildings, such as the City Hall, the Water Tower, and the Railway Station, line the route. You'll also find the market square, roundabouts, traffic lights, and level crossings – all designed to create the most authentic city experience possible on a child-friendly scale.

“The Onkilahti traffic park is like Vasa in miniature and offers both children and adults a wonderful environment to learn about traffic and have fun,” noted Service Manager Jarmo Latvala at last year's opening, and the park truly lives up to that promise.

On weekdays, the park is open to the public between 12 PM and 6 PM, and on weekends between 12 PM and 4 PM. Mornings are reserved for booked groups from schools and kindergartens, where professional staff from the City of Vasa's youth services guide the children through traffic rules and safety.

Each driving session begins with a short safety briefing, and there are departures every 30 minutes. With 36 go-karts and bicycles, and even a miniature model of the Lifti bus, there are plenty of vehicles for everyone.

And don't miss the adjacent 1000 square meter pump track, which invites you to exciting rides with skateboards, scooters, or BMX bikes!

Don't miss the chance to experience Vasa in a completely new and playful way! Welcome to the Onkilahti traffic park on the second of May!





HEALTH

It Pays to Be Happy and Well-being: You Don't Get Dementia

As life expectancy increases and the global population ages, we are faced with an undeniable challenge: how to reduce the growing burden of neurodegenerative diseases like dementia. Dementia, with Alzheimer's disease as its most common form, has been on the rise for decades. An estimated 139 million people worldwide are projected to be living with dementia by 2050. Alarming, over 10 million new cases are diagnosed each year—roughly one every three seconds.

However, new research provides hope and offers a refreshing perspective: well-being may hold the key to preventing, or at least mitigating, the risk of dementia. While most public health strategies focus on biomedical interventions, emerging evidence suggests that promoting mental well-being and fostering positive emotions could serve as powerful tools in dementia prevention.

A Decade of Research Linking Well-Being to Brain Health

A landmark study conducted by researchers from the Well-being and Emotion across the Lifespan Lab (WELLab) at Washington University in

St. Louis, and highlighted in the 2024 World Happiness Report, shows a strong correlation between well-being and a reduced risk of dementia. This interdisciplinary research, spanning over a decade, makes a compelling case for the protective effects of well-being on the brain.

The study's findings are based on data collected from older adults in Chicago and Illinois, starting in 1997. Participants underwent annual evaluations of their cognitive abilities and provided self-assessments of their emotional states and overall well-being. The researchers found that individuals who consistently reported higher levels of well-being were less likely to develop memory and thinking impairments, even when they had the biological markers associated with Alzheimer's disease.

While the exact mechanisms behind this link remain unclear, the results strongly suggest that maintaining high levels of well-being throughout life could help delay or even prevent the onset of dementia.

Well-Being: A Buffer Against Dementia?

The research also touches on a broader question: why is there a connection between well-being and

brain health? According to Dr. Emily Willroth, Director of WELLab and one of the study's lead researchers, there are several factors that might explain this relationship. "People who report higher well-being are more likely to engage in activities known to promote brain health, such as regular physical exercise, social interaction, and mental stimulation," says Dr. Willroth. These activities have long been associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline, but the study goes a step further by suggesting that well-being may also act as a buffer against the harmful effects of stress, a known contributor to neurodegenerative diseases. Dr. Kyrsten Costlow Hill, another co-author of the study, explains that stress can damage the brain's critical systems responsible for maintaining cognitive function. Higher levels of well-being, on the other hand, may provide the resilience needed to withstand or counteract this damage.

What Does Well-Being Look Like for Those Already Living with Dementia?

While well-being is now recognized as a potential preventative measure, it also plays a crucial role in improving the lives of

those already living with dementia. The WELLab team emphasizes that well-being interventions can enhance autonomy, competence, and relatedness, even in advanced stages of dementia.

Simple activities such as physical exercise, spending time outdoors, and engaging in social activities have shown significant benefits for individuals with dementia.

These interventions not only improve mood and cognitive function but also increase life satisfaction. Moreover, methods like reminiscence therapy, where individuals are encouraged to reflect on past memories, can foster emotional stability and enhance overall well-being. Aging in place—remaining in one's home rather than relocating to an institution—has been shown to be particularly effective in boosting the well-being of older adults with dementia. By using home adaptations, assistive technologies, and maintaining social connections, individuals can experience greater satisfaction with life. Dementia villages, which provide a safe yet familiar environment, have also emerged as a model for maintaining dignity and quality of life for those affected by the disease.



The Path Forward: Acting on What We Know
Despite the promising findings, Dr. Willroth stresses that there is no "miracle cure" for dementia. However, the evidence points toward actionable steps that can be taken today to reduce the risk of this devastating condition. Public health initiatives should prioritize well-being as a cornerstone of dementia prevention. As the global population ages, the demand for strategies

that not only treat but also prevent neurodegenerative diseases will continue to rise. Incorporating well-being into daily routines is not just a matter of living a happier life; it may also be the key to preserving cognitive function well into old age. Physical activity, social interaction, mindfulness practices, and positive emotional engagement are all accessible and effective means of improving both

mental health and brain health. As the research suggests, investing in well-being pays dividends far beyond happiness—it may hold the key to unlocking a future with fewer cases of dementia. While we cannot completely eliminate the risk of developing neurodegenerative diseases, the steps we take today toward fostering mental and emotional well-being may reduce the likelihood of dementia for millions.

