



SUOMI  
FINLAND



# Finland in the World Media in 2019

Ministry for Foreign Affairs review of 2019

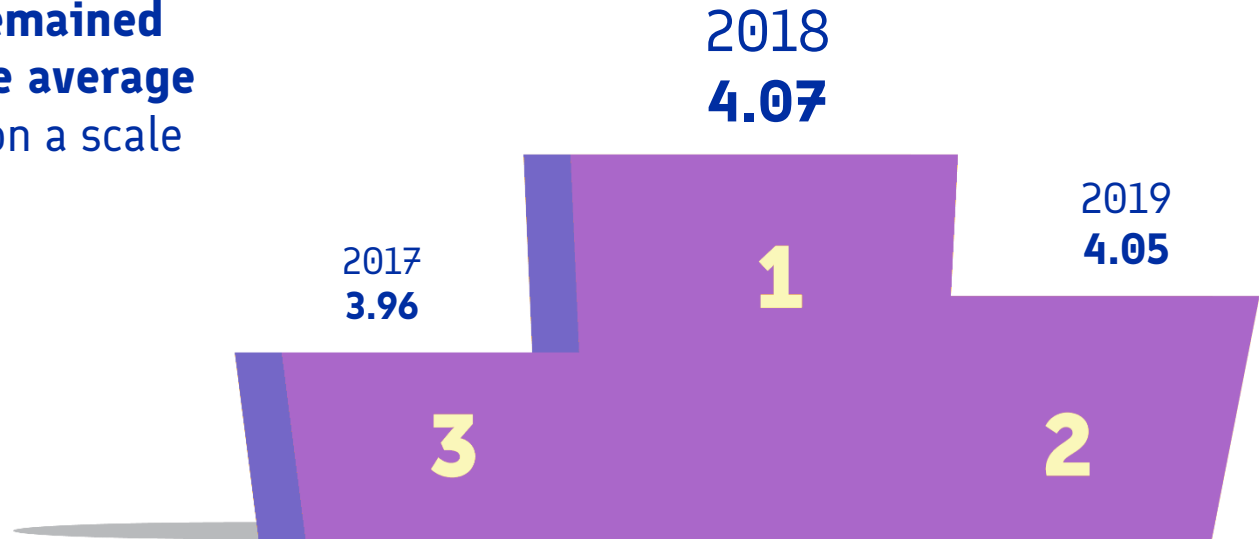
”

The new government and the media coverage it has received have been like winning the lottery for Finland's brand.

– NORWAY

# Finland's overall rating

In 2019, Finland's reputation in the world media **remained unchanged, with the average again more than 4** on a scale of 1 to 5



# Sanna Marin, equality and education led Finland's visibility in the world media in 2019

2019



A word cloud for the year 2019, rendered in shades of red and maroon. The most prominent words are 'Marin', 'Prime Minister', 'education', 'equality', 'government', and 'Council of the EU'. Other visible terms include 'tourism', 'elections', 'Rinne', 'Bottas', 'well-being', 'Niinistö', 'Nokia', 'Helsinki', 'sauna', 'circular economy', 'Nykänen', 'Santa Claus', 'Haavisto', 'Lapland', 'food', 'climate', 'the happiest country in the world', and 'football'.

2018



A word cloud for the year 2018, rendered in shades of blue. The most prominent words are 'education', 'well-being', 'Helsinki', 'Niinistö', 'equality', 'the happiest country in the world', 'Trump-Putin', 'circular economy', 'immigration', 'start-up', 'Lapland', 'sauna', 'arctic', 'Northern Lights', 'heavy metal', 'basic income', 'raking', 'Paasilinna', 'architecture', 'food', 'Nokia', 'kalsarikännit', 'Oodi', and 'Santa Claus'.

2017



A word cloud for the year 2017, rendered in shades of blue. The most prominent words are 'Finland 100', 'independence', 'design', 'tourism', 'culture', 'Helsinki', 'sauna', 'education', 'basic income', 'Tom of Finland', 'Nokia', 'terror attack', 'crisis', 'government', 'Moomins', 'Niinistö', 'Santa Claus', 'Räikkönen', 'Bottas', 'Kaurismäki', 'Sibelius', 'Saariaho', 'Markkanen', and 'Slush'.

# **The most prominent themes**

# Sanna Marin became a phenomenon in the international media in December, bringing Finland to the limelight

”The big news at the end of the year was Sanna Marin’s election as Prime Minister – everyone on the street seems to know about it. [...] Between 8 and 15 December, there were more than 1,500 news reports related to Marin published in the United States. This included all the major media houses in the US, from The New York Times to The Washington Post and from NPR to NBC. Finland’s new Prime Minister also featured on social media and late-night shows.  
– UNITED STATES

”As a rule, Germany is not interested in Finland’s domestic politics. For example, the criticism that Foreign Minister Haavisto received did not make it to the news. But Sanna Marin is completely different.  
– GERMANY

”After December, the name of the Prime Minister – Sanna Marin – was recognised by all Norwegians. – NORWAY

”The election of Sanna Marin as Prime Minister of Finland in December received a lot of coverage in the Danish media. After Marin’s election, the newspaper Extra Bladet wrote that ‘wild things are happening in Finland at the moment’. – DENMARK

”Election of Sanna Marin as Prime Minister has brought about positive attention towards Finnish politicians. – CHINA

”The election of Sanna Marin as Prime Minister was probably the most significant news about Finland in the Myanmar media; a young successful female politician is held in high esteem here just like in other countries.  
– MYANMAR

# The elections and the new government provided something to talk about all year

” The elections were followed relatively eagerly in all major media, and Swedes were particularly interested in the popularity of the Finns Party. The tone was mainly neutral and matter-of-fact. Both before and after the elections, the popularity and development of the Finns Party were compared to the Sweden Democrats, a similar populist party in Sweden. The success of young women also received coverage.

– SWEDEN

” Several changes in government were noted in 2019 in a country known for its political stability. People are interested in the phenomenon, and it is linked to pan-European developments and the growing influence of populist movements.

– PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EU

” The resignation of the Sipilä government in March, just five weeks before the parliamentary elections, the victory of the Social Democrats, the resignation of Prime Minister Rinne in December, and the appointment of Marin as the new Prime Minister, all emerged as the most important news from Finland. The role of women in the Marin government, in particular, was prominently featured in newspapers and in many news magazines and women’s magazines, which praised Finland as the happiest country in the world, a leader in environmental and well-being issues, and now also a country led by a young prime minister. – NETHERLANDS

” The rise of Sanna Marin as prime minister and the new young and female-dominated government made headlines, and interest in Finland has been staggering [...] The new government and the media coverage it has received have been a lottery win for Finland’s brand. – NORWAY

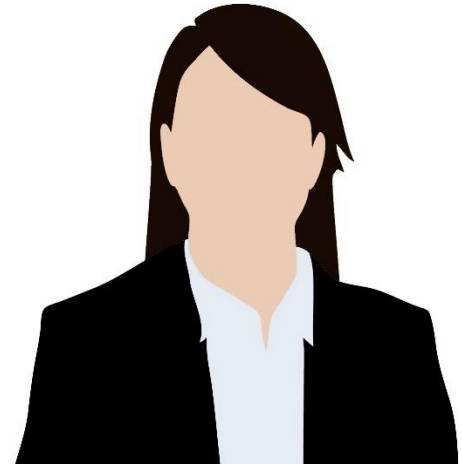
# Prime Minister Marin's example strengthened the image of the uniqueness of equality in Finland

”After Marin's election as Prime Minister, there was a great deal of interest in Finnish gender equality and the employment of women with families. – SWITZERLAND

”Sanna Marin was described in the Danish media as an example of 'social mobility', who grew up in a rainbow family with two mothers. [...] the article described how Marin had said that the environment where she grew up gave her a fundamental belief that all people are equal. – DENMARK

”Finland's reputation as a gender equality model country was boosted when Sanna Marin was chosen as the new Prime Minister in December. – CHINA

