



SUOMI  
FINLAND



# Finland in the World Media

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs'  
observations about 2020

” New aspects of Finns as an innovative nation have come up in the US media due to the coronavirus pandemic. – **THE UNITED STATES**



# The Ministry for Foreign Affairs' observations about Finland in the world media

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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 information is based on observations made by the embassies and missions. In most of the missions, media-related activities were conducted alongside other work; there are 38 members of staff in all the embassies and missions that submitted replies whose full-time job involves communications and boosting the image of Finland.

The missions filled in the Webropol survey between December 2020 and January 2021. A total of 78 out of 89 missions responded to the survey.

# The missions' view of how Finland is rated in the world media

The missions rated the media opinions about Finland from critical (1) to admiring (5). In 2020, **the average overall rating was 4.25**.

This was an improvement of 0.2 points on the previous year.



# The missions' views on words and themes related to Finland

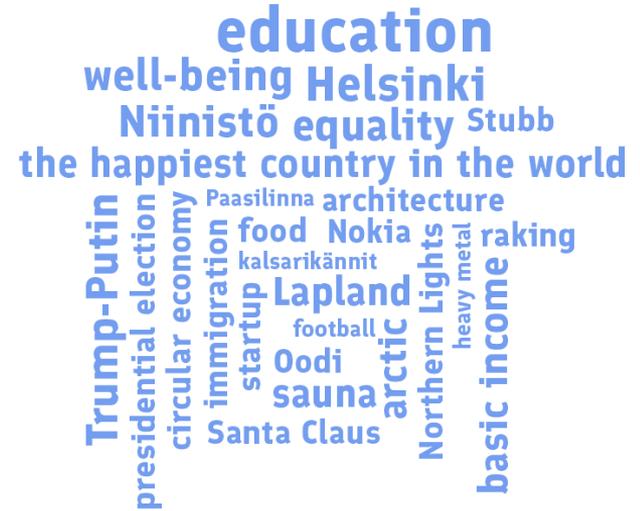
2020



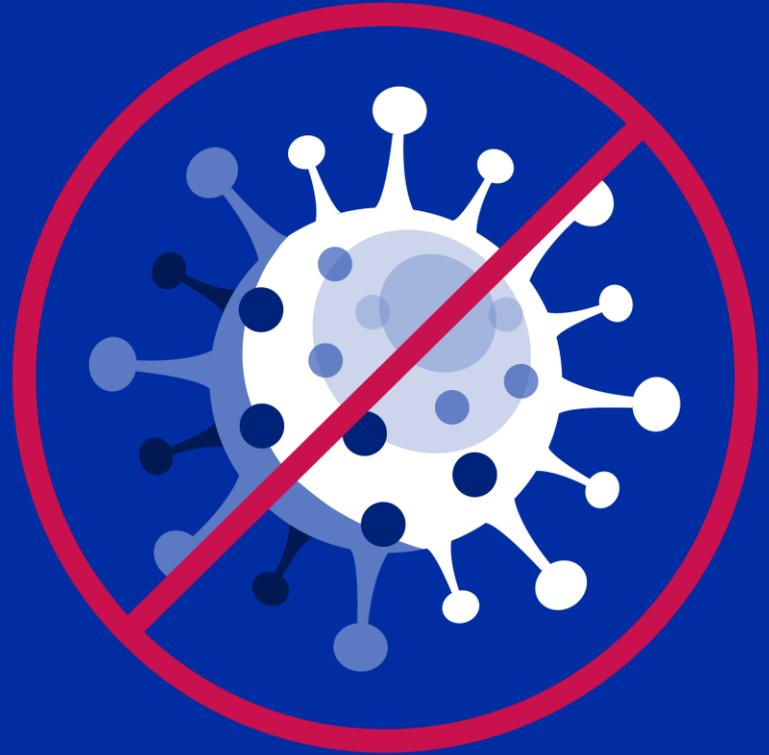
2019



2018



The most prominent  
themes



# The efficient handling and innovative treatment of the coronavirus pandemic drew positive attention

” The coronavirus pandemic turned eyes in Sweden to Finland and its social system. [...] It was clear that the Finnish government and society had done quite well in the coronavirus stress test: Finland’s citizens were protected and its society's laws and processes worked well. – **SWEDEN**

” The high level of emergency supplies in Finland and efficient measures taken to fight the coronavirus were featured in a positive light in the Korean media. Finland has been one of the few countries in Europe and the only Nordic country to have received any positive coverage during the pandemic. – **SOUTH KOREA**

” New aspects of Finns as an innovative nation have come up in the US media due to the coronavirus pandemic; coronavirus sniffer dogs, in particular, received a lot of positive coverage. – **THE UNITED STATES**

” The way Finland handled the coronavirus pandemic was in the news from the spring, starting with emergency supplies, and in autumn the focus was on Finland's successful strategy to control the second wave of the pandemic, especially as Finland's strategy was very different from Sweden's. – **PORTUGAL**

” The measures taken to fight the coronavirus in Finland have been considered admirable while the low number of infections and people’s efforts to adhere to the restrictions have also drawn attention. – **BELGIUM**

” Finland came out in a very positive light in the news about the coronavirus. – **THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

# The most critical coronavirus-related comments were related to travel restrictions

” On the negative side, border traffic restrictions and their potential negative impact on Nordic relations. – SWEDEN

” The restrictions on passenger traffic in the Gulf of Finland made headlines in March (state of emergency, stopping of traffic) and in May (relaxation of restrictions) as well as in September (reintroduction of restrictions). In Estonia, the focus has been on commuters, but the coronavirus also meant a crisis for tourism in Estonia, which mainly relies on Finnish tourists. Coronavirus-related news stories about Finland were published every day. – ESTONIA

” The tightening and relaxing of coronavirus measures in Finland has been mentioned in the news. Tourism in Rovaniemi was seen to have suffered because of the travel restrictions. – GREECE

” In the summer, there was news about Finland’s strict travel restrictions, difficulties recruiting seasonal workers, the launching of testing for travellers and then first about the fact that the Nordic countries had not made wearing a face mask obligatory, followed by the recommendation to wear one. – SWITZERLAND