In a world where dementia remains one of the most pressing public health challenges, we must act now. Prioritizing well-being, both in our personal lives and through public health policies, can lead to healthier aging and, ultimately, a reduced burden of dementia on individuals, families, and society. After all, the cost of ignoring well-being is far too high—for our minds, our bodies, and our collective future.

EXHIBITION

Riding The Radio Waves - an interesting exhibition in Tampere Vapriikki-museo



A 15 W FM-transmitter used in pirate radio in Tampere in the 80ies



Commodore, the first computer for everyone in Finland

"On the crest of the radio wave – From crystal machine to podcast" opens up Finnish radio history from the 1920s to the present day

The Tampere Vapriikki Museum opens a fascinating exhibition that delves into the roots of Finnish radio history. "Riding the radio waves – From crystal machine to podcast" takes the visitor on an enchanting journey into the multifaceted history of radio. The exhibition delves into what has made radio enchanting for creators, listeners and enthusiasts for decades, and why this magical device has maintained its position in the age of the internet and digital communication.

Although radio may seem like a transitory format in today's media storms, it is still a globally significant means of communication. Internet access, mobile networks, electricity and access to digital information are not available everywhere in the world. Radio is also proving to be a valuable communication channel in crisis situations, as its network is designed to withstand longer power outages compared to, for example, mobile phone networks.

Radio amateurs, in particular, appear to be critical pillars of communication and communication in crisis situations. The exhibition invites the visitor to think about the magic that a device hidden on the radio manages to create, from everyday listening to necessary crisis connections. This unique exhibition offers an opportunity to delve into the history of radio and understand its continued importance as a versatile and sustainable means of communication. *en jatkuvan merkityksen monipuolisena ja kestävässä viestintävälineenä.*



CLIMATE CHANGE

Copernicus: March 2025 Was the Warmest March Ever Recorded in Europe – A Climate Emergency Unfolding



A PLANET ON FIRE. Europe's Hottest March in History

The latest data from the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) confirms what many feared: March 2025 was the warmest March ever recorded in Europe, shattering previous records and deepening concerns over an accelerating climate crisis.

Globally, March 2025 was the second-warmest March on record, with an average surface air temperature of 14.06°C—0.65°C above the 1991-2020 average and a staggering 1.60°C above pre-industrial levels. While it was 0.08°C cooler than March 2024's record, it still surpassed the third-warmest March (2016) by a narrow margin.

But the most alarming revelation? This marks the 20th month out of the last 21 where global temperatures exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels—a critical threshold scientists warn could trigger irreversible climate tipping points.

Europe in the Hot Seat: A Continent Burning Up

For Europe, March 2025 was unprecedented. The average temperature over European land reached 6.03°C, a shocking 2.41°C above the 1991-2020 average. The worst-hit regions included eastern Europe

and southwest Russia, where temperatures soared far beyond seasonal norms.

Samantha Burgess, Strategic Lead for Climate at ECMWF, stated:

"March 2025 was the warmest March for Europe, highlighting once again how temperatures are continuing to break records. It was also a month of contrasting rainfall extremes—some regions experienced their driest March on record, while others saw their wettest in at least 47 years."

This climate whiplash—swinging between extreme drought and flooding—is becoming the new normal, destabilizing agriculture, ecosystems, and human settlements.

The Arctic Crisis: Sea Ice Hits a Devastating Low

While Europe baked, the Arctic suffered another devastating blow. Winter sea ice coverage hit a record low, continuing a decades-long decline. The loss of reflective ice accelerates global warming, as dark ocean water absorbs more heat—a dangerous feedback loop.

Scientists warn that without urgent action, Arctic summers could be ice-free within decades, with catastrophic consequences for global weather patterns, sea levels, and

biodiversity.

Why This Matters: We Are Living in a Climate Emergency
1.5°C Is Not a Target—It's a Limit We've Already Crossed

The Paris Agreement aimed to keep warming below 1.5°C, but we are already flirting with disaster.

20 of the last 21 months exceeded this threshold, meaning we are living in uncharted territory.

Extreme Weather Is the New Normal

Droughts, floods, wildfires, and heatwaves are no longer anomalies—they are the baseline.

Europe's wildfire season is starting earlier and lasting longer, while Mediterranean nations face crippling water shortages.

The Arctic's Collapse Will Affect Everyone

Melting ice disrupts the jet stream, leading to prolonged heatwaves and brutal cold snaps.

Rising sea levels threaten coastal cities worldwide, from Miami to Mumbai.

A Call to Action: What Must Be Done?

The Copernicus report is not just another climate warning—it is a screaming alarm bell.

□ End Fossil Fuel Subsidies – Governments still pour billions into oil and gas while renewable energy waits for funding.

□ Accelerate Renewable Energy Transition – Solar and wind must replace coal and gas within years, not decades.

□ Enforce Stricter Climate Policies – Carbon taxes, deforestation bans, and binding emissions cuts are non-negotiable.

□ Prepare for the Unavoidable – Even if emissions stop today, locked-in warming guarantees more extremes. Cities must adapt now.

The Next Decade Will Decide Our Future

We are not just breaking records—we are breaking our planet. If March 2025 is a sign of what's to come, the 2020s will be the decade that determines whether we avoid climate catastrophe or plunge into irreversible chaos.

The time for half-measures is over. The time for action is now.

NEWS

MIGRI

Finland Streamlines Reception System as Asylum Numbers Decline. Oravais will close in December

THE FINNISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE (Migri) has announced the closure of multiple reception centres, including the Oravais facility in December, as the need for asylum accommodation continues to decrease.

