

WASA DAILY

Nr 31 Sunday, August 3, 2025

ISSN 2965-2456

Korsholm Music Festival

World Record set at Salteriet in Björköby

Vaasa Future Festival

Butterfly-Exhibition

Global Footprint

Onkilahti Paper Bridge

WASA DAILY



**The Great Fire
of Vaasa
Today
173 years ago**

**HERE WE ARE:
vpress.ovh**

What Can We Learn from the Great Fire of Vaasa in 1852?

IT HAS BEEN SAID that history teaches us it repeats itself. This idea is often attributed to Oscar Wilde, while the American philosopher George Santayana warned over a century ago: *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."*

Remembering history is not just about honoring the past—it is a way to understand our present and shape our future. This is especially true for difficult and tragic events, the kind that test societies to their core. By analyzing why disasters happen, we gain not only insight but also better tools to prevent them in the future.

A City in Ashes—and a New Beginning

The fire that devastated Vaasa in 1852 was one of the most destructive in Finland's history. Most of the city was reduced to ruins, leaving thousands homeless. Today, a disaster of that scale seems unimaginable, thanks to modern fire safety regulations and improved infrastructure. Yet the story of Vaasa's recovery still holds lessons that remain relevant.

The catastrophe became a catalyst for change. Rather than rebuilding the city exactly as it was, the people made a bold decision: to relocate Vaasa closer to the sea.

This marked the beginning of a new era for the city as a port and commercial hub. The move demonstrated foresight and adaptability—qualities that not only saved the city but made it stronger.

Resilience and Faith in the Future

Vaasa's story after the fire is a powerful testament to human resilience—the ability to recover and rebuild from loss. It reminds us that disasters, no matter how devastating, do not have to be the end. They can also be the start of something better.

In today's world, where climate change, pandemics, and economic crises constantly test our adaptability, Vaasa's history is more relevant than ever. It teaches us that:

Preparation is crucial – Modern societies must invest in disaster readiness and infrastructure that minimizes risks.

Crises can drive innovation – Instead of clinging to old ways, adversity can be a force for renewal.

Community and determination are key – Vaasa's reconstruction shows that cooperation and shared vision can overcome even the greatest challenges.

A Lesson for the Future

The story of Vaasa is not just one

of destruction—it is a tribute to humanity's ability to rise again. By remembering this event and learning from it, we can build a more sustainable and resilient society.

Santayana's words remain as true today as they were a century ago: If we forget history, we risk repeating its mistakes. But if we learn from it, we can shape a better future. The Great Fire of Vaasa is not just a piece of the past—it is a guide for facing the challenges ahead.

Photo Supplement

Waaan Pälvälhti
Photo Supplement
Wasa Dagblad Wasa Daily



3.8.1852

Vasa stads brand
Vaasan kaupungin palo
The Fire of Vaasa

Photo Supplement - bpress.obh

NEWS

KORSHOLM MUSIC FESTIVAL

Viktor Nygård continues for one year as executive director – and does much more!



IT HAS BEEN AN intense, inspiring and successful year for Viktor Olaus Nygård – and now it is clear that he will continue for another year as executive director of the Korsholm Music Festival. A good news for everyone who appreciates both innovative thinking and high-quality music in a beautiful archipelago environment.

Viktor Nygård, born in 1986 in Härnösand, Sweden, was educated at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm and at the Academy of Music in Leipzig. With this background, he combines artistic quality with organizational ability – and as a parent of young children, also with a lot of human understanding.

For the past year, he has been substituting for Milla Virta, who is on family leave, and during this year he has made his mark on the festival through several successful innovations. One of them is

the free bus transport to concerts outside Vaasa.

“It’s both an environmentally friendly and social decision,” says Nygård. It has also been very popular – it feels great to be able to make the festival more accessible, regardless of car or place of residence.

Another new feature that has received a lot of appreciation is childcare during certain concerts. For the first time, parents of young children could participate without having to solve the eternal mystery: who can babysit?