” Finland has received much negative coverage during the coronavirus pandemic due to its closing of the border and its visas (visas were not extended, money was not refunded for unused visas and issuing of visas was suspended except for special groups). – RUSSIA

# The COVID sniffer dogs at Helsinki airport attracted a lot of positive attention

” The sniffer dogs at Helsinki airport were the single biggest news story about in Finland in the German media, featuring in the main and smaller media; there were dozens of articles and TV news stories, not to mention those on social media. The stories were positive and seemed to bring joy to people. – **GERMANY**

” The sniffer dogs featured in almost all of the major US media outlets. – **THE UNITED STATES**

” The sniffer dogs at the airport were reported on in several media. – **SWITZERLAND**

” The sniffer dogs at Helsinki airport featured prominently in the Icelandic media in late September. A few days after the first news item there was an interview with a dog trainer, who said it was possible that sniffer dogs could be introduced in Iceland within a few months if a decision was made to do so. – **ICELAND**

” The sniffer dogs at Helsinki airport made headlines in Colombia, too. – **COLOMBIA**

” The sniffer dogs at Helsinki airport collected sympathy points while showing that Finnish people were on top of things, the country's lean administration and the overall inventiveness of the people. – **CROATIA**

# The female-led government attracted positive media coverage

” Prime Minister Marin and the female-led Government made news early in the year as they were a novelty, and later featured in the news about the pandemic. – **SERBIA**

” Sanna Marin and the female-led government have been much admired in Colombia. – **COLOMBIA**

” This positive reporting trend of 'the five' government continued throughout the year, bringing along many positive news stories about Finnish gender equality, youth in politics, education, heathy and functioning political system, effective leadership during the pandemic etc. – **JAPAN**

” The Italian media covered the five party leaders from the Finnish government giving speeches in press conferences. They also noted that female-led countries were handling the coronavirus crisis better, and Finland and Marin were also mentioned in this context. – **ITALY**



# Sanna Marin was still the figurehead for Finland

” Prime Minister Marin is by far the most visible individual Finnish person featured in the Indian media. Her public image is very positive, also in terms of handling the coronavirus pandemic. – **INDIA**

” Sanna Marin made the news both as a leader who handled the coronavirus crisis well as well as for her low-cut blazer. [...] Finland is attracting a lot of positive attention because of its young women. Marin, who is young and from a rainbow family, is a completely different leader from Austria's young Chancellor Kurz. – **AUSTRIA**

” Just like the previous year, Prime Minister Marin and her cabinet were portrayed in a positive light in the Indonesian media. The media drew attention to Marin's family background, her appearance in a Finnish fashion magazine and her inclusion in the BBC's list of the 100 most influential women. – **INDONESIA**

” Sanna Marin, Prime Minister who successfully heads a coalition government in which all party leaders are women. [...] named as one of the women who have changed the world in 2020. The news stories highlight Marin's exceptional personal history, her success in managing the coronavirus pandemic, and her ability to get everyone to work for a common goal. – **MEXICO**

” The most visible person from Finland in Czech and Slovak media is definitely the Prime Minister, Sanna Marin. Media are interested in her work as well as her personal life. A lot of attention was attracted by the wedding of Marin, a hoax about 4 days working week, Girls Takeover and a replacement of Marin by Ms. Aava Murto for one day, Marin and COVID 19 and a beautiful picture of Marin in her jacket. – **THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

# Finland is known for equality

” The stories highlight the equality in Finland and the equal opportunities that society offers to all people. ‘Finland is a country where all children can make something of themselves,’ the Jyllands-Posten newspaper quoted the prime minister. – DENMARK

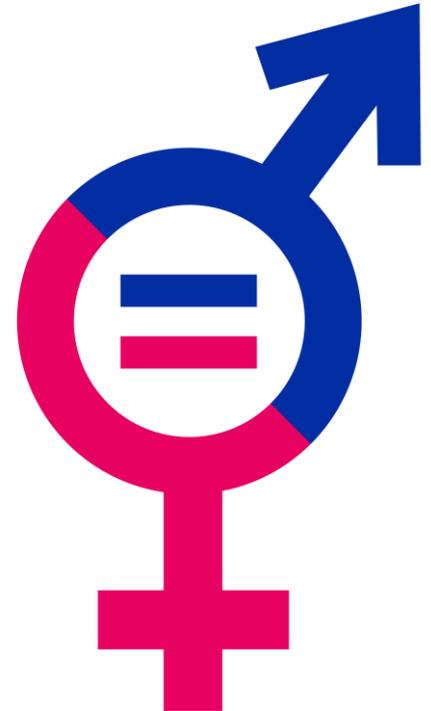
” There was an article in a Kenyan newspaper about the equal leave for both parents in Finland, and it depicted Finland as an equal and family-friendly country. – KENYA

” The topic of social equality is often mentioned in connection with the education system but there appeared also articles about the Finnish social system elaborating on topics of parental leave for mothers and fathers, men and women equality and accommodation for homeless people. – THE CZECH REPUBLIC

” The well-functioning and equal school system and the high-quality teaching in Finland were also mentioned often. – MALAYSIA

# The HÄN campaign promoting equality stood out in a positive way

- ” The Embassy's Hän campaign was one of the stories that made the news in 2020. When a French financial paper listed initiatives to promote equality in honour of International Women's Day, the Hän campaign was at the top of the list. – **FRANCE**
- ” Equality became one of the most prominent topics related to Finland's country brand in 2020. The embassy carried out a Hän campaign for equality in October and November, and a Hän-themed mural was produced in Delhi's Khan Market shopping district. The event received a lot of media attention, including India's most important English-language newspapers, raising Finland's profile as a pioneer in equality. – **INDIA**
- ” The presentation of the Hän award to the embassy's long-term partner [...] made positive news in some newspapers. The award, which emphasises equality, highlighted the values that are important to Finland in an upbeat manner, while strengthening ties with local partners. – **CANADA**