Fewer Arrivals, More Local Integration

The decision follows a significant drop in asylum applications—down 45% in 2024 compared to the previous year. Additionally, the number of displaced Ukrainians seeking temporary protection has steadily declined. At the same time, an increasing number of reception centre residents have successfully transitioned to permanent municipal housing, reducing the demand for centralized accommodation.

Cost Efficiency Without Compromising Welfare

To maintain a financially sustainable reception system, Migri will terminate contracts with 18 reception centres by July, saving an estimated €21 million in 2025. A further eight centres will close by February 2026.

Elina Nurmi, Director of Reception Services, emphasized that the closures have been carefully timed:

“The first centres will not shut before the end of June, ensuring school-aged children can complete their academic year without disruption. Our priority remains the well-being of vulnerable groups, particularly minors.”

Pathway to Independence

Over 2,200 current residents are now eligible to apply for municipal residency, granting them the freedom to settle anywhere

in Finland. Nearly half could relocate immediately if they choose. Those not yet ready for independent living will be transferred to other reception centres, with Migri providing tailored support throughout the transition.

“We’re committed to a smooth process,” Nurmi added. “Each case will be assessed individually, and clients retain the option to move into private housing if preferred.”

A Shift in Finland’s Migration Landscape

This move reflects broader trends in migration—fewer new arrivals and greater emphasis on long-term integration. While the closures signify a reduction in immediate capacity, they also highlight the success of Finland’s resettlement policies in helping asylum seekers establish stable lives.

What’s next?

With further adjustments possible in 2026, Finland’s reception system appears poised for a more targeted, cost-effective future—one that balances fiscal responsibility with humanitarian commitments.

This rationalization was inevitable given the sharp decline in asylum seekers. However, the real test will be ensuring that those still in the system—particularly families and unaccompanied minors—receive adequate support as they transition to independence.

The €21 million savings are a win for taxpayers, but the human aspect of integration must remain a priority.

MIGRI

Фінляндія оптимізує систему прийому, оскільки кількість біженців зменшується. Oravais

ІМІГРАЦІЙНА СЛУЖБА ФІНЛЯНДІЇ (Migri) оголосила про закриття кількох центрів прийому, включаючи заклад Oravais, у грудні, оскільки потреба в притулках продовжує зменшуватися.

Менше прибуттів, більше локальної інтеграції

Це рішення послідувало за значним падінням кількості заявок на надання притулку — на 45% у 2024 році порівняно з попереднім роком. Крім того, кількість переміщених українців, які шукають тимчасового захисту, неухильно зменшується. У той же час, все більша кількість мешканців приймальних центрів успішно перейшли на постійне муніципальне житло, що зменшило попит на централізоване житло.

Економічна ефективність без шкоди для добробуту

Щоб підтримувати фінансово стійку систему прийому, Migri розірве контракти з 18 центрами прийому до липня, заощадивши приблизно 21 мільйон євро у 2025 році. Ще вісім центрів будуть закриті до лютого 2026 року.

Еліна Нурмі, директор служби прийому біженців, наголосила, що закриття було ретельно розплановано:

«Перші центри не закриються до кінця червня, щоб діти шкільного віку могли завершити навчальний рік без збоїв. Нашим пріоритетом залишається благополуччя вразливих груп населення, особливо неповнолітніх».

Шлях до незалежності

Понад 2200 нинішніх жителів тепер мають право подати заявку на муніципальне проживання, що надає їм свободу проживання в будь-якому місці Фінляндії. Майже половина може переїхати негайно, якщо захоче. Ті, хто ще не готовий до самостійного життя, будуть переведені в

інші центри прийому, а Migri надаватиме індивідуальну підтримку протягом усього переходу.

“Ми прагнемо до безперервного процесу», — додав Нурмі. “Кожен випадок буде оцінюватися індивідуально, і клієнти зберігають можливість переїхати в приватне житло, якщо це бажано».

Зміни в міграційному ландшафті Фінляндії

Цей крок відображає ширші тенденції в міграції — менша кількість новоприбулих і більший акцент на довгостроковій інтеграції. Хоча закриття означає скорочення негайної пропускної здатності, воно також підкреслює успіх політики переселення Фінляндії у допомозі шукачам притулку налагодити стабільне життя.

Що далі?

З можливими подальшими коригуваннями у 2026 році система прийому у Фінляндії, схоже, готова до більш цілеспрямованого та економічно ефективного майбутнього — такого, яке збалансує фінансову відповідальність із гуманітарними зобов’язаннями.

Така раціоналізація була неминучою з огляду на різке зменшення кількості шукачів притулку. Однак справжнім випробуванням буде забезпечення того, щоб ті, хто все ще перебуває в системі, особливо сім’ї та неповнолітні без супроводу, отримували належну підтримку на шляху до незалежності.

Економія у розмірі 21 мільйона євро — це вигравш для платників податків, але людський аспект інтеграції має залишатися пріоритетом.

PARTY DRUGS

Laughing gas epidemic: the hidden danger destroying young lives



"Living Made Easy": An 1830s satirical print depicting Humphry Davy giving a dose of nitrous oxide to a woman. Wikimedia Commons.

A SILENT BUT DEADLY TREND is sweeping through parties, festivals, and even schoolyards across the nation. Nitrous oxide, commonly known as "laughing gas," is being abused at record rates—and medical experts warn it could leave a generation with permanent nerve damage, paralysis, or even death.