”Sanna Marin and the new government have enhanced the image of Finland as an example of an equal nation. – SINGAPORE



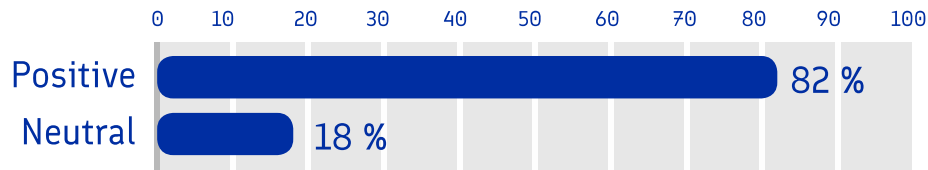
# Gender equality was also discussed, thanks to the HÄN campaign

- ” Topics relating to gender equality also received good coverage, since this is a topical issue in Japan nowadays – Japan dropped to 121st, whereas Finland ranked 3rd in the WEF Global Gender Gap Index. The Foreign Ministry’s HÄN Campaign was nicely covered in the media, resulting in 86 articles written from the award-giving ceremony with President Halonen, and the press release the Embassy’s Press Section, sent out prior to the event. – JAPAN
- ” In June, Ambassador Mikael Antell spoke about the HÄN campaign and the background of the HÄN phenomenon in the Språkteigen programme on NRK’s P2 radio channel. – NORWAY
- ” Finland presented the HÄN Honour to the Rumah Kita Bersama Foundation. – INDONESIA
- ” Colombia, a big football country, covered the news of equal pay for female football players. – COLOMBIA





# The most prominent news stories about Finland were reported in a very positive tone



” ‘Pretty damn cool’  
(Viva magazine on Sanna Marin becoming Prime Minister)

– THE NETHERLANDS

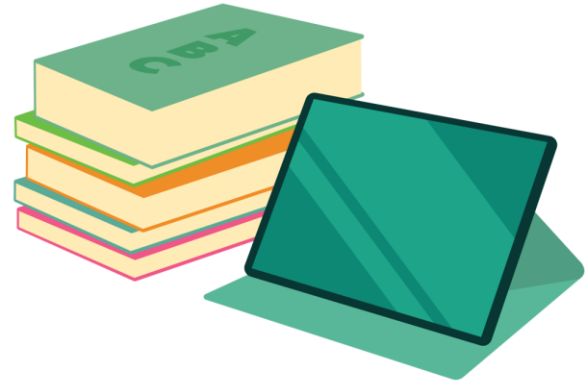
” The articles about Marin have been very positive, and they have created a great image of the Finnish government. – HONG KONG

# The country's reputation of having the best education system in the world remains

” The Finnish education system continues to be a success: it was one of the most prominent news topics in the media throughout the year. Finland's high-quality education system has been well known in Thailand for several years. – **THAILAND**

” Finland's high-quality education system was the topic that received the most media coverage in every possible media throughout the year. Finland was almost invariably mentioned as a model country when it comes to education. [...] The meeting between Olli-Pekka Heinonen and the Mexican Minister of Education gained extraordinary visibility even in the main news on TV. – **MEXICO**

” The Finnish education system is well-known, and it maintains its position as one of the most interesting topics about Finland. There continues to be demand for Finland's expertise, products and services in the educational sector. – **POLAND**



# The media paid attention to the government's ambitious climate policy

- ” The ambitious government programme aroused interest in the summer, and the image of Finland as a pioneer in combating the climate crisis spread in the media. – NORWAY
- ” Finland's ambitious climate policy and the target of climate neutrality for 2035 also received considerable coverage, although the media also called for concrete measures to achieve the target. – SWEDEN
- ” Various climate-related articles referring to Finland's ambitious climate targets (carbon neutrality for 2035, phasing out of coal burning by 2029) and the proposed solutions to achieve these targets were published in a number of major mainstream media (FAZ, ZDF, Zeit, Stern). – GERMANY
- ” Special attention was paid to climate-friendly policy in Finland. In the column Commentaries from Nordic countries, in Latvijas Avize, Ambassador Riitta Korpivaara wrote the article 'Step by step towards fossile-free world'. – LATVIA

# Climate issues were also highlighted in news stories about Finland's EU Presidency

” ‘Finland fights for climate during its EU Presidency’ [...] The priorities of Finland's EU Presidency on climate issues were well-publicised in the Greek media, and some articles also analysed the use of the money conventionally spent on presents to the heads of state to combat climate change instead. – GREECE

” Climate policy was placed at the forefront of most news stories related to the EU Presidency. Climate issues were exceptionally strongly present in Madrid as the UN climate talks and COP25 moved to Madrid at the end of the year. – SPAIN

” Finland's priority on climate issues was noted in a very positive light in the Brussels media, especially in the early stages of the Presidency. – BELGIUM

” ‘Finland's EU Presidency wants to be ecologically sustainable,’ read LUSA's headline, and the story continued: ‘With the slogan ‘A sustainable Europe – a sustainable future’, Finland sets an example and limits its carbon footprint by holding fewer meetings, by providing organic food and by offsetting emissions.’ – PORTUGAL

” Turkish media widely covered Deputy Minister Faruk Kaymakçı's statements during the opening reception in July. Mr. Kaymakçı emphasized the expectation from Finland's chairmanship for the revival of ‘Helsinki spirit’, where the negotiations started between EU and Turkey in 1999 during Finland's presidency. There were comments in several news outlets as well on the same subject. Towards the end of the term, the Finnish chairmanship was depicted as rather ‘low-profile and did not meet the expectations’. – TURKEY

**Other prominent themes**

# Finland – still the happiest country in the world

” Although Finland was already at the forefront of the happiness report in 2018, the coverage in 2019 was even greater; perhaps the first time at the top spot was seen as a curiosity, but the second time it was more real. – SWEDEN

” Finland’s reputation in the Australian media has stayed much the same. Most reports acknowledge the country as the happiest in the world. – AUSTRALIA

” Finland’s ranking as the happiest country in the world for two consecutive years as well as its good ranking in other international comparisons (e.g. the IMD Smart City Index and the Global Innovation Index, the Work-life Balance Index, tourism), further boosted the country’s reputation. – SINGAPORE

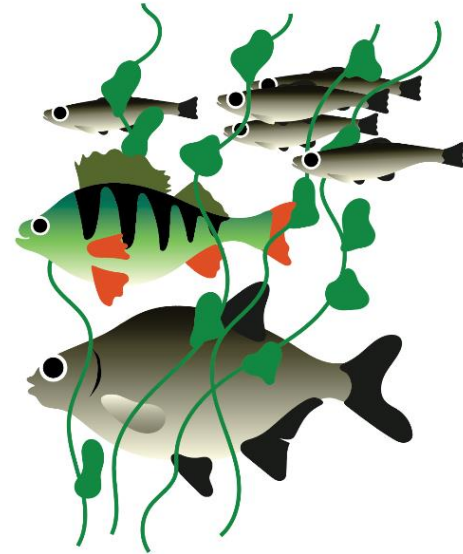
” The biggest hit in Vietnamese Media related to Finland is ‘Finland again ranked the happiest country in the World’. Even though this is not the first time Finland is ranked the happiest country, this information has been repeated again and again through the years, and now it has somehow become a ‘brand’ for Finland. – VIETNAM

# Finnish food is attracting more interest

” Finnish food, drink and food products were well covered in the media; many stories were related to Finland having been the theme country at the world’s largest food fair, the International Green Week. – **GERMANY**

” Pulled oats conquered the Netherlands in June and received a great deal of praise in the media and blogs. The product was deemed to be a delicious meat substitute. Even De Volkskrant’s food writer cooked it in a wok and was positively surprised. – **NETHERLANDS**

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



# Exports of Finnish expertise are gaining coverage

” Finnish export products that have featured are tourism and the themes of media visits such as education, circular economy, environmental policy and Cleantech. – HONG KONG

” Finnish expertise in waste management particularly gained a lot of coverage, even in the national media. – RUSSIA