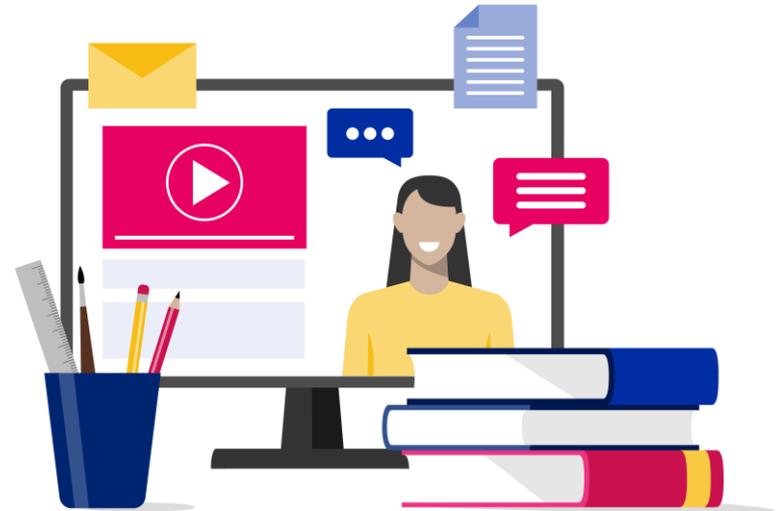


# Finnish school is an example in many countries

” In Austria, Finland has a strong reputation as a model country for education. – **AUSTRIA**

” Finland's expertise in education and the KiVa school, an anti-bullying programme, continue to receive positive coverage in Spain, especially after the introduction of the KiVa programme in Spanish schools/municipalities. Finland's relatively successful remote teaching efforts during the coronavirus restrictions, highly-skilled teachers and digitalisation were described in a positive light. – **SPAIN**

” Finland was also presented in the German media as a model country for remote education, with headlines such as ‘What Germany can learn from Finland?’ The transition to home schooling was described as quick and smooth, with every pupil having a device needed for remote learning (that could also be borrowed from the school), daily video meetings and online teaching. The difference compared to Germany was striking: in Finland, people talk about remote education, while in Germany it is home schooling, and teaching is mainly the responsibility of parents. – **GERMANY**



# Finland was the happiest country in the world for the third time – people want to know how it is done

- ” Finland's rank at the top of the UN's World Happiness Report for the third time inspired several stories in the media: what is the Finns' recipe for happiness? – **GERMANY**
- ” The fact that Finland ranked as the “happiest country in the world” for the third year-in-a-row in the UN World Happiness Report created a strong tailwind. – **JAPAN**
- ” Having ranked as the happiest nation for the third time in a row, Finland is well-known for its work-life balance, high level of trust, reliable and extensive welfare benefits, low corruption and well-functioning democracy and state institutions. – **SINGAPORE**



# Digitalisation and technology are highlighted in export news

” In 2020, Finland's strength in terms of exports was digitalisation, which was particularly noticeable in news stories about remote education: Finland appears to be a pioneer in digitalisation. Finland was also described as a forerunner in the field of health technology. – GERMANY

” Finnish products or services are viewed as some of the best in the world. Not all Finnish fields of expertise or sectors are mentioned in local media, but we can see a constant pattern in praising Finnish products or Finnish technologies whenever they are mentioned, especially in the fields of telecommunication technologies, education, and indoor hygiene. – SAUDI ARABIA

” Nokia stands out among individual companies. Building a mobile network on the moon was an invaluable victory for the brand. – INDIA

# Investing in recruiting talent generated more visibility

- ” In terms of attracting talent, it can be said that [the media] focuses on the education opportunities in Finland. Finland's reputation as a place to live and study has improved in recent years, but it is challenging to gain visibility as long as Finland or Finnish higher education institutions do not offer scholarships that cover accommodation and other living expenses, at least in part. - ARGENTINA
- ” The newspaper Aftenposten published an article on Helsinki Business Hub's talent recruitment campaign before Christmas, headlined ‘Within 90 days over 5000 have applied to be Finnish’. - NORWAY
- ” Team Finland staff's proactive efforts play an important role in gaining media coverage in India. A good example of this is the Future is Made in Finland webinars under the Talent Boost programme, which raised Finland's profile in terms of attracting talent in autumn 2020. - INDIA

# Tourism was less visible due to the coronavirus pandemic

” Comparing to previous years the topic was almost invisible due to pandemic restrictions banning entry into Finland for tourist purposes. Due to the Christmas season, there were some articles about Santa Claus and on the Lapland’s attractions, too. – **POLAND**

” Tone was positive and first people were encouraged to look at Finnish Lapland as a safe travel destination. Later articles analysed the damage COVID may have caused to SCV. Santa Claus zooming possibility was noted numerous times. Northern Lights were mentioned many times in different connections and publications. – **GREAT BRITAIN**

” The most significant Finland-related topic in the BiH media in 2020 was the Nordic/Finnish lifestyle involving the sauna and relationships with nature. There were several online articles about tourism, which made readers want to travel to Finland, at least in their imagination, with descriptions of all the things they could experience during a visit to the country, from the Northern Lights in Lapland to the market hall in Helsinki. – **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

” Tourism in Finland has been covered in relation to travel restrictions, and the tone of these articles has been neutral/negative. However, Finland's image as a tourist destination, especially Lapland, has remained good in Belgium. Belgian people would have been interested in travelling to Lapland even this winter. – **BELGIUM**

” Finland has a good reputation as an investment destination and place to establish operations, although in this context, Finland does not obtain the same level of visibility and recognition as many other countries [...]. There have been some favourable stories in the Russian media about Russian companies locating or establishing operations in Finland. – **RUSSIA**

# Helsinki – the world's best city for families



” Helsinki has been on the news related to the international rankings. In January, for example, Morgunbladid featured a listing by Movinga, in which Helsinki was named as the best city in the world for families with children. – **ICELAND**

” Helsinki in summer is a stop for cruise liners, and there are more articles about Helsinki as a tourist destination. – **MEXICO**

” Helsinki is often mentioned in connection with 'Best short breaks in Europe', 'Best Bars in Helsinki', 'Best Hotels in Helsinki', 'What to do in Helsinki' -type articles also appear from time to time. – **GREAT BRITAIN**

# Finnish sauna culture was included in UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage



” Finnish sauna culture gaining UNESCO recognition was also featured in Chinese media. – CHINA

” Sauna is mentioned in Vietnamese Media many times and becomes the most well-known culture feature of Finland and Finnish people. – VIETNAM