The problem is already big in Sweden, and we usually follow in Sweden's footsteps here in Finland.

What Is Laughing Gas?

Nitrous oxide (N_2O) is a colorless, sweet-tasting gas that has legitimate medical uses as an anesthetic in dentistry and surgery. When used properly under medical supervision, it helps relieve pain and anxiety. However, outside the clinic, it has become a popular—and dangerously misunderstood—recreational drug.

From Medical Tool to Party Drug

Legally, nitrous oxide is classified as a pharmaceutical and should only be administered by trained professionals. Yet, it's alarmingly easy to obtain. The gas is sold in small metal canisters (often called "whip-pits") meant for whipping cream

in professional kitchens. These canisters are now being openly sold online and in shops, with little regulation.

The Shocking Rise in Abuse

According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), nitrous oxide has become one of the most commonly used recreational drugs among young adults in Europe, with use doubling in some countries since 2020. In the UK alone, hospital admissions linked to laughing gas have surged by 300% in the last five years (NHS Data, 2024).

The High—And the Horrific Crash When inhaled, laughing gas induces a brief but intense euphoria, dizziness, and uncontrollable laughter—hence its nickname. The effects last only 20-30 seconds, leading users to binge multiple canisters in one session. But what comes next is far from funny.

The Dark Side: Nerve Damage, Paralysis, and Death

While many dismiss it as "harmless fun," doctors are seeing an alarming spike in severe neurological damage caused by nitrous oxide abuse.

The gas destroys vitamin B12, a critical nutrient for nerve function. Without it, the nervous system begins to fail.

Symptoms of long-term abuse include:

- Tingling and numbness in hands and feet (early warning signs)
- Loss of bladder and bowel control (due to nerve damage)
- Paralysis in legs (from spinal cord deterioration)
- Psychosis and memory loss (in extreme cases)

A 19-year-old in the Netherlands was left wheelchair-bound after months of heavy use, his spinal nerves irreversibly damaged (Dutch Journal of Medicine, 2023). Another case in the UK saw a young woman permanently unable to walk after just six months of weekend use (BBC News, 2024).

A Warning to Young People: "It's Russian Roulette With Your Nerves"

Dr. Lisa Carter, a neurologist at King's College Hospital, has treated dozens of laughing gas victims. She warns:

"Young people think it's safe

because it's used in medicine. But medical doses are controlled. Recreational use is like playing Russian roulette with your nervous system. Once the damage is done, it's often permanent."

The Lethal Risk: Oxygen Deprivation

Beyond nerve damage, laughing gas can starve the brain of oxygen, leading to sudden death. In 2023, a 17-year-old girl in Germany died after inhaling nitrous oxide from a balloon and suffocating (Der Spiegel, 2023).

What's Being Done?

Some countries are cracking down. The UK recently banned recreational sales of nitrous oxide, imposing fines and jail time for possession. But enforcement remains difficult, and the black market is thriving.

Is 30 Seconds of Laughter Worth a Lifetime of Regret?

The message from doctors is clear: Laughing gas is no joke. What starts as a "harmless high" can end in a wheelchair—or worse.

If you or someone you know is using nitrous oxide recreationally, STOP NOW. The next balloon could be the one that changes your life forever.

If you are worried about yourself or someone close to you:

- Substance abuse counselling 0800 900 45

Environmental impact – not just health risks

- Nitrous oxide is a powerful greenhouse gas (300 times more potent than carbon dioxide)

SOURCES:

- EMCDDA (2024) - European Drug Report
- NHS England (2024) - Hospital Admission Statistics
- Dutch Journal of Medicine (2023) - Case Study on Spinal Damage
- BBC News (2024) - "The Laughing Gas Crisis"
- Der Spiegel (2023) - Fatal Nitrous Oxide Case

ART

HELENE SCHJERFBECK

Helene Schjerfbeck Exhibition Comes to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York – A Historic First for Finnish Art

Ateneum Art Museum | News |
April 2, 2025

A LANDMARK MOMENT in Finnish art history is approaching as the works of Helene Schjerfbeck will be displayed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) in New York from December 5, 2025, to April 5, 2026. This marks the first time a Finnish artist has been granted a dedicated exhibition at one of the world's most prestigious art museums. The showcase is the result of long-term collaboration between the Ateneum Art Museum and the Klassikot maailmalle (Classics to the World) initiative, supported by the Jane and Aatos Erkko Foundation.

A Dream Come True for Finnish Art

"This is a dream come true—not just for me but for Finnish art as a whole. The Met is in a league of its own, and it's an incredible honor that Helene Schjerfbeck's works will grace its walls," says Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, Director of the Ateneum Art Museum.

The exhibition spans Schjerfbeck's (1862–1946) entire career, from her early academic works to her introspective late self-portraits. Over 60 pieces will be on display, including portraits, still lifes, and landscapes, featuring iconic works such as *The Convalescent* (1888), *The Seamstress* (1905), and a series of self-portraits. A speci-

Helene Schjerfbeck: Self-Portrait with a Black Background (1915). Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum, Hallonblad Collection. Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Yehia Eweis.

al highlight is *The Lace Collar* (1920), acquired by The Met in 2023—the first work by a Finnish artist to enter the museum's collection.

International Collaboration and Contemporary Art Spotlight

The exhibition will be held in The Met's Robert Lehman Wing, curated by Dita Amory, with Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff serving as consulting curator. A comprehensive exhibition catalog, including an essay by von Bonsdorff, will accompany the showcase.