” Cultural exports gained the most visibility as Finland partnered with Vienna Design Week, Austria’s largest design event, in autumn 2019. Eight Finnish design companies participated in the week-long event. Similarly, Finnish alcohol products gained coverage when Finland was a partner in Vienna’s Craft Beer Festival in November. – AUSTRIA

” Healthtech and ICT innovations (including Slush and hackathons), 5G technology, disposal solutions, cultural exports (Osmo Vänskä, the Moomins and Santa Claus) and xylitol have gained considerable coverage. – KOREA



# Nokia and circular economy were the most interesting phenomena in business

” [...] Nokia’s decision to open a centre of excellence with 150 highly qualified employees at its global service centre. – PORTUGAL

” Nokia’s 5G networks are regularly featured in the news, especially due to the uproar around Huawei and Canada’s tense relations with China. – CANADA

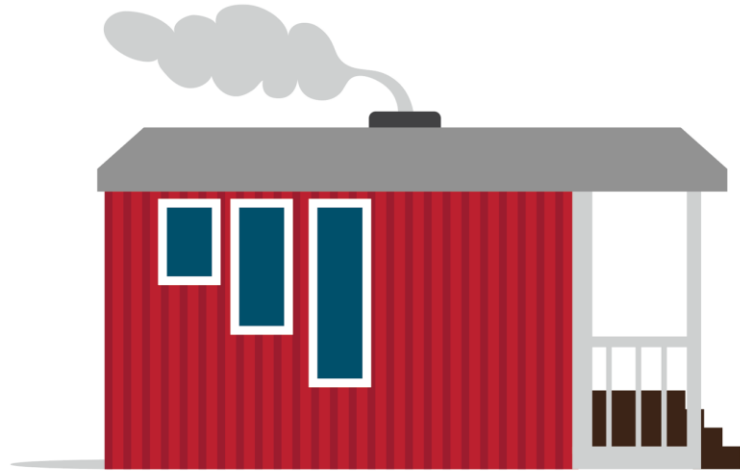
” Finns are still known especially for education, winter and Nokia. The image of Finland as a provider of circular economy and environmentally friendly solutions has developed in recent years, and, consequently, Finns are known as high-tech experts. – INDONESIA

” Finland is highly esteemed as a responsible country in climate issues, and our expertise in circular economy and the Smart City concept are also widely recognised. – MEXICO



# The sauna and Finland are inseparable

” In response to the current Japanese sauna boom and Visit Finland’s campaigns in the field, some Japanese travel agencies have started offering sauna tours to Finland for their customers. – JAPAN



” Fodor’s Travel: 10 Totally Insane Saunas You Can Only Find in Finland. – UNITED STATES

” The Finnish sauna is attracting more attention, and practically all travel stories mention the new design saunas Löyly and Allas. – SWEDEN

” Helsinki’s reputation as an interesting tourist destination remains, and the thriving sauna culture, in particular, is often mentioned. – NORWAY

# The features that make Finland an attractive tourist destination are Lapland, nature and the Northern Lights

” Many French people who have got to know Finland and Finnish culture have become infatuated with Finland. French people are growingly aware of Finland. – FRANCE

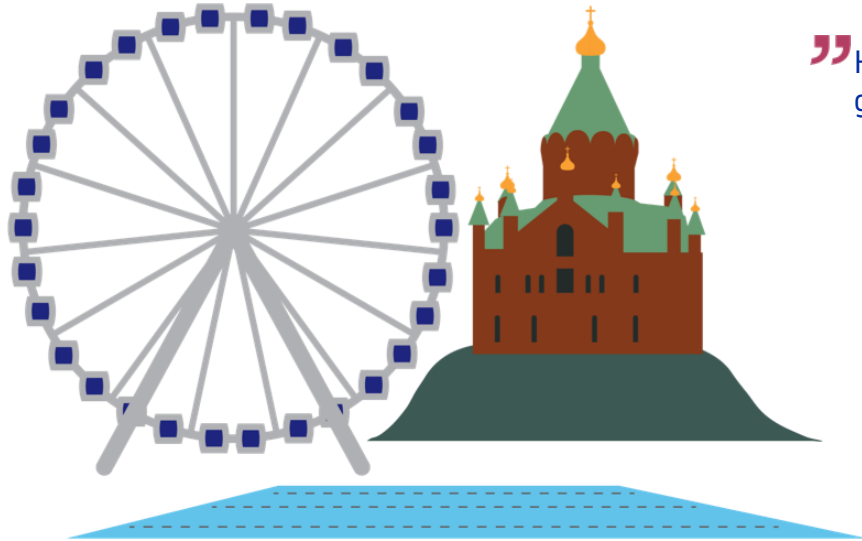
” Media coverage remains largely focused on Finland as a winter destination. This includes attractions like the Santa Claus Villages, activities like dogsledding or snowmobiling and experiences like stay in an igloo to watch the Northern Lights. Finland has also received attention in Australian media as one of the safest countries to visit in the world, in particular, female solo travelers. – AUSTRALIA

” Finland is constantly featured as a pleasant tourist destination. In general, nature is what attracts tourists. Finland: silence, me and time -- this was a title of a very interesting article in a travel magazine. A spectacular picture of the Northern Lights is always appreciated by online media and attracts a lot of attention. Definitely, Lapland is most desirable tourist destination due to its fresh nature, Northern Lights and different climate compared to Poland. Of course, the village of Santa Claus also strengthens the attractiveness of this place. – POLAND

” Finnair has a new direct flight between Sapporo (Hokkaido) and Helsinki, and another additional flight between Haneda (closer to Tokyo metropolitan area than the current Narita International Airport) and Helsinki this coming spring, so tourism business is also going strong. – JAPAN



# Helsinki is attractive



” Hotel mogul Petter Stordalen’s acquisition of the Choice hotel chain and investments in Finland have been well covered in the media, and Stordalen has said that he ‘loves Helsinki and Finnish people’. – **NORWAY**

” Finland is generally considered to be a good tourist destination, although an online survey that named Helsinki as the most boring travel destination in Europe received some coverage in autumn. – **RUSSIA**

” Helsinki was featured in a report as an organized smart city and a good place to visit museums and explore the Finnish culture. – **BRAZIL**

” The super-popular band BTS’s filming trip to Finland and Finnair’s launch of direct flights to Busan sparked renewed interest in Helsinki. – **KOREA**

” Helsinki received amusingly overwhelming compliments as ‘ecstasy for Central Europeans’, a city of ‘unpretentious naturalness’ that exudes ‘retrocharm’; the city is ‘weirder, crazier and less prettified than Copenhagen or Stockholm’. – **AUSTRIA**



**Finns across the world**

# Santa Claus is still popular among children and the young-at-heart

” In May, Santa Claus’s ‘Roman holiday’ generated a number of positive headlines in the Italian media. The media that reported on the visit included Sole24Ore, Tg4, Rai Lazio’s local TV channel and the TV show La vita in diretta. – ITALY

” Santa Claus has established himself as a Finnish figure and features in the Portuguese media at Christmas. – PORTUGAL

” This year Joulupukki visited Kyiv and caused even more interest, as he had a very comprehensive programme which was widely covered and advertised in different kinds of media. – UKRAINE

# Kaija Saariaho has, *allegro con moto*, become the most renowned Finnish artist

” According to BBC Music Magazine’s recent poll, Kaija Saariaho is the greatest living composer in the world. While J.S. Bach was voted the greatest of all time, Saariaho’s 17th position ranks her highest among living composers. – **MUSIC FINLAND**

” Kaija Saariaho’s opera ‘L’amour de Loin’, performed at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico, received exceptionally wide media coverage and glowing reviews. It was considered the event of the year in the country’s music scene. – **MEXICO**

” Tarja Turunen, who has a huge following in Colombia, performed at the popular Rock al Parque festival in Bogota at the end of June 2019, and she was one of the most anticipated performers at the event.  
– **COLOMBIA**