” The sauna was on many people's minds late in the year. The Finnish sauna tradition, which was included in UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage, inspired several stories in the local media. Archive photos of the Rajaportti sauna in Tampere were used in many media, including Euronews. – FRANCE

Finns across the world



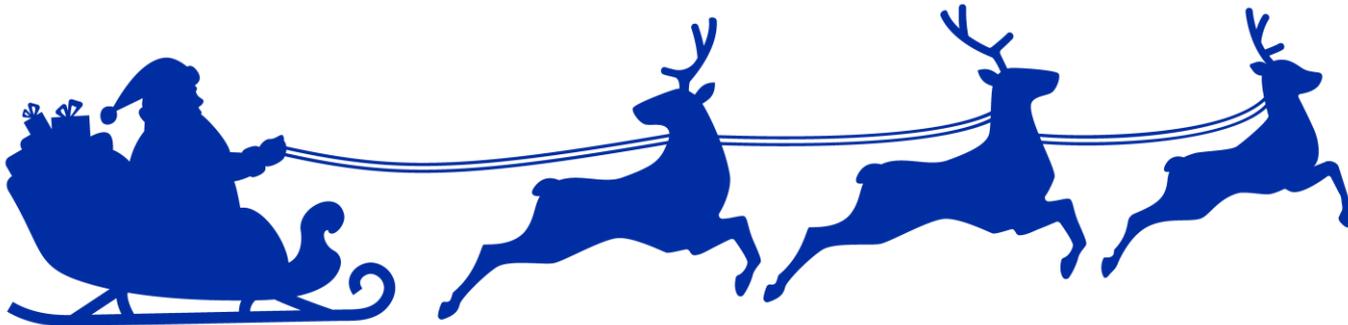
# Santa Claus was the star of the news coverage later in the year

” With the coronavirus pandemic, travel news focused on domestic tourism. However, the fact that Santa Claus was able to deliver presents at Christmas despite the pandemic was reported as a light-hearted story in several media outlets. – **AUSTRIA**

” In November, ETV ran a news story about the current situation of tourism in Rovaniemi – it came as a pleasant surprise that Santa Claus can really speak Estonian. – **ESTONIA**

” Santa Claus and Lapland received a lot of attention later in the year, and the ‘Dos en la Carretera’ travel programme about Santa Claus Village was broadcast on Christmas Eve on the Telemadrid channel right after the king's speech to peak audiences. – **SPAIN**

” Santa Claus is obviously from Finland. – **INDIA**



# Creative sectors were widely covered

” Conductor Klaus Mäkelä’s debut in Amsterdam on 25 September and his return to conduct the Concertgebouw Christmas Matinee, replacing Fabio Luisi, who had fallen ill, received excellent reviews in the media. ‘The young Finn is a natural-born conductor. Such talent!’ (Trouw). [...] ‘Wherever he debuts, the same thing happens: the musicians in the orchestra look at each other in surprise and the manager is told: bring that boy back, quick!’ (De Volkskrant). – **THE NETHERLANDS**

” The cultural event in Finland that received by far the most visibility in Russia in 2020 was the video of the song ‘Rakasta elämää’, sung by the Oulu-based policeman Petrus Schroderus; it received a lot of positive coverage even on the national television channels.” – **RUSSIA**

## Most frequently mentioned artists:

Tove Jansson  
Klaus Mäkelä  
Aki Kaurismäki  
Jean Sibelius  
Alvar Aalto  
Karita Mattila  
Kaija Saariaho  
Esa-Pekka Salonen  
Sofi Oksanen  
Santtu-Matias Rouvali  
Samu Haber  
Jörn Donner

” Santtu-Matias Rouvali’s debut in Amsterdam early in the year was met with great enthusiasm. ‘Stubborn, with a great technique and vision: we’ll be seeing more of him.’ (De Volkskrant). The recording of Sibelius’ Symphony No. 2 (Alpha) by Rouvali and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra received full marks from De Volkskrant. – **THE NETHERLANDS**

” Jörn Donner’s passing away was covered by virtually all Swedish media. – **SWEDEN**

# The group of well-known Finnish sportspeople is becoming more diverse

” In the world of sports, Valtteri Bottas and the Finnish national football team were the most quoted Finnish sports figures in Bulgarian media. – **BULGARIA**

” The sports news featured football players Joel Pohjanpalo and Lukas Hradecky, who play in Germany, as well as Formula 1 drivers Valtteri Bottas and Kimi Räikkönen. – **GERMANY**

” In sport Teemu Pukki, Valtteri Bottas and Kimi Räikkönen feature weekly. – **GREAT BRITAIN**

” Finland was covered in sports news as Denmark's opponent in the European Football Championship. Team Finland's captain Tim Sparv featured in numerous stories and profiles when he moved to Greece in the summer from the Danish club Midtjylland club, for which he had played successfully for several seasons, winning the Danish championship several times. – **DENMARK**

## Most frequently mentioned sportspeople:

Valtteri Bottas  
Kimi Räikkönen  
Teemu Pukki  
Tim Sparv  
Jari-Matti Latvala  
Lukas Hradecky  
Joel Pohjanpalo

” Around mid-November, the 2–0 victory of the Finland national football team over France on the French home ground featured prominently in the news. Morgunbladid and Visir were very positive about it. Morgunbladid reported that Finland had ‘beaten the world champions’ and described the victory as ‘incredible.’ – **ICELAND**

# What image of Finland is portrayed in the media?

## Observations from the missions

” Sanna Marin and other female politicians have changed the image of the quiet Finn in Colombia; Kimi Räikkönen might have been the biggest reason for this image. – **COLOMBIA**

” Finns are perceived to be progressive, content and have a good sense of humour. The country’s response to pandemic has furthered the country’s reputation as a good global citizen and respect for human rights. Finns have been portrayed as calm under pressure and prioritising the health of those most vulnerable in response to the pandemic. – **CANADA**

” The general perception of Turkish people about Finns is 'happy', respecting nature, well-educated and with high awareness related to human rights, social equality, and citizen rights. – **TURKEY**

” Finns are considered friendly and sometimes a little odd but in a positive sense. ‘Finnen, die spinnen’, Finnish people are quite mad, is a fairly frequent headline. Finns go ice swimming, bathe in saunas, listen to heavy metal, come up with funny competitions and love nature. Finns are honest and straightforward. Yet the cliché about Finns as a nation that does not talk is surprisingly prevalent. – **AUSTRIA**