Alongside Schjerfbeck's retrospective, Finnish con-

temporary art will also take center stage in New York. The *Remix the Archive* exhibition (May–June 2025) will feature generative art created using open-access data from the Finnish National Gallery's collections, including the award-winning *Loom of Reality* by Ilmo and Aarni Kapanen.

Finnish Art's Global Reach

Schjerfbeck's works have previously captivated international audiences, with a celebrated 2019 exhibition at London's Royal Academy of Arts and a 2014–2016 tour across Japan and Germany.

The Klassikot maailmalle project continues to bring Finnish masters to global audiences: a Pekka Halonen exhibition will open at Paris's Petit Palais in November 2025, following the recent Akseli Gallen-Kallela showcase at Vienna's Belvedere Museum.

Who Was Helene Schjerfbeck?

Schjerfbeck developed a distinctive modern style, stripping her paintings of unnecessary detail. Her self-portraits—painted from youth to old age—reveal a profound artistic journey. The Ateneum holds the world's largest Schjerfbeck collection, with over 200 works.



BOOKS

HISTORICAL LITERATURE

Karl August Tavaststjerna: Nobleman

A romantic in the whirlwind of hard times

Hårda tider will be published by Wasa Daily

KARL AUGUST TAVASTSTJERNA, the controversial and great star of Finland-Swedish literature, was born in 1860 into a noble family in the municipality of Mikkeli. Already in her childhood, he experienced the shadows of upper-class life, when her mother died of typhoid fever while caring for beggars during the famine years. This tragic event made an indelible impression on the young Karl August, which was later reflected in his works.

The road to school was rocky. After his father's death, he was placed under the guardianship of Colonel Constantin Ruin, and his studies at the Helsinki Polytechnic School did not inspire him much. He longed to return to the Parisian art scene, but eventually returned to Finland disappointed. After this, however, his literary career began to flourish.

Tavaststjerna was a controversial figure, a "patriot of the fatherland" who hated the intellectual atmosphere and language battles in Finland. He thirsted for international recognition and moved around in Parisian artistic circles, but at the same time he depicted the conflicts and injustices of Finnish society in his works. The novel *Hårda tider*, (Hard Times) (1891) is a brutal depiction of the famine years of the 1860s, where noble romanticism collides with grim reality.

Tavaststjernas pen was sharp and satirical. He did not shy away from depicting the dark side of society, and his work aroused much discussion in his time. He was a realist who did

not embellish reality, but at the same time he had the soul of a romantic who longed for beauty and harmony.

Tavaststjerna's book *Hårda tider* and the Finnish translation *Kovina aikoina* will be published on Wasa Daily's website.

His life came to a tragic end in Pori in 1898, only 37 years old. According to the story, instead of medicine, she was given a lethal dose of lamp oil, according to other sources, it was a nurse's mistake. This seemingly absurd death is the end of his contradictory life.

The legacy of Tavaststjerna lives on in Finland-Swedish literature. His works are timeless depictions of the role of man in difficult times, and his satirical pen continues to scratch the surface of society. He was a noble romantic who dared to look reality in the eye and describe its brutality.

His book *Hårda tider* is a milestone in Finnish literature that depicts the misery and despair of the famine years. Häme-star does not spare the reader, but shows the horrible face of hunger, disease and death. He also describes people's desperate attempts to survive and even exploit each other. The book is a harsh depiction of the time



Karl August Tavaststjerna (1860-1898) Wikimedia Commons when Finland was a poor and hungry country.

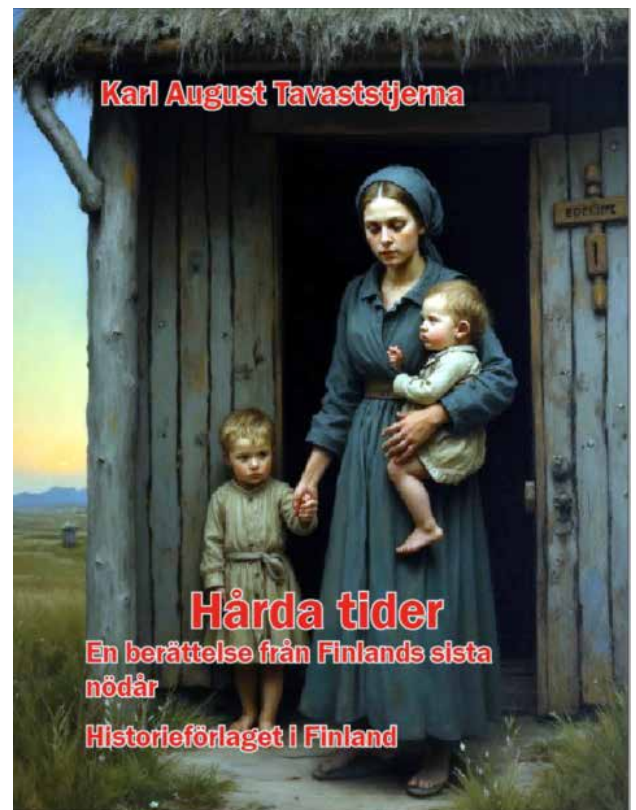
Tavaststjerna's humour was black and sarcastic. He mocked the hypocrisy of the nobility and the greed of the bourgeoisie. He did not mince words, and his works are full of sharp

observations and apt comparisons. He was a writer who dared to laugh even at serious things.

Tavaststjerna was also very talented. He wrote poems, plays, and novels, and he was also a skilled journalist. He started his own newspaper, but it was not financially successful. He was a visionary who wanted to change the world, but he also had a realistic understanding of its brutality.