“I know how difficult it is to get away on something when you have small children. This solution makes it possible for more people to participate,” says Nygård in an interview with *Vasa-bladet*.

This year’s festival had the theme “Bridges” – and the program really built bridges between genres, generations and countries. From world-leading classical musicians to tango, folk music, children’s performances – and for the very first time, Balkan music.

As always, the coast and archipelago

of Mustasaari and Vaasa formed a magnificent backdrop for the festival, which has attracted audiences since 1983. This year’s program consisted of 25 concerts with 100 musicians from near and far – a week filled with world-class music, great meetings and packed auditoriums.

In parallel with the intensive festival work, Viktor Nygård is studying at Hanken – a choice that may surprise, but which has proven to be extremely relevant. What he learns about marketing, audience work and strategic thinking is directly put to use in the festival activities.

Now that this year’s festival is over – with flying colors – the work on next year’s edition has already begun.

With Viktor Nygård at the helm, the Korsholm Music Festival faces an exciting future – with new ideas, strong tradition and a festival spirit that continues to build bridges between people and music.

PHOTO: Viktor Nygård opens the festival with Jan-Erik Gustafsson

NEWS

YOU CAN READ THIS NEWSPAPER ANYWHERE



You can read this paper wherever You are. Like here in Palo-saari

BLOG WRITERS

Join Wasa Daily as a Blog Writer!

Are you passionate about sharing your thoughts, stories, or expertise with the community? Wasa Daily is looking for enthusiastic blog writers to contribute engaging content for our readers.

Whether you love writing about local events, culture, lifestyle, business, or personal experiences, we welcome your voice!

Writing for Wasa Daily is a great opportunity to reach a wider audience, connect with fellow locals, and showcase your creativity. No prior experience is needed—just bring your ideas and enthusiasm! We value diverse perspectives and fresh voices that reflect the vibrant spirit of our community.

Interested? Send us your blog pitch or a short sample, and let's get your words published! Join us in making *Wasa Daily* a platform for meaningful conversations and inspiring stories.



Contact us at wasadagblad@gmail.com for more details. We can't wait to hear from you!

UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate is rising - but is lowest in Malax and Larsmo

IN OSTROBOTHNIA AND Central Ostrobothnia, unemployment continued to rise in June, but the region's unemployment rate still remains the lowest in Mainland Finland. Particularly positive news comes from Malax and Larsmo, where the unemployment rate is among the lowest in the country.

In the Ostrobothnia ELY Centre's area, there were a total of 9,620 unemployed jobseekers at the end of June. This represents a significant increase, as the number of unemployed was 1,015 more than a year earlier and a full 1,371 more than in May. Despite the increasing number of unemployed, the proportion of unemployed jobseekers in the labor force in the Ostrobothnia ELY Centre's area

is still the lowest in Mainland Finland, at 8.3 percent. In the whole country, the corresponding proportion is significantly higher, at 12.2 percent. The data is based on KEHA Centre's Employment Statistics.

The unemployment rate in Ostrobothnia and Central Ostrobothnia is thus still low compared to the rest of the country. In the whole country, the number of unemployed increased by an average of 12.8 percent compared to a year earlier, while the increase in the Ostrobothnia ELY Centre's area was 11.8 percent. The number of unemployed jobseekers increased in all of the region's economic areas compared to the previous year. The lowest unemployment rate was measured in the South Ostrobothnia

coastal region, at 5.2 percent.

At the municipal level, the increase in the number of unemployed was largest in Vaasa, Kokkola, and Pedersöre. As a positive development, the number of unemployed decreased most in Malax, Nykarleby, and Halsö. The proportion of unemployed jobseekers in the labor force was highest in Kaskinen (12.9%). In contrast, the proportion of unemployed jobseekers in the labor force was lowest in Larsmo municipality (3.5%) and Malax (3.7%), which underlines these municipalities' strong employment situation. Vaasa's unemployment rate was 9.9 percent, Jakobstad's 10.8 percent, and Kokkola's 10.5 percent.