” With the relatively good handling of the coronavirus pandemic, the perception of Finns as a law-abiding nation may have been further strengthened. – **UKRAINE**

” The addition of barbeques to items that can be borrowed for Finnish libraries was well received Down Under given Australia’s love of grilling snags on the barbie. – **AUSTRALIA**



**Further information by region**

The Nordic countries

## Sweden

“Finland has often been mentioned in Sweden in connection with the coronavirus crisis, because the country's media has often compared the way Sweden has handled the situation and managed the crisis with the actions taken in Finland. The general tone adopted by the media is that Finland is much more successful in dealing with the crisis: Finland was prepared and immediately took the threat of the virus seriously by shutting down the country in the spring. There has been negative coverage, albeit relatively little compared to the positive coverage, about the negative attitudes of some Finnish people towards Swedes who have travelled to Finland during the pandemic, and the impact of closing the borders on relations between the two countries, especially up in the north.” – **SWEDEN**

“Several media outlets repeatedly reported in May and June that Swedish tourists were not allowed into Finland due to the restrictions, even though Finland opened its borders to people from many other countries. The issue was reported mainly in a neutral tone, but the stories also highlighted the disappointment of the Swedish ministers with Finland's policies, and there were some provocative headlines: ‘Finland continues to keep Swedes out’ and ‘Swedes still banned from travelling to Finland’.” – **SWEDEN**

“Although Sanna Marin became Prime Minister as early as December 2019, the media were very interested in her post and her persona throughout 2020. In January, Marin visited Stockholm and met Prime Minister Löfven. In October, the buzz about the photo of Marin wearing a certain jacket in the fashion magazine Trendi also made headlines. The tone has been positive; Marin is seen as a brave breaker of glass roofs.” – **SWEDEN**

## Sweden

“Prime Minister Marin has been the person in the Government to have received a lot of positive attention, while the scandals related to Minister for Foreign Affairs Haavisto and former Finance Minister Katri Kulmuni have attracted more negative media attention.” – **SWEDEN**

“The deepening defence cooperation between Sweden and Finland [...] regularly makes headlines in the press and other media, and the tone is either neutral or positive. As Sweden increases its investment in defence, defence issues are often the focus of attention, and Finland comes up in this context.” – **SWEDEN**

“The coronavirus pandemic turned eyes in Sweden to Finland and its social system. There had been a lot of interest in the past in terms of the UN happiness reports. [...] It was clear that the Finnish government and society had done quite well in the coronavirus stress test: Finland’s citizens were protected and its society’s laws and processes worked well.” – **SWEDEN**

## Other Nordic countries

“According to the embassy, the media story of the year was PM Sanna Marin's outfit in a photo in Trendi magazine in mid-October. There was a lot of coverage immediately after its publication, as well as considerable media attention in the aftermath. The news coverage was neutral in tone: it noted that Marin had been criticised for the photograph, but many people had also stepped in to defend the prime minister. Many Icelanders also took a prominent stand in defence of the prime minister; the Federation of Young Progressives, for example, uploaded a photo to its Instagram account of a total of 30 members, both men and women, dressed in line with Marin's image in Trendi and tagged the image with the hashtag #ImwithSanna. Marin was also defended in the same manner on Instagram by Heiða Björg Hilmisdóttir, Vice-Chair of the Icelandic Social Democratic Party.” – ICELAND

“The observation, widely noted globally, of how well female-led countries had done in the fight against the coronavirus was also noted in Denmark. The articles also referred to Finland and mentioned Prime Minister Sanna Marin's cabinet, which consists of female party leaders. The Berlingske newspaper on 16 April 2020: ‘Female-led countries such as Denmark, led by Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, and Finland, led by Prime Minister Sanna Marin, whose government is made up of a coalition of female-led parties, have done a remarkably good job of stopping the coronavirus’.” – DENMARK

“Topics related to Prime Minister Sanna Marin and her government were the media phenomenon of the year in Denmark. The themes that were covered were diverse, from the prime minister's profiles to the cover image of Trendi magazine, which caused a stir in the autumn. An article featured the following quote from the prime minister: ‘I'm very proud of Finland. Here, even children from poor families can get an education and achieve their goals in life. A cashier in a shop can become prime minister.’ The tone of the stories was very favourable, and Finland presented itself in a positive light as a fresh and modern country.” – DENMARK

## Other Nordic countries

“There has been extensive news coverage about the measures and restrictions against the coronavirus in Finland. In the spring, there was a particular focus on emergency supplies. The isolation of Helsinki and Uusimaa was also covered. The Aftenposten newspaper visited the Torne River Valley and reported on the closed border in two multi-page articles in its printed paper and online. The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's news on the radio and television also reported directly from the location about the situation in Finland after the borders opened in the late spring.” – **NORWAY**

“Klaus Mäkelä, the young Finnish conductor who joined the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra as its artistic advisor in the 2020-21 season, received a lot of public attention again. Several prominent interviews with Mäkelä were shown on television and published in the press. Mäkelä's first official concert as artistic director received a lot of coverage and tremendous reviews.” – **NORWAY**

# The Baltic countries and Russia

## The Baltic countries

“The most significant media topic related to Finland was the measures to restrict passenger traffic in the Gulf of Finland. The measures were widely covered in all media in March, when Finland declared a state of emergency and commuting stopped. Finland also gained a lot of visibility in May, when Estonian commuter traffic was restored, and in September, when Finland re-imposed restrictions on people arriving from Estonia. In spring, the news stories about Finland's activities were not just informative, but there was a lively public discussion about the ban on commuting and its effects on family life and well-being of Estonians who work in Finland. Similarly, the fact that Finland did not join the so-called Baltic travel bubble made headlines in May.” – **ESTONIA**

“Estonian people generally consider Finland to be a very interesting tourist destination. The exotic northern Lapland is found to be interesting, but so is Helsinki as a big city and the beautiful lake district in Finland. There were probably fewer articles than usual in 2020 on tourism, but cruises to the Åland Islands, which were on offer in the summer, were of particular interest to Estonians. ETV's travel series was about travel in a post-pandemic Europe, and an episode was dedicated to Finland; the tone of the programme was very positive.” – **ESTONIA**