Karl August Tavaststjerna was a controversial and fascinating figure who left an indelible mark on Finland-Swedish literature. His works are still relevant today, and they are still read and studied.

He was a noble romantic who dared to look reality in the eye and describe its brutality.



EXHIBITION

AMOS REX

Anna Estarriola's "Staged Circumstances and Piles of Things" – A Multisensory Journey Through Constructed Realities at Amos Rex



WHAT HAPPENS when reality is not what it seems? When the objects, sounds, and spaces around us are staged, manipulated, and deliberately arranged? The new exhibition Staged Circumstances and

Piles of Things by Catalan-born, Helsinki-based media artist **Anna Estarriola** at Amos Rex invites visitors to peel back the layers of perception and step into a labyrinth of shifting realities.

Opened to the public on April 2, this is Estarriola's largest solo exhibition to date, transforming Amos Rex's underground galleries into an immersive, ever-changing environment. Each of the 17 installations acts as a portal into a different dimension—sometimes startlingly tangible, sometimes hauntingly abstract.

Constructed Spaces and the Fluidity of Meaning

Blending sculpture, moving image, sound, and interactive electronics, Estarriola's works challenge the viewer's senses and assumptions. The exhibition's title (Staged Circumstances and Piles of Things) hints at its core themes: How do the objects around us gain meaning? Can we trust our own perception?

"Estarriola's work doesn't just tell stories—it turns the viewer into an active participant. Her installations are like intimate theatrical experiences where everyone plays a role," says curator Katariina Timonen.

Where Art and Science Collide

Drawing inspiration from quantum physics, neuroscience, and belief systems, Estarriola's practice explores how the brain processes reality and constructs order from

chaos.

"I want people to question what they see. Is what's in front of me really there? Or is it just a construct I've learned to accept?" Estarriola reflects.

Her work has been exhibited internationally and is held in collections such as the Finnish National Gallery and the Saastamoinen Foundation. In 2015, she received the prestigious AVEK Award, followed by a five-year state artist grant.

Touch, Interact, Disrupt Expectations

This is not a traditional art exhibition where visitors observe from a distance. Here, every movement, glance, or touch can reshape the experience. Estarriola's installations provoke thought, defy expectations, and leave the audience wondering: What is real, and what is staged?

Staged Circumstances and Piles of Things runs at Amos Rex from April 2 to September 1, 2025, alongside Enni-Kukka Tuomala's Expanding Empathies, offering a fascinating counterpoint to Estarriola's explorations.

Images: Anna Estarriola, System-Amos Rex-Aukusti Heinonen
AnnaEstarriola_03_Amos Rex-StellaOjala



BOOK

Rediscovered classic offers new insight into today's society

Wasa Dagblad has translated "1984"

into Swedish and the book can be read on the newspaper's website: www.vpress.ovh. The English version is also ready-

In an era marked by digital surveillance and the influence of social media, George Orwell's novel "1984" has gained new relevance. Although the book was written in 1948, long before the internet and smartphones, its depiction of a totalitarian society is frighteningly relevant.

The novel, which takes place in a dystopian future, describes a society where the state controls every aspect of citizens' lives. Through advanced surveillance and manipulation of information, the regime maintains its power and creates an atmosphere of fear and suspicion.

"It is fascinating how pinpoint-accurate Orwell was in his description of a surveillance society," says a well-known literary critic. "Although technology has developed enormously since 1948, the

underlying mechanisms for control and manipulation are still the same."

In "1984," the state uses "telescreens" to monitor citizens 24/7. In today's society, we have surveillance cameras, internet tracking, and facial recognition. Although these technologies are often justified on security grounds, they raise questions about privacy and civil liberties.

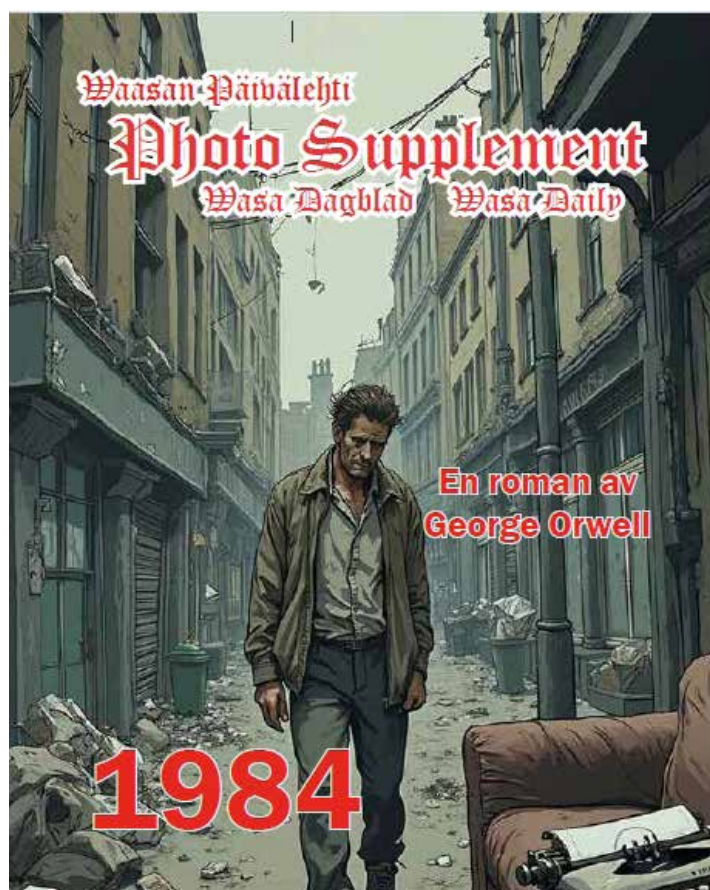
Orwell also depicts how the state uses "newspeak" to limit citizens' ability to think and control their perception of reality. By eliminating words that express opposition and criticism, the regime creates a language that makes it impossible to think "non-authoritarian" thoughts.