## Most frequently mentioned artists:

Kaija Saariaho  
Tarja Turunen  
Jean Sibelius  
Alma  
Tove Jansson  
Susanna Mälkki  
Aki Kaurismäki  
Pekka Kuusisto  
Darude  
Mikko Franck  
Klaus Mäkelä  
Dome Karukoski  
Samu Haber  
Saara Aalto

” The young Finnish conductor Klaus Mäkelä, who was appointed the artistic director of the Oslo Philharmonic for the period 2020-21, continued to feature in the media. Several prominent interviews with Mäkelä were shown on television and published in the press. – **NORWAY**

” In terms of popular music, Samu Haber is still the most famous Finn in Germany, and the breakup of the band Sunrise Avenue was also widely reported in the German media. – **GERMANY**

# Matti Nykänen's career was commemorated across continental Europe

”Matti Nykänen's death made headlines in all major newspapers in Austria, and even made it onto the main evening news. Nykänen's Austrian fellow-jumpers were interviewed, and the ups and downs of his life story were reported thoroughly, but with great respect. – AUSTRIA

”Matti Nykänen's death was widely covered in the Slovenian media. Slovenians are very interested in news about ski jumping. Matti Nykänen was widely known in Slovenia. – SLOVENIA

”The death of the Sarajevo 1984 Olympic ski jumping hero in February 2019 prompted all the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina to report on Matti Nykänen's achievements and life. Nykänen was a 'ski jumping symbol', 'icon', 'legend'. The stories often featured a link to the YouTube video of Nykänen's large hill performance in Sarajevo. – BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



## Finland qualified for the European Football Championship for the first time, which meant that football and Teemu Pukki featured along with Santa Claus in the media coverage

” The fact that Finland qualified for the European Championship received a lot of positive coverage, and all the major media mentioned it. ‘Finland has its ice hockey heroes, its skiing and ski jumping legends, its javelin throwers and runners, its rally drivers and Formula One stars, but now Finland has also succeeded in football’ (VG). – **NORWAY**

” Finland qualifying for the European Championship – and Teemu Pukki, in particular – featured prominently in the print media, online media and on TV. – **THE NETHERLANDS**

” Finland’s success in the European Championship qualifiers was also widely reported in the Italian media. – **ITALY**

” Teemu Pukki’s achievements in the Premier League and Finland qualifying for the European Championship made headlines in sports news in the autumn, as football fanatic Korea was also once the black sheep of football. – **KOREA**

### Most frequently mentioned sports people:

Valtteri Bottas  
Kimi Räikkönen  
Matti Nykänen  
Teemu Pukki  
Kaisa Mäkräinen  
Jari-Matti Latvala  
Kaapo Kakko

” The most notable sports news stories were the Russian hockey team’s heart-breaking defeat against Finland in the Ice Hockey World Championship semi-final in May and Russia and Finland having been drawn in the same group in the European Football Championship. – **RUSSIA**

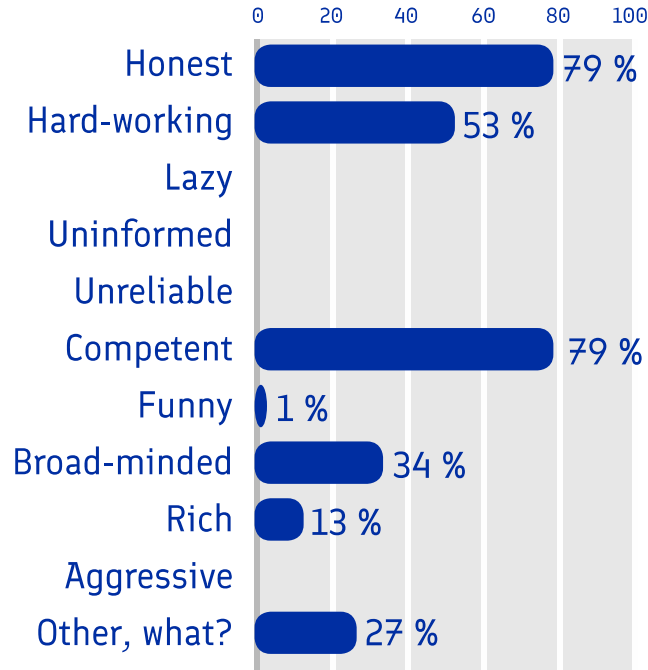
” The long-awaited success of the Finnish football team became a bright topic for Ukrainian sports media. – **UKRAINE**

# What image of Finland is portrayed in the media?

- ” Finns remain viewed as progressive, content and boasting a zany sense of humour. However, some Australians still mistakenly refer to Finnish people as Scandinavian. – AUSTRALIA
- ” Finns are seen as a well-to-do nation that has managed to look after things really well [...] In 2019, the emergence of Finnish women was also highlighted: by appointing a woman as Prime Minister, Finland proved to be a model country for equality, which made many Americans aware of the country. – THE UNITED STATES
- ” Older people still see Finnish people as a somewhat distant, exotic, small northern nation that went through hard times at war and showed their guts. Younger and more international generations have a more modern image of Finland and Finnish people [...] French people see Finns as pragmatic, innovative, calm compared to Mediterranean people, sometimes a little solemn, but kind and creative people. – FRANCE

- ” What was remarkable in 2019, was that many Japanese comedians went to Finland to participate in the Finnish unique world championships. The Air Guitar contest is already quite well known, with Japanese winners in the past, but in 2019 there were comedians going to Sauna Heating World Championship, Heavy Metal Knitting World Championship, and the Mölkky World Championship. Since these are comedians loved by the media, Finland's unique world championships ended up being talked about a lot. – JAPAN
- ” Finns are sometimes considered crazy, in a good way (ice swimming, ‘kalsarikännit’ (‘pantsdrunk’), Puolanka’s Pessimism Days and their love for sauna and heavy metal music), and a bit more exotic than Swedes, who are known for things such as Ikea and meatballs. – AUSTRIA
- ” Finns are considered to be matter-of-fact if slightly weird people, an idea strengthened by Finnish artists visiting Belgium and special Finnish ‘sports’ such as wife-carrying and swamp football. – BELGIUM