“In 2020 the course ‘Elements of AI’ created in Finland was translated into Latvian and was launched on May 6. Information about it was widely reflected in social media, radio, magazines and internet news.” – **LATVIA**

“Another significant event widely reflected in Latvian mass media was cooperation between Latvia and Finland in the development of 6x6 armored personnel carriers.” – **LATVIA**

## The Baltic countries

“The Lithuanian media often paints a picture of Finland as a country that is very well prepared for crises, that is well organised and has stock of emergency supplies. Finland is highlighted as an example of a country that has handled the crisis well.” – **LITHUANIA**

“Finland's pure nature and eco-friendliness are admired in Lithuania. Lithuanian people already understand that people go to Finland to enjoy the opportunities offered by its beautiful nature. It is also often mentioned how modern its museums are; they are often interactive, and people can touch and experiment with the objects.” – **LITHUANIA**

## Russia

“As Finland is one of the Russians’ favourite travel destinations, the travel restrictions between the countries, problems with visas and other news related to tourism were the coronavirus-related topics that gained most visibility in the Russian media. There have also been some news stories about the coronavirus situation and measures to fight it in Finland though significantly fewer than about the above-mentioned topics.” – **RUSSIA**

“Finland was far less visible in the Russian media than two years ago, and this was down, in particular, to fewer stories about travel, sports and high-level visits. According to the media monitoring statistics, the number of stories about Finland that were published in Russia's largest media was down by a quarter last year compared with 2019.” – **RUSSIA**

“According to the media-monitoring measures, the news story that received most prominence in Russia’s largest media was the speculation by ex-diplomat Jukka Seppinen in his book that Mikhail Gorbachev had considered returning Karelia to Finland. The story was covered in almost all major media and commented on by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zaharova and ex-president Mikhail Gorbachev.” – **RUSSIA**

“The media have been interested in how companies in Finland have been supported during the coronavirus pandemic. This is probably due to the fact that the support offered to companies in St Petersburg has been widely considered insufficient, and people have been interested in the experiences and measures taken in the neighbouring country.” – **RUSSIA**

“The Republic of Karelia and the provinces on the eastern border of Finland signed a three-year strategy for the development of cross-border tourism. The aim is to attract international tourists to the region with the theme ‘Two countries, one Karelia’.” – **RUSSIA**

## Russia

“Finland’s ranking in the UN happiness report was noted by the Russian media also this year. It inspired analytical stories throughout the year.” – **RUSSIA**

“Finland is often presented as an example of a good and functioning society when any wrongdoing is revealed in Russia. The video by opposition leader Navalny’s team is one example, another is the public funding given to the prison camp museum, which was targeted at young people and built on the set for the film Vesuri. The news showed images of Finnish schools and said that the money would have been better spent on building a school like the ones in Finland.” – **RUSSIA**

Europe, excluding the Nordic and  
Baltic countries

## Europe, excluding the Nordic and Baltic countries

“Finland was mentioned several times in connection with the EU recovery package as being linked to ‘the frugal four’. [...] Handelsblatt reported that Finland was happy with the result, and although Finland was not part of the quartet, Finland strongly supported it. Handelsblatt said that Prime Minister Marin showed a new side of herself at the summit when she joined the four.” – **GERMANY**

“The Swiss quality media group Tamedia published a double page spread about Finland's three-time top rank as the happiest country in the world and the background to this achievement. The article strengthened Finland's already favourable image and made Finland stand out as the best country in the Nordic countries among Swiss people.” – **SWITZERLAND**

“The Finnish way of life, close relationship with nature, the principles of sustainable development and the peaceful pace of life made headlines in several media, thanks to the UN World Happiness Report and Visit Finland's highly successful Rent a Finn online campaign.” – **SPAIN**

“Finnish music in creative sector gets the most mentions due to multiple conductors and artists residing and visiting the UK. Sibelius is played daily in classical radio but modern compositions are being featured occasionally too.” – **GREAT BRITAIN**

“Finnish people naturally keep more distance than people in Central Europe, and they are not very sociable. ‘We like to be alone’, replied one of the Finnish interviewees on the main news on TV (which inspired amused comments in the media about ‘northern hermits’).” – **AUSTRIA**

## Europe, excluding the Nordic and Baltic countries

“Turkish media has praised Sanna Marin's government numerous times for the successful management of the pandemic crisis. Sözcü newspaper [...] wrote that Finland has made very timely and effective decisions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.” – **TURKEY**

“The coronavirus bulletin for children organised by the Finnish government received a lot of attention on social media. What drew the most attention were the female ministers (and their casual and colourful outfits).” – **HUNGARY**

“In financial news, Europe's second fastest growing company, the Wolt food delivery service, made news as the number of home deliveries grew exponentially due to the pandemic.” – **CROATIA**

“Finland kept its good reputation in Bulgarian media especially in relation to the country's top position in different world survey like f.ex. the happiest nation, quality of life, perception of corruption, media freedom, quality of air etc.” – **BULGARIA**

Asia and Oceania

## Japan

“MaaS continues to be a strong topic of interest, especially because Japanese companies are investing in MaaS Global and there are MaaS related projects ongoing in Japan. In terms of business, Finnish food delivery service WOLT started expanding in several Japanese cities, also coming to Tokyo towards the end of last year. Food delivery service as an industry is growing due to more people working from home in the corona era, and in the media Finnish WOLT is seen as a good, healthy and ‘employee-friendly’ alternative to the likes of Uber Eats.” – **JAPAN**

“A few articles noted Finland’s preparedness, emergency supplies and nuclear shelters. The Embassy's Minister-Counsellor was interviewed about the topic in July, and the article that came out as a result summarised the COVID situation in the Nordic countries [...] ‘In Finland, the country’s youngest ever Prime Minister Sanna Marin, a 34 year-old female, with an approval rate of 80% is implementing bold measures. What was of envy of the global community was the large stockpiles of masks, medical equipment and protective attire, a practice started in the Cold War Era. Finland took these out from the secret storage and used them to deal with the pandemic. Finland, a country which was under Russian and Swedish rule for a long time, with a history of Soviet Union invasion attempt during WW2, stands out with preparedness.’ Embassy of Finland Minister Counsellor Miia Lahti comments that ‘What we’re experiencing now shows the importance of preparedness. We’re currently preparing for the Second Wave’.” – **JAPAN**