"It is a frightening thought that language can be used as a tool of control. In today's society, we see how politicians and the media use 'spin' and 'fake news' to manipulate public opinion. Orwell's newspeak may not be so far from our own reality."

"1984" is not only a warning against totalitarianism, but also a reminder of the impor-



George Orwell (1903 - 1950). Wikimedia Commons



tance of safeguarding freedom of expression, privacy, and critical thinking. In a time when these values are being challenged, Orwell's novel is more relevant

than ever.

'1984' can be recommended to everyone. It is a book that makes you think about our own time and the challenges we face.

AI

AI-Generated Podcasts: A New Era of Audio Content with NotebookLM

20 Everyday Abbreviations You Need to Know (and Maybe a Few You Don't)



**Podcast in English:
Russian disinformation**
<https://vpress.ovh/podcasts.htm>

In the rapidly evolving landscape of digital media, artificial intelligence continues to push boundaries, reshaping industries and redefining creative processes. One of the most groundbreaking developments is Google's NotebookLM, an advanced language model with the potential to revolutionize the podcasting world. With its ability to generate human-quality audio content, NotebookLM is paving the way for a new era of AI-driven storytelling, education, and entertainment.

The Emergence of AI-Generated Podcasts

As the podcasting industry continues to grow at an unprecedented rate, content creators and media companies are always on the lookout for innovative tools to streamline production and enhance creativity. NotebookLM, initially celebrated for its ability to generate high-quality written content, has now ventured into the realm of audio. This cutting-edge

technology is capable of producing podcasts that are nearly indistinguishable from those created by human hosts, opening up exciting possibilities for the future of digital content.

The appeal of NotebookLM-generated podcasts lies in several key features that set them apart from traditional podcasts:

Natural-Sounding Voice: NotebookLM can produce audio content with a voice that mimics the natural cadence and tone of human speech. This makes it difficult for listeners to discern that the podcast is AI-generated, offering a seamless listening experience.

Diverse Range of Topics: Whether it's breaking news, current events, or light-hearted storytelling, NotebookLM can tackle a wide array of subjects. Its versatility makes it an ideal tool for content creators looking to explore different genres without the constraints of time and labor-intensive production.



Abbreviations are everywhere these days. From texting acronyms to technical jargon, those handy 3-letter (and sometimes longer) combos can be confusing if you're not in the know. But fear not, fellow abbreviation adventurer! This article will equip you with the knowledge to decipher 20 of the most common abbreviations you'll encounter in everyday life.

1. **LOL:** Laughing Out Loud (This one might already be a classic for many!)
2. **BRB:** Be Right Back (Perfect for a quick bathroom break during a chat)
3. **OMG:** Oh My God (Expresses surprise or strong emotion)
4. **IMHO:** In My Humble Opinion (A way to preface your opinion politely)
5. **** ASAP:** As Soon As Possible (Lights a fire under someone... nicely)
6. **FYI:** For Your Information (A heads-up for someone)
7. **ETA:** Estimated Time of Arrival (Lets you know when to expect someone)
8. **RSVP:** Please Reply (Formal request for a response to an

- invitation)
9. **PDF:** Portable Document Format (A common file format for documents)
10. **JPG:** Joint Photographic Experts Group (A popular image file format)
11. **GIF:** Graphics Interchange Format (Another image format, known for animations)
12. **TIFF:** Tagged Image File Format (Used for high-quality images)
13. **WWW:** World Wide Web (The foundation of the internet we know)
14. **HTTP:** Hypertext Transfer Protocol (The language webpages use to talk)
15. **GPS:** Global Positioning System (Helps you navigate the world)
16. **ATM:** Automated Teller Machine (Your friendly neighborhood cash dispenser)
17. **DIY:** Do It Yourself (For the handy folks out there)
18. **VIP:** Very Important Person (Someone who gets special treatment)
19. **TBA:** To Be Announced (Stay tuned for more information)
20. **TBD:** To Be Determined (We're still figuring things out)

This is just a taste of the abbreviation world, but with these 20 under your belt, you'll be well on your way to deciphering the everyday lingo, from casual texts to technical documents. So, the next time you see an abbreviation that leaves you scratching your head, remember this list and keep on exploring the wonderful world of shorthand communication!

Wasa Daily

A modern newspaper with a layout with features of the press of the 1870s. Back then, newspapers had only 4-8 pages. Lots of text, but no images at all, so there's a lot to read on a few pages. Our paper is one of the very few newspapers in English serving English-speaking inhabitants in the Osthrobotnia region

The magazine contains quotations from old daily newspapers taken from the National Archives (digikansalliskirjasto.fi). GPT3, Gemini, Aria and Monica do some of the routine editing work, such as translation, corrector reading, and short notice writing. All texts have been checked by journalists and the editorial staff is responsible for all the content of the texts.

Wasa Daily is a daily newspaper type publication, so far it is published on Sunday mornings. But our goal is for it to come out every morning in the future.