Unemployment increased at

the end of June in most age and occupational groups, as well as at all education levels. The number of unemployed jobseekers under 25 years of age was 1,273, which is 122 more than the previous year. The number of unemployed over 50 years of age was 3,084, thus 224 more than a year earlier, and they constituted 32 percent of all unemployed jobseekers. By education level, unemployment increased most among those with secondary education, with an increase of 485 people (+11.6%) compared to the previous year. By occupational group, unemployment increased most in the specialist occupational group (+336), while it decreased most in the occupational group of farmers, forest workers, etc. (-34).

NEWS



KORSHOLM MUSIC FESTIVAL

World Record Set at the Salteriet in Björköby

Norwegian speed, Ostrobothnian cheer, and a double bass with a sense of humor

Laughter echoed, bows flew, and spirits soared when Norwegian double bass virtuoso Knut Erik Sundquist, together with violinist Arvid Engegård, set an informal world record at the Salteriet in Björköby last Saturday, as part of the Korsholm Music Festival.

The piece? Vittorio Monti's ever-popular Czardas. The tempo? Blazing fast.

"We played it as fast as we possibly could. Normally, Czardas takes about four and a half minutes. We did it in 2 minutes and 33 seconds," Sundquist said with a grin.

The previously known – albeit unofficial – world record is said to be 2 minutes and 27 seconds.

"Well, we didn't quite beat it, but we had a great time. And the audience stayed in their seats the whole time –

that's always a good sign," he laughed.

The crowd at the Salteriet was anything but disappointed. The humorous concert also featured music by Chaplin, Gershwin, Piaf, Piazzolla, Chick Corea, and even Popy – all presented with storytelling, jokes, and musical mischief that kept everyone entertained from start to finish.

For those who haven't seen him live: imagine one of the world's top double bassists – technically brilliant, musically expressive, and funny enough to hold a comedy set. That's Knut Erik Sundquist in a nutshell.

Born in Tromsø in 1961, Sundquist studied in Vienna under the legendary Professor Ludwig Streicher. After a distinguished career as principal bassist with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, he returned to his beloved Northern Norway, settling in Harstad – which happens to be Vaasa's twin town.

From there, he's built a remarkable international career as a soloist and chamber musician, regularly appearing at prestigious festivals such as the Schubertiade in Schwarzenberg, the Lockenhaus Chamber Music Festival, and the Lucerne Festival. He also teaches at the University of Tromsø and works as a regional musician in the city.

This year marked Sundquist's third consecutive appearance at the Korsholm Music Festival, where he performed in several concerts throughout the week – always with passion, presence, and plenty of humor.

"I'd love to come back. Vaasa is a wonderful summer city," he said with a warm smile – then added, only half-joking:

"Next time, maybe we'll try to play Czardas in under two minutes. You've got to have goals in life."

NEWS

KORSHOLM MUSIC FESTIVAL

Amélie goes to Belgrad charmed the city hall ballroom on Sunday



ON SUNDAY EVENING the dignified banquet hall of Vaasa City Hall was transformed into an oasis of joy, dance and Balkan rhythms when the Ostrobothnian-born orchestra Amélie goes to Belgrade took the stage as part of the Mustasaari Music Festival's "Concert Royal" event.

The audience's expectations were high and the band clearly exceeded them. Fast songs, catchy rhythms and a cheerful atmosphere literally made the Great Hall rise in the air – rarely has there been such heartfelt dancing and cheering within the walls of the City Hall.

The band Amélie goes to Belgrade is known for its unique style, which combines musical traditions from the Balkans and the Middle East, the pulsating rhythm of Roma music and fresh arrangements of songs from different genres. The band performs both traditional Balkan classics and their own "Balkanized" versions of other songs – such as the charmingly humorous "Bara

bada bastu", which made the audience laugh and dance at the same time.

Since 2008, the band has spread its musical joy at festivals, clubs and parties, and Sunday's concert was no exception. The evening's performance was an energetic and warm-hearted display of how music can unite people across borders and highlight the landscape of everyday life in the midst of celebrations.