# Year after year, Finns are known as competent, honest, hard-working people

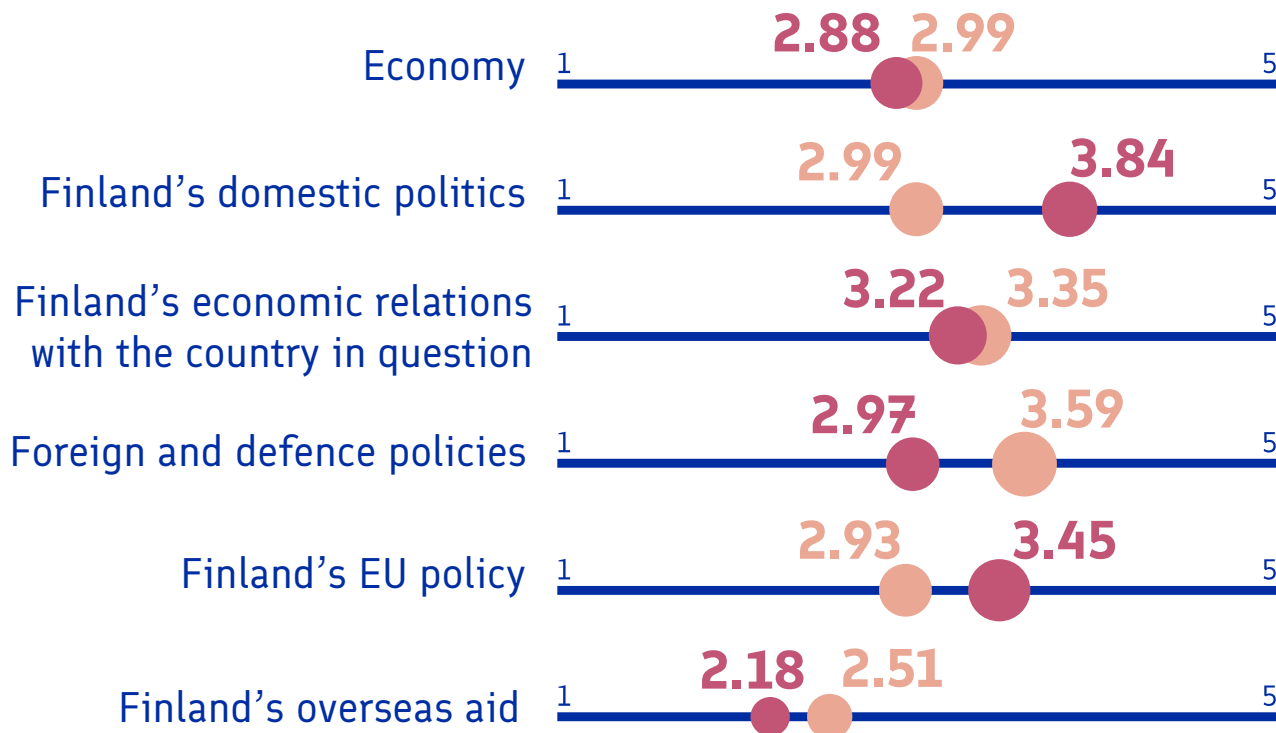


” Finland has a very good reputation; it is particularly praised for its clean nature and environment, high quality (e.g. products and food), education and for the honesty of its people. However, Finns still have a reputation for liking their drink and being a bit sullen, slow and naive. – RUSSIA



# Political and economic topics followed by the Ministry (2019)

Assess the visibility of the following content in the host country's media on a scale of 1 (not at all visible) to 5 (very visible).



● 2019 ● 2018

# Embassy staff and media visits to Finland

## EMBASSY STAFF

” The attention attracted by the country image event about food waste organised by the Embassy exceeded all expectations in social, print and online media. What they found interesting was the subject of food loss and the fight against it, and the fact that one of the owners of the restaurant Nolla, Carlos Henriques, is from Portugal. In addition to food loss and Carlos Henriques, the articles and news stories also described Finland in general. – **PORTUGAL**

” The Embassy of Finland in Tokyo annually calculates the number of media coverage we were directly involved in, meaning direct interviews and briefings, events and press conferences, press tours, courtesy calls, attendance of ceremonies, twitter posts or just answering media inquiries via email and phone – and the total number of media coverage was a record-breaking 1,860! – **JAPAN**

” The appointment of the new ambassador was what the media reported about the embassy staff. – **TANZANIA**

” The embassy staff were twice asked to comment on the gender issue, and the ambassador was interviewed on TV regarding the EU Presidency. – **SWITZERLAND**

” The Embassy of Finland in Prague has organized several events to strengthen the visibility of Finland as key European/world player in the field of education in the Czech and Slovak media. Those events have been visible in and received the attention of the media. – **CZECH REPUBLIC**

## MEDIA VISITS

” Visits by media representatives and influencers increase and strengthen Finland’s visibility abroad and raise awareness of the key government priorities, such as action against climate change and circular economy.”

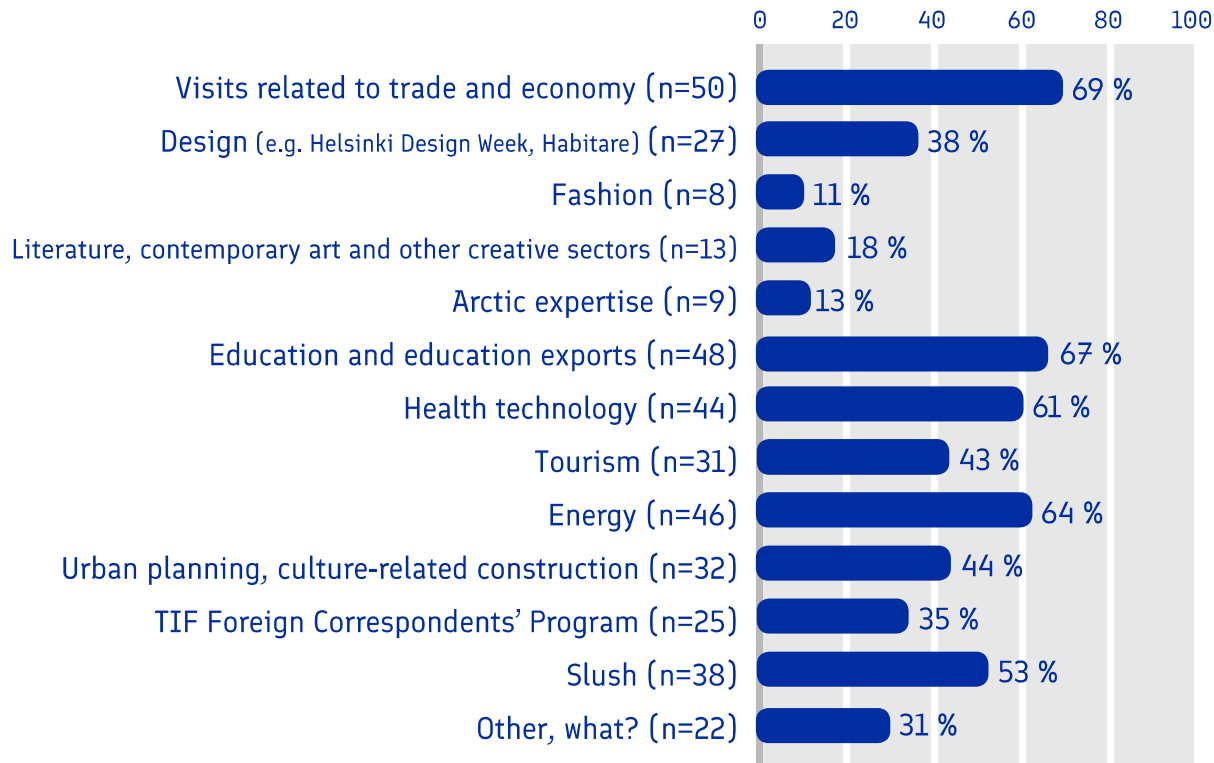
– **CHILE**

” The embassy finds visits by media representatives and influencers useful for efforts to enhance the country’s image, and we hope that we can also send reporters to Finland in the future. Serbia is an EU candidate country, and there is demand in the Serbian media for Finland’s experience and good practices especially in the education sector, but also in other areas such as innovation, clean technologies, society and agriculture.” – **SERBIA**

” Organising media visits should not be left to summer workers and trainees. It is a means of influencing through professional communications that reaches millions of people at its best.”

– **PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EU**

# Key themes for media visits



## The key themes for media visits:

Trade and economy  
Education and  
education export  
Energy  
Health technology  
Slush

# Finland in the world media

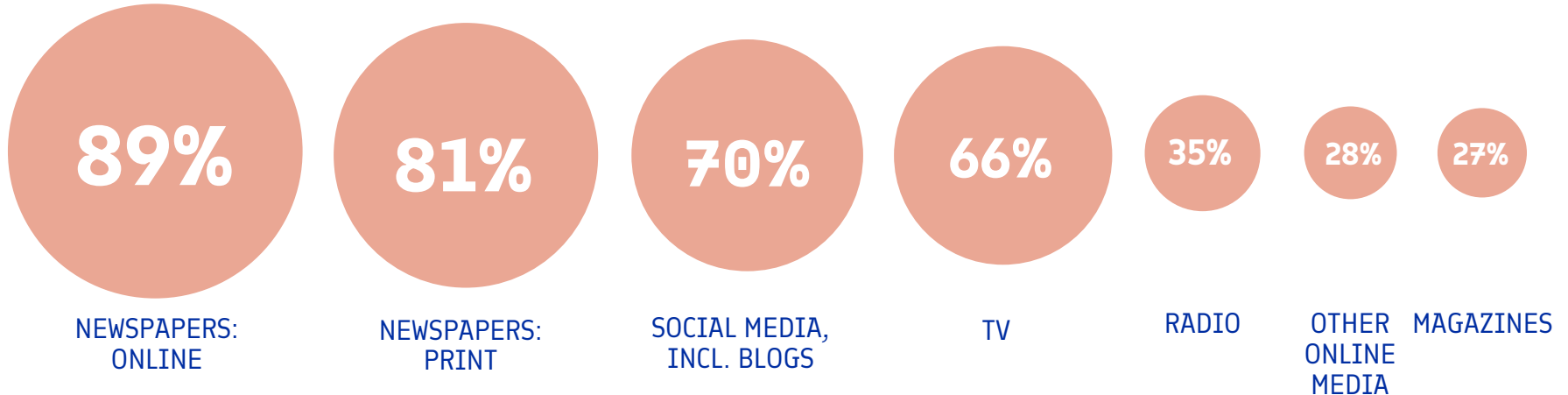
This survey was designed to examine the topics associated with Finland in international media coverage. It comprised all media, with a particular focus on newspapers.