“When Finland was ranked as the happiest country in the world for the third year-in-a-row, a press release about ‘How to calm your mind the Finnish way (during the corona era), 5 things you can do at home to be happy’ was sent out. This was picked up by many as it was a timely topic during the Japanese State-of-Emergency.” – **JAPAN**

## Japan

“Mölkky gained a big surge in recognition in 2020. A comedian started playing the game in 2019 and began actively promoting it among his celebrity friends and also introduced it in the media (web, TV and radio). Now there is even a TV programme just on Mölkky on Tokyo Metropolitan Broadcasting company, and there are many ordinary people enjoying the game across the nation in local parks. Asahi Shimbun web article published in December was titled ‘You don’t need to be close to another person with Mölkky, popularity increasingly rising, Japan’s first national contest being held.’ (introducing it as ‘perfect sport’ while keeping social distance in the corona era).” – **JAPAN**

## China

“Overall, Finland's reputation is still good in China and the tone positive when featured in the Chinese media. However, statements by Finland concerning the weakening autonomous position of Hong Kong (for instance, the suspension of the extradition agreement between Finland and Hong Kong) stirred negative voices.” – **CHINA**

“[...] Some sporadic news attracted publicity such as the first Covid-19 case in Finland who was a Chinese tourist in Lapland, former President Martti Ahtisaari testing positive for coronavirus as well as the scandal of poor quality and overpriced masks that were bought from China via ‘shady’ Finnish businesspersons.” – **CHINA**

“2020 marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Finland and China. [...] Throughout the year several events and activities were tied into the 70th anniversary theme, with e.g. thematic interviews (on various types of media) and media releases related to different events. Tone was overall positive. 70th anniversary video campaign launched by the Finnish missions received more than 1,2 million views on Chinese social media.” – **CHINA**

“Art exhibition ‘Flow with Matter’ by Finnish artists Tommi Grönlund and Petteri Nisunen at the Shanghai Minsheng Art Museum was running for half a year (May 31 until the end of November), and gathered wide media attention as one of the only major international art exhibitions in China during 2020.” – **CHINA**

“Kimi Räikkönen, still most likely the most famous Finn in China, echoes these ideas of a ‘typical Finn’, while PM Sanna Marin has brought along a different example of Finnish characteristic. She has been the most visible Finnish government figure in the media, and images of Finland's all-female cabinet have also been widely circulating in the Chinese social media.” – **CHINA**

## China

“When Finland announced it would suspend the extradition agreement with Hong Kong, the news was reported more than a hundred times during the following week.” – **CHINA**

“Talent Boost program: Two iBanker millennials obtained a startup permit to Finland thanks to their entrepreneurship ideas.” – **CHINA**

## Asia and Oceania, excluding Japan and China

“The Finnish education system is still a topic in India. Media visibility is steady throughout the year, but there was a spike after Finland once again took the top place in the World Happiness Report in March 2020. The high level of (basic) education, and especially the excellence of teachers and teacher education, was mentioned as the single most important factor to contribute to the happiness of Finnish people.” – **INDIA**

“In 2017, the reality TV show ‘Welcome! First Time in Korea?’ turned Vilppu Leppänen from Jyväskylä into a social media star. He announced that he had married a Korean woman in the summer. The news of Vilppu's wedding and his consequent relationship with Korea was one of the most widely read pieces of entertainment news that day. [...] The quarantine experiences of Vilppu and Seonjeong, the first meeting with the in-laws and Korean food helped to break the programme's viewer records for the year. Vilppu is seen as a down-to-earth, polite and sincere man, and the image of Finland he conveys has been a significant boost in the efforts to improve Finland's image in Korea.” – **SOUTH KOREA**

“Finland's technological know-how and innovations have been brought up regularly and in a positive tone. Nokia in particular has received a lot of attention as a service provider of 5G technology.” – **MALAYSIA**

“Finland's successful handling of the coronavirus pandemic has been covered in the media. Among the things that were mentioned were the Koronavilkku application and the organisation of a virtual May Day event. News stories about the sniffer dogs at Helsinki airport were published in several media.” – **INDONESIA**

“Nanoform announced the launch of its proprietary nanoparticle technology for biology could become a potential gamechanger [...]” – **SINGAPORE**

## Asia and Oceania, excluding Japan and China

“The story that received most media attention in 2020 was the 90-Day Finn campaign. The campaign marketed a free 90-day relocation package for the entire family. The application process was widely published in by Australia newspapers, in addition to, considerable television coverage in nightly bulletins.” – **AUSTRALIA**

“As in every year, very positive coverage was also around hockey and there were a number of stories. Finnish players are playing for the local Barys hockey team and usually take leading roles. Moreover, some of the local young talents are going to Finland to study and play hockey.” – **KAZAKHSTAN**

“In the summer, positive attention was paid in several online media to Finland joining the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region, established on the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan to mitigate the social consequences of the Aral Sea environmental disaster.” – **ROVING AMBASSADOR FOR CENTRAL ASIA**

# North Africa and the Middle East

## North Africa and the Middle East

“Finnish people are seen as citizens of a welfare state, who live in a country with one of the best education systems in the world, where things usually work.” – **TUNISIA**

“‘Nordic Noir’ film event in March as part of the Nordic cultural cooperation [...]. The film Look of a Killer by Lauri Nurkse was screened twice in Cimatheque theatre in Downtown Cairo. The coverage on the event was positive and re-introduced Finnish film to Egypt.” – **EGYPT**

“There was a lot of articles showing the cooperation between Finland and Morocco specially in the economic field.”  
– **MOROCCO**

“Finland's Emergency Supplies is amongst the best in the World, and according to Finnish experts Finland's emergency supplies system has made Finland almost always prepared for states of emergencies or War.” – **SAUDI ARABIA**

“Finnish passport is one of the most valid passports in the world and Finns can travel to most of countries without visa. [...] Finland is the cleanest and greenest country on earth. It ranks number one out of 180.” – **IRAN**