The band consists of an impressive group of musicians: Ulrika Öhman (vocals), Roger Bäck (alto horn), Anders Sjöling and Rickard Slotte (trumpet), Torvald Lund (trombone), Martin Enroth (euphonium), Michael Ford and Markus Kaikkonen (saxophones), Benny Ojala (tuba), Peter Enroth (violin), Richard Mitts (accordion) and Daniel Hjerpe (drums). The mutual joy and collaboration between these musicians can be seen and heard in every note.

"It's a great honour for us to be able to play right here in the City Hall, in connection with such a big festival," said singer Ulrika Öhman at the beginning of the concert and received warm applause.

The audience, which consisted of

music lovers, dance enthusiasts and curious beginners, was drawn in from the very first notes. On the parquet floor in the banquet hall, there was hustle and bustle, spontaneous dancing and happy faces – the atmosphere was like a village festival in the Balkans, but in the middle of Vaasa.

The Korsholm Music Festival has traditionally profiled itself as a high-quality classical music festival, but the theme of 2025 "Bridges" also enabled new encounters between cultures and styles. The concert in Amélie goes to Belgrade was an excellent example of how music can be used to build bridges between countries and moods.

Sunday's performance will surely be remembered by many. There was something magical about the evening – the joy, the community and the pure power of music. The audience applauded by standing up for a long time, and the smile didn't disappear from their faces even when they left home.

The Korsholm Music Festival and Amélie goes to Belgrade – thank you for an unforgettable evening!



NEWS

KORSHOLM MUSIC FESTIVAL

Monica Johnson became the 20th honorary member of the Korsholm Music Festival



WHEN MONICA JOHNSON returned to her hometown after a few years abroad, she hardly imagined that her name would one day be written into the history of the Korsholm Music Festival. In 2008, she took over as festival director, with the idea of staying for five years. But the mu-

sic, the people and the unique spirit of the festival kept her there – for a full fourteen years.

Under her leadership, the music festival grew in both scope and reputation, and became a natural summer tradition for music lovers far beyond Ostrobothnia. When she handed over the baton to Milla Virta in 2022, she left be-

hind a legacy of passion, professionalism and warmth.

On Sunday, she returned to the city hall, this time not as a leader but as an acclaimed guest. In an atmospheric ceremony, she was named the festival's 20th honorary member – a title that carries both gratitude and recognition for her invaluable contribution.

NEWS

VAASA

Renovation of the Onkilahti Paper Bridge will begin tomorrow – the bridge will be closed



THE POPULAR PEDESTRIAN and bicycle bridge connecting the centre of Vaasa and Palosaari, the so-called Paper Bridge, will be closed to traffic on Monday 4 August 2025. The reason for this is the long-awaited renovation of the bridge, which aims to improve safety, traffic flow and the usability of the route throughout the year. The new bridge will be completed at the end of November.

The Paper Bridge has been an important part of Vaasa's pedestrian and bicycle network for decades. However, the current condition of the bridge is poor: it slopes poorly, the pavement is cracked, and the width of 2.8 meters no longer meets modern needs.

"The new bridge will make the route significantly safer and more accessible all year round," says Samuli Huusko, Project Engineer for Walking and Cycling at the City of Vaasa. "The renovation work will also support the intensified winter maintenance that began last winter, which means that all road users have equal opportunities to use

this fast and pleasant route.

The new bridge will be 5 metres wide, which will make it possible to meet more smoothly between different user groups. At the same time, it will be prepared for the future: if the route is further developed, pedestrians and cyclists can be clearly separated into separate areas in accordance with national planning guidelines.

The bridge serves more than 700 hikers and as many cyclists daily. In addition, the route is used by recreational fishermen and other outdoor enthusiasts in the area. The upcoming construction of the workshop area in Vöyrastad will attract more and more users, which makes the improvement even more topical.

The contract applies not only to the bridge, but also to the adjacent embankment and the pavements on the pedestrian and bicycle paths will be renewed. The main contractor for the construction work is Destia Oy, which was selected for the task on the basis of a competitive procedure organised by the city. The Vaasa Urban Environment

Committee approved Destia's offer of 312,300 euros in June.