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

The Webropol survey was conducted between December 2019 and January 2020.

A total of 75 out of 89 missions responded to the survey. Most of these were embassies. 20 answered in English

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

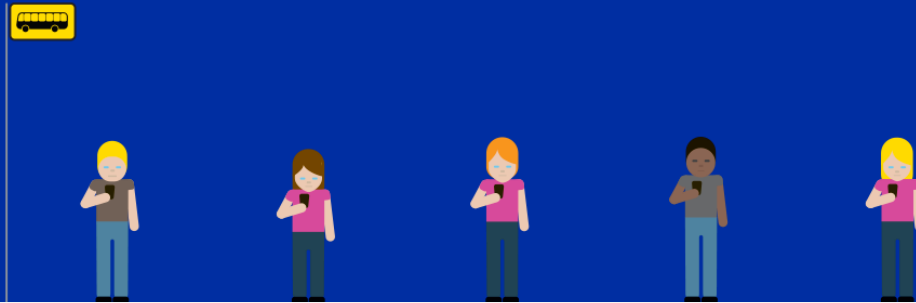


**“Marin and the other four female party leaders were covered in practically every medium.”**

**– SWEDEN**



# Further information by region



## Sweden

” The biggest media event of the year was the appointment of Sanna Marin as the youngest prime minister in the world and the young, female-dominated political leadership of Finland. ”Marin and the other four female party leaders were covered in practically every medium.” The reports were positive and admiring in tone. Finland was often compared to Sweden, which has yet to have a female prime minister. Some journalists, however, questioned the glorification of youth and called for older, more experienced leaders.” – SWEDEN

” Early in the year, Finland’s top position in the UN happiness survey was widely covered in Sweden. It is unlikely that anyone in Sweden is unaware of the fact that Finns are the happiest nation in the world for the second year in a row. This was often presented as a surprise; Swedes’ perception of Finns has perhaps been more sullen. Many still believe that we are at the forefront of suicide statistics.” – SWEDEN

” Finland’s EU Presidency did not receive huge media coverage, but it did feature in some stories. Finland’s ambitious climate agenda and the EU’s goal to be carbon neutral by 2050 were often key points in these stories. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s criticism of Finland was also noted. Finland’s proposal for the size of the EU’s long-term budget and Sweden’s unwillingness to accept an increase in its contribution to the EU were also reported.” – SWEDEN

” Finland plans to bring home the children of al-Hol camp: this was reported quite extensively in the mainstream media, as there are also Swedish children in the camp, and the policies of other countries are closely monitored. The tone was mainly neutral, but some commentators were positive, like Per Svensson, Svenska Dagbladet’s Editor-in-Chief, in his article "Finland visar vägen från al-Hol.” – SWEDEN

” Finland, the ice hockey world champion: many Swedish media outlets covered the ‘super surprise’ extensively: Finland’s young team with no stars exceeded all expectations by playing a great game as a team. The tone of the reports was very positive and warm, and Finland was widely congratulated and praised.” – SWEDEN

” Finnish men’s team qualifying for the European Football Championship for the first time: the Swedish media covered the news in a positive tone and described the event as historical. Aftonbladet even congratulated us in Finnish: ‘Onnea Suomi!’ – SWEDEN

## Other Nordic countries

” Teemu Pukki’s game drew a lot of attention – particularly early in the season – in the football-mad Iceland, where the Premier League is the most popular European major series. The main daily newspapers in Iceland ran double-page spread articles about Pukki following his hat trick against Newcastle in October. Pukki featured again later in October, and the Icelandic press had already predicted that Finland would qualify for the European Championship.” – **ICELAND**

” The joint statement by Prime Minister Rinne and the French President, Macron, on the deadline for Brexit made headlines in September. The Jyllands-Posten newspaper quoted Rinne, who said at a press conference in Helsinki that both Finland and the EU were prepared for a no-deal Brexit. ‘We are also prepared for a no-deal Brexit.’ – **DENMARK**

” The results of the basic income pilot attracted some publicity in Denmark. The DR news story said that ‘Finland's basic income pilot generated happiness but not any jobs’. The employment rate among the participants did not increase significantly with the basic income. Uffe Elbæk, leader of Alternativet – the Alternative Party – commented on the results, saying that he did not find Finland’s experiences with the basic income worrying. and that his party remains optimistic about the idea of a basic income.” – **DENMARK**

” Finland was the theme of the Nytt på programme on the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation’s NRK1 channel on 25 January. The programme had the best-known Finn in Norway, Sanna Sarromaa, as its guest and also featured Finland’s results in the Good Country Index – on a prime-time show on Friday. The tone was humorous and positive, although the old clichés such as vodka, the sauna and the axe were also brought up.” – **NORWAY**

” Matti Nykänen’s death was the subject of most news coverage early in the year (in terms of culture and sports). The debate on his statue in Jyväskylä was also mentioned.” – **NORWAY**

## The Baltic countries

- ” Finnish political journalists' visit to Estonia in November: a meeting with the interior minister of the nationalist populist party EKRE sparked a political storm in the country when he spoke about the so-called plan B for the region's defence collaboration. The speech led to widespread uproar in Estonia. The case was covered in all media and gave rise to the new political term 'plan B'.” – **ESTONIA**
- ” Finland had the most widespread media coverage early in the year, when Estonia celebrated the centenary of the War of Independence, which is essential for the country to become independent. [...] the main news in all media on the day. [...] Estonians defended Finland in the media in the early part of the year.” – **ESTONIA**
- ” Estonia is probably the foreign country where Finland is written about and followed more than anywhere else. There is something every day. There is not just one image of Finnish people because we are connected in many ways. One gradual change is taking place: Estonians no longer feel inferior like they used to. Finland is considered a benchmark. The division in the debate on domestic policies means that Finland is an ideal country for some people (equality issues) and for others, it is a worrying example of multiculturalism (too many people with foreign backgrounds).” – **ESTONIA**
- ” At the beginning of the year a Finn, Timo Riihimäki, became the CEO, new head of Rail Baltica project. Mass media in Latvia voiced big expectations that implementation of the project will proceed faster now. But in November Timo Riihimäki announced his resignation. This has disclosed problems existing in the management of the project.” – **LATVIA**
- ” The play 'Finlandization' by Juha Jokela was staged on National Theatre of Latvia last autumn. It was very positively received and caused a lot of discussion in mass media.” – **LATVIA**
- ” In 2019, Finland's Winter War was repeatedly covered in the Lithuanian media due to its jubilee year.” – **LITHUANIA**

## Russia

” In terms of the relationship between the two countries, particular attention was paid to the meetings between Presidents Niinistö and Putin. The Winter War was mentioned, but it did not make it to the top news stories in the national media.” – RUSSIA

” Finland has a very good reputation among Russians, and this is also reflected in the way the media reports on Finland. While news reporting is mainly neutral, there are also examples of positive news stories. Finland having been selected as the happiest country in the world and Finland’s expertise in environmental issues also generated great news stories.” – RUSSIA