The magazine is available online for free.

Editor-in-chief Hans Björknäs.

Readers' writings are welcome!

The magazine is locally owned and will remain so. For ever!

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Helsinki editorial office: Wasa Daily, Toimen linja 9 B 36, 00530 Helsinki. Phone +358-40-5462455.

Email: wasadagblad@gmail.com



HOROSCOPE FOR MAY 2025

May Horoscope – The Stars Are Mumblin' (And Maybe Making Some Sense)

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)
May begins with a burst of energy! Unfortunately, you misplaced it. Try checking under the couch or in the fridge. Love is knocking – open the door, but peek through the peephole first.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)
Happy birthday season! Celebrate with cake, presents, and maybe one extra glass of bubbly. Finances look stable – until you pass a flea market.

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)
You've got answers to everything, but no one's asked the questions yet. Careful with the puns – not everyone enjoys being called a "pre-coffee morning zombie."

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)
You're feeling emotional. That's okay – especially when you see a cute dog in the rain. Your career is moving

forward... slowly, like a snail on a sightseeing tour.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)
May is your catwalk! But remember: not every sidewalk is a stage. Love is blossoming – so is the balcony weed. Choose which one to water.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22)
You're planning everything to perfection. May says: "Good luck with that!" The stars suggest letting go a little – or at least trying spontaneous Taco Tuesday.

Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)
You're weighing your options. May might trap you in a decision loop – especially at the ice cream counter. Love is nearby, possibly hiding behind a bookshelf.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)
You attract secrets and drama. Perfect – May has plenty of both, with bonus cliffhangers. Tip: always have extra coffee at home.

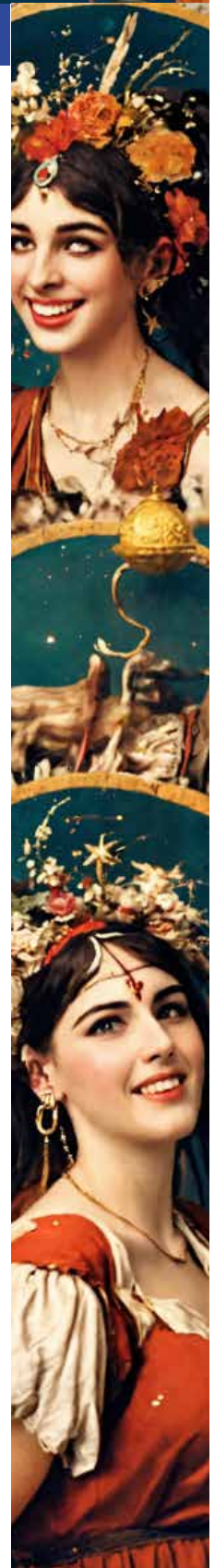
Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)
Wanderlust is real!

Even if your biggest trip is to the grocery store. May wants you to try something new – maybe salsa dancing. Or at least hot sauce.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)
You're working hard. May whispers: "Take it easy." A picnic in the park might give you more insight than three Power-Point decks.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)
You're ahead of your time. May is still in pajamas. Meet halfway – maybe shorts with a blazer? Innovation is coming... once you find your charging cable.

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)
Your head's in the clouds. May offers sunshine, rain, and sudden existential questions while waiting in line at the post office. Trust your gut – but also check the weather forecast.



HUMOUR ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

MR WEST

A well-known joker once came in company into a restaurant, where he saw a familiar gentleman named Wester sitting drinking toddy.

"Listen, Wester," he exclaimed, "can you tell me what is the resemblance between the sun and a toddy?"

"No", he replied.

"Well, both go down in the west," was the answer.

WHERE THE CHILDREN COME FROM

There was a group of three flamboyantly dressed very little girls, with barks and ribbons and precious toys and neighbor dolls, and near them was playing on the sand a poor little girl of about the same age, scantily clad and with a home-made primitive doll in her arms. The three fine children discussed the interesting question of where they came from, which proved a highly interesting topic for toddler speculation.

— I come from a rose, mother said, uttered one of the little living dolls.

— And me again, interjected No. 2, I must have come from a head of cabbage.

"I, yes I was picked up by a stork," said number three.

Whereupon she, who had come out of a rose, scornfully and proudly turned to the poor little scantily clad girl child, and said nobly:

— And you, there, where did you come from?

— Alas, answered little Cinderella, we are so poor, so terribly poor back home, that mother and father have to make their children

themselves.

DAMN LUCK

— Hello, my lord, cried the energetic flower seller, buy some flowers for your darling.

- I have no sweetheart, said the young man.

- Then buy some flowers for your wife.

— I have no wife.

— Well, lucky cheese, then buy some flowers to celebrate your damn luck.

THE CUCKOO

The teacher (who told about the cuckoo):

— Well, what is it in the main that you now know about the cuckoo?'

Student:

— It does not lay its own eggs.

The astronomic picture of today:



This spectacular image of the large spiral galaxy NGC 1232 was obtained on September 21, 1998, during a period of good observing conditions. It is based on three exposures in ultra-violet, blue and red light, respectively. The colours of the different regions are well visible : the central areas contain older stars of reddish colour, while the spiral arms are populated by young, blue stars and many star-forming regions. Note the distorted companion galaxy on the left side, shaped like the greek letter "theta".

Credit: ESO

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Next week:



From our readers

We very much welcome submissions from our readers. Comments, stories, memories, debate, news from home. Probably this will be the most important part of this spring paper. But space is limited, so please write as short as possible! So please send posts to:

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