The project has also been granted discretionary government grants: the EUR 140,000 received by the Ministry of Transport and Communications from the Ministry of Transport and Communications' programme for the promotion of walking and cycling covers almost half of the costs.

During the construction period, pedestrians will use alternative routes around Edvik. The City of Vaasa encourages you to reserve a little more time for exercise and to monitor any additional information on the progress of the work.

The renewal of the Paper Bridge is a concrete example of how Vaasa is investing in sustainable and user-friendly mobility – step by step towards a smoother, safer and greener everyday life.

CAPTION: Currently, the Paper Bridge is 2.8 meters wide. The width of the new bridge will be 5 meters. Photo: Veera Röyttä / City of Vaasa

NEWS

VAASA

Lifti's winter timetables will enter into force tomorrow – and residents' opinions will be surveyed



THE WINTER TIMETABLES of Lifti public transport in Vaasa and Korsholm will enter into force on Monday 4.8.2025. The new timetables will be in use until spring 31.5.2026, and they will bring changes to several routes. The changes have been made to improve the flow of traffic and scheduling, and they are based on both operators' assessments and passenger

feedback.

Main changes in the lines Due to the winter timetables, the changes will affect several routes. On tram 2, the departure times have been harmonised so that they will be either 15 or 45 minutes over. On tram 7, departure times will be shifted by a few minutes, while tram 12 has been extended to run from Länssinuitto to Suvilahki via the city centre. Bus 12 will have seven departures in

both directions on weekdays.

Minor adjustments will also be made to the timetables of route 30. The call times introduced for service buses in the summer will continue over the winter, and the call time of service bus 2 has been specified for 3.15–16.00.

All new timetables and route information are available on Lifti's website, where you can also find information about possible exceptions.

Customer survey opens – an opportunity to influence the development of public transport At the same time as the new timetables come into force, the residents of Vaasa and Korsholm are once again asked to share their opinions on Lifti's public transport operations. The annual customer survey will open on 28 July, and it will be used to collect valuable feedback for the development of public transport.

The survey focuses on passengers' experiences of various services, such as the reliability of timetables, the cleanliness of buses, customer service and the clarity of journey planners. The structure of the survey remains similar to the previous one, which makes it possible to compare the results with previous years.

The participation of children under the age of 15 in the survey is considered particularly important. Their views are also important in the implementation of the Child-Friendly Municipality project.

"Everyone's answer matters. The results of the survey will be used directly in the development of public transport services, so we hope that there will be a lot of participation from different age groups," says Lifti's Communications Manager.

If you want to influence the public transport in your home region, don't leave it unanswered – the survey is open by the deadline and offers passengers a direct channel to tell about their own experiences and wishes.

VAASA

Reeds become biogas



THE CITY OF VAASA cuts reeds for the third year in a row – reeds that cause problems are now being turned into environmentally friendly energy.

In Vaasa, for the third year in a row, extensive cutting of reeds is underway at Södra Stadsfjärden. Not only does this work improve water quality and promote biodiversity, but the harvested reeds are also used as a raw material for biogas production. The mowing will continue until the end of October.

Reed cutting offers several advantages

During the summer, reeds have been cut in several places in Vaasa, including the Old Vaasa Canal, Sunnanvik, Kuuslinna and Metlahti. During August and autumn, the work will focus on the nature conservation area in Södra Stadsfjärden, where the birds' nesting season is now over.

"There is a lot of reed growing in Etelä-

inenfjärden, and by cutting it, we improve water circulation," says project coordinator Simo Marttila.

The area is one of the city's most important recreational sites, but it is also affected by eutrophication and land uplift. Reed cutting reduces the nutrient supply to the water, which in turn reduces the risk of algal blooms and oxygen deficiency that can damage the fish stock.