” There were articles about the anniversary of the start of WWII, the media coverage of which followed the official Russian historical and political interpretations, in which the responsibility for the outbreak of the war has been laid on the Western countries. Some of the negative coverage of this topic was also targeted at Finland, though Finland mostly had a minor, not very prominent, role.” – RUSSIA

” The announcement in August 2019 of the introduction of the new visa requirements, and the subsequent queues and longer processing times, sparked uproar in the media and social media for a few weeks, which inevitably weakened Finland’s reputation, at least temporarily. Although the Consulate General tried to explain in its communications and media releases why the changes had been made, some media outlets that are usually quite positive about Finland had a rant about the issue (‘Finland has betrayed the trust of the people of St. Petersburg’).” – RUSSIA

” The most widely featured event of the EU Presidency was the Green European Economy Day organised by the Consulate General, where European companies exhibited their sustainable business solutions and the media got to know the Consulate General’s recycling system in a so-called ‘waste safari’.” – RUSSIA

## Europe, not including the Nordic and Baltic countries

” Sanna Marin becoming the new Prime Minister of Finland also made headlines in Germany. There were, and still are, news stories about it almost every day, and the Embassy is swamped with requests for interviews. The news was incredibly important for Finland’s image.” – **GERMANY**

” Finland and the Nordic countries in general were praised as models for equality. The media noted that gender equality policies have been promoted in these countries for years. Finland is used as an example in issues such as the implementation of family policies that facilitate the employment of mothers of young children. The news also highlighted Finland’s ranking in various international surveys measuring equality, and comparisons were made with the situation in Belgium.” – **BELGIUM**

” There was a long article about the social sector media visit that took place in 2018 in the main Irish newspaper in January 2019. The article compared life in Finland and Ireland for a family with children and for a single parent, in particular; it highlighted issues such as free school meals, housing allowances, subsidised hobbies, child health clinics, and cheap day care in Finland.” – **IRELAND**

” The articles on the resignation of the government in March 2019 emphasized the grounds of resignation as ‘government’s failure in realizing the health reform’. This supports Finland’s image as a well-governed country with ‘honest’ politicians and a successful control mechanism.” – **TURKEY**

” A programme made by the Greek national television company ERT about Finland – working title 'the Finnish pupil' – in its series about European citizens gained the most visibility in Greece. The reporter visited Finland to interview education authorities and researchers, and also visited a school to interview teachers and to observe classes. The result of the trip was an exciting 43-minute programme about Finland with Finnish music playing in the background.” – **GREECE**

” This EU candidate country closely follows issues related to the enlargement of the EU. The Serbian media particularly highlighted issues such as Kosovo’s participation in the meeting between the EU and the Western Balkans in August, the Council’s decision in October to postpone the opening of accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania, and the opening of negotiations on one chapter with Serbia in December.” – **SERBIA**

” The most important media topic of the year was President Sauli Niinistö's official visit to Ukraine on September 12–13, 2019, during which Mr Niinistö met with Ukrainian officials and gave a speech at Yalta European Strategy Conference. The President’s visit was widely covered in all kinds of media: TV, printed and online newspapers, social media.” – **UKRAINE**

” Ice hockey is sport number one in the Czech Republic and the Ice Hockey World Championship was held in Slovakia so the visibility in all Czech and Slovak news (TV, press, internet articles, social media etc.) was great.” – **CZECH REPUBLIC**

# Japan

” The image of Finland in Japan hasn’t changed compared to last year, but it got ‘clearly better’ in terms of the volume of media coverage. 2019 was the 100th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Finland and Japan, and the commemorative year generated an abundance of articles. [...] Many media decided to report about Finland since it was the special year. [...] Just the fact that there were about 1,700 pieces of news carrying the phrase ‘100th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Finland and Japan’ tells how much this was highlighted in Japan in 2019.” – **JAPAN**

” As the year before, sauna was the biggest Finland related topic in Japan in 2019. If you type in "sauna" in the Nikkei Telecon service, the number of articles was 1,378 [...]. Media coverage where the Embassy was involved in was biggest with sauna as well, producing 476 news items (the Embassy was involved with 253 items last year, so almost double!). Biggest element behind this is the TV drama titled "Sado," which is about a Japanese man getting hooked on sauna, played by a very famous actor comedian. In the series, these sauna lovers also crave for Finnish sauna. A sauna book was published, titled "Sauna skills that changes your life – why do top business people go to sauna?" written by influencers, getting nice media attention.” – **JAPAN**

” MaaS has spread nicely in the Japanese business media. When searched on the Nikkei Telecon with keyword ‘MaaS,’ there were 3,324 news articles [...]. This is because some Japanese companies began testing MaaS, such as Odakyu private railway company tagging with MaaS Global and TOYOTA starting its pilot programme in local municipalities. The giant Mitsubishi Corporation also announced that it will invest in MaaS Global, which made headlines.” – **JAPAN**

” Baby liquid formula was talked about in the media quite a lot, since the Japanese government lifted the ban in 2019. There were 923 articles in Nikkei Telecon when searched with the word ‘liquid formula’ alone [...] Some media still mention that liquid formula became widely known in Japan because they were sent to earthquake-stricken areas from Finland as relief aid.” – **JAPAN**

” The Japanese film ‘Yuki no hana’ (meaning "snow flower") was partly filmed in Helsinki and Levi, and premiered in Japan in February 2019. The love story was a success, with its box-office revenue exceeding 1 billion yen [...]. Visit Finland conducted a press tour before the Japan premiere, so both Helsinki and Levi got nice media coverage with many beautiful photos.” – **JAPAN**

## China

” President Niinistö made the first state visit from Finland to China since 2002 in January 2019 which was the top news in practically every Chinese state and other prominent media for a few days, gathering hundreds of millions of total views on TV, online and in newspapers. During the visit the presidents officially launched China-Finland Year of Winter Sports [...], also shown partly in the main news for instance in CCTV (China Central Television).” – CHINA

” Election of Sanna Marin as the new Prime Minister of Finland in December 2019 became one of the most shared and discussed news in China. In the Chinese social media, in particular, there has been a great deal of interest and, for example, many WeChat articles about Marin have gathered over 100,000 readers and commentators each. Also, This is Finland news about Marin on Weibo and WeChat have been the most read posts in 2019. Besides Marin, also the fact that women are in the majority in the new government and many political parties are now led by young women have gained lot of positive visibility in China.” – CHINA

” During the last two years, the Finnish Nightmares comic has made the Finnish characteristic more widely known and popular in China, leading to a whole new word, ‘jingfen’, spiritually Finnish, referring to a shy and introvert character. Many young Chinese have identified themselves as ‘jingfen’. The phenomenon was still very popular in 2019, usually perceived in a positive light. However, sometimes the introvertedness has been linked to social phobia in a more negative sense.” – CHINA

” Only a few Finnish athletes have been featured in Chinese media, and with the exception of Kimi Räikkönen, who is still very popular in China, most of the mentions of Finnish sport and Finnish athletes have been related to the China-Finland Year of Winter Sports.” – CHINA

” Circular economy and environmental policy, including Cleantech, have been in the news headlines featuring Finland.” – HONG KONG

” Mixu Paatelainen is constantly in the media due to his role as head coach of the Hong Kong team.” – HONG KONG



## Asia and Oceania not including Japan and China

” In June, President Moon’s state visit to Finland brought huge media coverage to Finland. The general attitude towards Finland was either positive or neutral, while President Moon and his objectives were criticised. Finland made an impression as a happy and progressive country with which it would be worth having a closer relationship.” – **SOUTH KOREA**

” Sanna Marin’s election as the world's youngest prime minister and the advice given to her by the oldest prime minister in the world (Mahathir of Malaysia). The tone was interested and positive, though it was also linked to the news of the surprising resignation of the Rinne government; it reinforced the image of Finland as a forward-looking and equal country.” – **MALAYSIA SOUTH**