“Finland's EUR 1 million support to the Lebanese Red Cross in response to the Covid-19 pandemic was covered by several local newspapers and on the front pages of several online newspapers.” – **LEBANON**

## North Africa and the Middle East

“We brought the Northern Lights from Rovaniemi to Tel Aviv, as a video installation, for one evening in November to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Finland and Israel. The Northern Lights blazed on the large exterior wall of the Habima Theatre and were visible from afar. The event made it on the radio and live TV news on the same day.” – **ISRAEL**

“A delegation of EU diplomats of 18 EU countries headed to Gaza strip during COVID19 outbreak. they met with representatives of Palestinian Civil Society and the private Sector as well as international organizations. Delegation supported the people of Gaza who are suffering from the closure. – **PALESTINE**

Other African countries

## Other African countries

“A special campaign in partnership with She Forum Africa for supporting indigent girls' education in Nigeria. The campaign started on the International Day of a Girl Child in October and culminated to Finnish Independence Day. The campaign aimed raising awareness on access to education and girls' rights. [...] The campaign was featured on radio, press and online media, and in the largest TV Channel of Africa.” – **NIGERIA**

“The results of the basic income experiment in Finland show that a basic income is beneficial for mental health, economic autonomy and well-being in general. For this reason, the basic income is seen as a useful tool for responding to a pandemic.” – **TANZANIA**

“Finland's development aid cooperation in the water, sanitation and hygiene sectors received positive attention in the Ethiopian media throughout the year.” – **ETHIOPIA**

“The young female Prime Minister, Sanna Marin, has been featured in a positive light. The embassy has also succeeded in strengthening Finland's image as a driver for equality through TV appearances.” – **KENYA**

“The official launch of the Zambia SME support project in November 2020 received attention in several newspapers as the local Minister of Commerce Trade and Industry attended the event.” – **ZAMBIA**

“Sports news stories mentioned the success of the Finnish football team and African club players. There were a few mentions of motorsport events held in Finland.” – **SOUTH AFRICA**

## Other African countries

“Finland and Namibia celebrated 150 years of common history in 2020, and there were positive news stories in the media.” – **NAMIBIA**

“European Union (EU) Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen said that the European Union will support the government of Mozambique to meet its most urgent budgetary needs during the pandemic.”  
– **MOZAMBIQUE**

# The United States and Canada

## The United States

“CNN: Dogs can be trained to detect Covid-19 by sniffing human sweat, study suggests (reached 270 million people).”  
– **THE UNITED STATES**

”The importance of female leaders in handling the coronavirus pandemic was widely covered, and Finland was also mentioned in this context: What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common? Women Leaders (Forbes), How a Millennial Prime Minister Is Leading Finland Through Crisis (Vogue).” – **THE UNITED STATES**

“The election campaigns also highlighted the Nordic welfare country models and how well they work. Sanna Marin's interview in the Washington Post was widely quoted: - Bernie Sanders is a fan of the ‘Nordic model.’ Finland’s leader says it’s the American Dream.” – **THE UNITED STATES**

“Prime Minister Sanna Marin attracts a lot of interest in the United States not only for her policies, but also for her personal life. Examples of prominent stories: Finland’s Sanna Marin, the World’s Youngest Female Head of Government, Wants Equality, Not Celebrity (The Time), The rapid rise of Sanna Marin, the 34-year-old Finnish woman who is the youngest serving world leader (Business Insider), Finnish prime minister marries longtime partner (CBS, People, Bloomberg), Finland PM's photoshoot sparks sexism debate (CNN).” – **THE UNITED STATES**

“The pandemic has inspired stories about Finnish health technologies, thanks in particular to Oura Ring. Oura Ring has been heavily involved in the battle against COVID-19 in the US (including an agreement with the NBA), which we have also taken into account in our own communications.” – **THE UNITED STATES**

## Canada

“Finland was mentioned as an example of a country where the government has taken action and kept infection rates under control, especially compared to neighbouring Sweden. It was often pointed out that the pandemic has been better managed in female-led countries than elsewhere.” – **CANADA**

“Restaurants on the Edge, Netflix's food and travel series by a Canadian production company, visits Restaurant Ruissalon Maininki in Turku in one episode; it has aroused some interest in Finnish food. Netflix's drama series Deadwind (Karppi) and, especially, Bordertown (Sorjonen) have aroused interest in travelling to Finland, especially to the Saimaa region.” – **CANADA**

“The sports news mention dozens of Finnish hockey players every week, especially Puljujärvi, Kotkaniemi, Laine and Lehtonen.” – **CANADA**

Latin America

## Latin America

“Finland's reputation as a success story has strengthened in Mexico. Finland is described as a country that has been very successful in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic and is increasingly being used as an example when it comes to the welfare state, the education system, non-corruption, equality, the status of women and children, health care, trust in decision-makers and good governance. Prime Minister Marin has received a particularly high level of positive visibility.”

– MEXICO

“Finland has been mentioned several times as a good and successful example of the handling of the coronavirus crisis compared to Sweden (the Swedish strategy has been widely reported in critical tones).” – ARGENTINA

“Colombians have been impressed by Finland's good management of the coronavirus pandemic, its female-led government and Sanna Marin. Finnish politicians were hardly mentioned in the Colombian media before Marin.” – COLOMBIA

“The Sorjonen series on Netflix in Argentina has received a surprising amount of visibility and people have liked it.”

– COLOMBIA

“Finnish heavy metal music has a strong fan base in Chile. Finnish design is highly valued by designers and experts in the country's design industry. Finnish expertise is valued in Chile's most important publications on design and architecture.” – CHILE

## Latin America

“The fictional TV series Invisible Heroes featured prominently in the media and inspired a lively discussion on social media. It is based on a true story about the actions of Ambassador Tapani Brotherus and his colleagues at the Finnish embassy in Santiago de Chile during the 1973 military coup as they helped those in danger. These events in Chile’s recent history continue to divide the people and evoke strong emotions. However, the coverage was mainly positive.” – **CHILE**

“Media showed researches and innovations, such as: Aalto University, Finnish Meteorological Institute, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland and University of Helsinki have studied how extremely small airborne aerosol particles emitted.” – **PERU**



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**FINLAND**



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