” Angry Birds has been featured on a good few occasions in relation to the gaming industry (a double page spread feature about the film premiere in The Myanmar Times, plus a separate event in April). Finnish esportsmen are sometimes mentioned when newspapers report on big esports events.” – **MYANMAR**

” Australian media paid considerable attention to Finland’s sporting achievements this year, included the Ice Hockey World Championship and qualification to Euro2020. Finnish culture received was again on full display at the Embassy’s annual Finnish Crazy Games. Likewise, television news coverage of the Embassy’s Mölkky tournament went viral online. The media also covered the hobbyhorse phenomena in Finland and air guitar was the subject of a film at the world's largest short film festival, Tropfest.” – **AUSTRALIA**

” The Finnish design house Marimekko has been very successful in Thailand and featured in the media throughout the year. The company’s network of shops and brand awareness have continued to grow in recent years. Marimekko’s collaboration with the Japanese Uniqlo and the Thai Greyhound has featured in magazines and on the streets.” – **THAILAND**

” The Finnish school project generated [...] a lot of positive media visibility. The project was implemented by Polar Partners from Finland and Alliance Group Holding from Georgia. This is a Finnish educational export project financed by private funding.” – **ROVING AMBASSADOR FOR THE SOUTH CAUCASUS**

” Kazakhstan is interested in education, cleantech, and waste management. All three topics were closely followed by Kazakh media. Overall, in all three aspects, Finland has a very positive image by Kazakhstani citizens and media.” – **KAZAKHSTAN**

## North Africa and the Middle East

” Various international comparisons related to good administrative practices, including those related to the environment, are highly valued in the mission's countries of operations, especially in the United Arab Emirates, which is why Finland, which is successful in many of these comparisons, receives a lot of media coverage.” – **THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

” Aki Kaurismäki’s film ‘The Other Side of Hope’ won the Grand Prix at the Algiers International Film Festival and was praised for its humanity.”  
– **ALGERIA**

” Finland makes usually the news by having one of the top spots on some charts, such as quality of life, sometimes in the political context with regards to the Government and foreign policy. However, the view of Finland is very positive in the Gulf Countries.” – **SAUDI ARABIA**

” The most important phenomenon related to Finland was about education. The launch of the first preschools inspired by the Finnish education system has been reported in many media channels (newspapers, social media, radio...). The articles praised the Finnish education system and pointed out the advantages compared to the existing foreign systems in Morocco.” – **MOROCCO**

” An extensive article on Finnish equality, the election of the Prime Minister, the female leaders of the political parties and the changes to gender equality taking place across the EU. ‘Where other parliaments of the world take steps towards equality, Israel continues to slip’ (Globes Online).”  
– **ISRAEL**

” Finland’s internal policy was visible in a very positive manner as a country of democrats, giving chances to the young generation and especially women to fulfill high ranked position, giving all the trust to its people. This news came when appointing the PM HE Sanna Marin.” – **PALESTINE**

” In September [...] the launch of education cooperation between University of Helsinki and the Regional Information Technology Institute based in Cairo. Education Forum event which was held in connection with the launch was attended by the former Finnish president Tarja Halonen, the vice-rector of the University of Helsinki, and senior Egyptian cabinet officials and ministers. The event was well covered in Egyptian media.” – **EGYPT**

## Sub-Saharan Africa

” The Nordic Connect event in Lagos in spring 2019 was well covered in the media. The event was organised together with Norway, Sweden and Denmark. More than 15 Finnish companies participated in the event; Finland organised a fashion and design side event, which was noticed in the local media.” – **NIGERIA**

” The media event of the year in Namibia was the Embassy's educational event "Education – Key to a Nation's Success". The seminar, which highlighted the strengths of the Finnish education system, was held in Windhoek in October 2019. [...] The event was a great success, especially in terms of country image, and it received a lot of media attention.” – **NAMIBIA**

” The African-Nordic foreign ministers' meeting, hosted by Tanzania, was fairly well covered in the press. Finland also featured through aid collaboration efforts (especially the support for the forest sector, women's political participation and the Uongozi Institute). Finnish domestic politics, the elections in particular, were also the subject of news stories, which has not been the case in previous years.” – **TANZANIA**

” The President of the Republic's visit received a lot of media coverage, and important themes such as equality and climate issues were also more prominent in the media.” – **ETHIOPIA**

” The overwhelmingly positive publicity for the new Finnish government should be exploited, as Finland has never featured so extensively and in such a positive light in the media.” – **KENYA**

” The most common theme in the media was the diversification of Finnish-Zambian relations and the goal of strengthening the trade relationship between the two countries. Events related to the theme and covered in the media included the "Finnish Week of Business" held in April and a related visit by a Finnish business delegation to Zambia, as well as Finnfund's first investment in Zambia and a private sector support programme supported by Finland [...] – **ZAMBIA**

” Our education system is becoming better known due to the TV-programs that have aired in 2018 and 2019 [...]. Finland also received positive coverage regarding our new young female Prime Minister. Even South Africa's own Trevor Noah talked about the topic to his millions of followers as host of the Daily Show.” – **SOUTH AFRICA**

## The United States and Canada

” We would say that awareness of Finland has grown, thanks to Prime Minister Sanna Marin. Finland has a good reputation, and the country is considered a pioneer in many respects. Finland is known in the United States for its education, equality, tourism, the environment, and now also for its Prime Minister.” – **THE UNITED STATES**

” President Sauli Niinistö’s visit to Washington gained enormous media attention and featured in online media, newspapers and social media. While news stories focused on the behaviour of US President Donald Trump and how it differed from that of Saul Niinistö, several media also covered the actual topics of the visit. President Niinistö’s messages regarding democracy, a strong EU and shared values were highlighted in several articles. The repatriation of the ancestral remains of Native American tribes to the United States also attracted a lot of attention. In addition to the news media, all major late-night talk shows and comedy programmes talked about the visit.” – **THE UNITED STATES**

” There are also many well-known people in the USA with Finnish roots. Matt Damon, who visited the Ellen Degeneres Show recently, told the hostess about his roots. Marissa Mayer, the former CEO of Yahoo, is a Finnish-American businesswoman; she founded a new company called Lumi, which has featured in the media.” – **THE UNITED STATES**

” Nikki Haley’s comments on the Finnish health care system made headlines in November.” – **THE UNITED STATES**

” Finland’s visibility in the Canadian media decreased a little in 2019. The media in Canada, as everywhere else, has undergone changes so that the number of editorial staff is smaller and fewer media houses write their own stories. Most of the articles come from Reuters or the AP. Only the sports desks are the media's own, without exception.” – **CANADA**

” Indigenous art is important in Canada, and this has meant that Sámi artists have also gained media coverage.” – **CANADA**

## South America

” The new government and its priorities have prompted the Mexican media to address topics that are Finland’s strengths. Finland is constantly cited as a model in terms of its education, corruption-free society, access to welfare services, equality, functionality, and the status of women and children.” – **MEXICO**

” The Colombian public is becoming more aware of Finland through news about issues such as education and the wonderful Northern Lights. The numerous heavy metal bands touring the country also inspire discussion with Colombians.” – **COLOMBIA**

” Finland has stood out as a country that is really concerned about environmental issues. The media emphasized Finland’s effort to reach the carbon offset agreement.” – **BRAZIL**

” Marin’s appointment came at a time when social upheaval in Chile had caused widespread debate across the political spectrum and civil society on topics such as women’s status and equality, so Finland stood out as an advanced and equal society.” – **CHILE**

” The Finnish-Chilean TV series Invisible Heroes received positive reviews. The drama is based on the story of Finnish diplomat Tapani Brotherus and the embassy staff during the 1973 military coup in Chile.” – **CHILE**

” Finland was the host country of ‘Expoagua 2019’ trade fair. This platform helped to visualize Finland as a powerhouse of clean technologies, water and forestry.” – **PERU**

” The idea of a four-day working week [...] was first reported to be under preparation in Finland, but a few days later the same newspaper corrected that it was just an idea someone tossed around or an individual politician’s goal.” – **ARGENTINA**



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