From problems to biogas

Instead of more expensive dredging, mowing is now used as a more cost-effective method. The harvested reeds are sent to Stormossen, where they are crushed and digested to be converted into biogas. This biogas is then used as vehicle fuel, including in Lifti's buses.

"The City of Vaasa's goal is to increase the use of local raw materials in biogas production," Marttila says.

The project also supports the city's ambition to become carbon neutral in the 2020s and fits perfectly with Vaasa's designation as a European Green Leaf city in 2026 – an award given to cities that actively work for sustainable development.

Challenges and future plans

The land uplift causes the beaches to become shallower and increasingly covered with reeds, which requires continuous maintenance. To make the work more efficient, better methods and equipment are now being investigated.

"Our current flat-bottomed boat does not reach the shallowest areas, so we cannot cut all the reeds," Marttila explains.

To solve this, Jami-Matti Aho investigates different investment options for more customized equipment in his degree project. In addition, the transport chains to Stormossen and the storage facilities for the reeds are improved.

The project will run until 31.10.2025, after which the city's decision-makers will assess whether further investments in reed management are profitable.

By turning a natural problem into a resource, Vaasa is showing the way for sustainable urban development – where reeds are no longer a nuisance, but part of the green transition.

Source: City of Vaasa Photo: Veera Röyttä / City of Vaasa

NEWS

DIY BUILDERS

Good to remember if you want to build a warehouse! A reminder for DIY builders



SUMMER IS THE PERFECT time for construction projects, but be sure to check the rules before you start building – especially if your plot is close to a road! Although the new Building Act (2025) facilitated the permit practice for small buildings, a separate permit from the ELY Centre is still required for construction in a protected area on a motorway.

What is a road protection zone?

A protected area is an area adjacent to a road area where construction is restricted due to traffic safety and road maintenance. Its width depends on the type of road:

Main and main roads: 30 metres

Motorways: 50 metres

Regional roads and connecting roads: 20 metres

The distance is measured from the centre

line of the road, and nothing – not even a fence or a shed – can be built in the area without a special permit from the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment.

The reform eased the rules for small buildings

From the beginning of 2025, building permits are no longer required for warehouses, garages and saunas of less than 30 square meters, provided that they:

They are not intended for residential use.

Follow the plan and building regulations (e.g. distances to plot boundaries).

Similarly, it is now possible to erect tree canopies of less than 50 square meters without bureaucracy.

The proximity to the road? Check the permit!

If your plot borders a road, the restrictions in the protected area still apply. For instance:

You want to build a 25 square meter warehouse next to the road. According to the new law, a building permit is not required, but if the building is located in a protected

area (e.g. less than 30 metres from the centre of the motorway), you will need a special permit from the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment.

When applying for a permit, an assessment is made as to whether the construction will pose a danger to traffic or a nuisance to road maintenance. The process includes listening to the neighbours and producing a situation map (site plan).

Tips for builders

Measure the distance from the road – Is your plot part of a protected area?

Request from the ELY Centre – Confirm the requirements before you start construction.

Follow the rules – Even if you don't need a permit, distance and safety are important.

Don't let surprises slow down your summer building dreams – check the rules and enjoy a successful project!

Source: Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment of Southeast Finland

NEWS

AI MUSIC

The Best AI Music Generators in 2025 – From Rap Beats to Opera Masterpieces



Imagine a 16-year-old aspiring rapper who wants to craft the next viral hit but doesn't know how to produce beats. Or a retired music teacher dreaming of composing an opera but lacking the technical skills. Maybe even a podcaster looking for the perfect background track without paying expensive licensing fees.

In 2025, AI music generators have become so advanced that they can turn anyone—regardless of musical training—into a composer.

But with so many options available, which AI tools truly stand out? We tested the top platforms to find the best AI music generators of 2025, catering to different needs, genres, and skill levels.

Suno AI 3.0 – The King of AI-Generated Songs

Suno AI made waves in 2024 with its ability to generate full songs—lyrics, vocals, and instrumentals—from simple text prompts. In 2025, Suno AI 3.0 has refined its algorithms to produce even more natural-sounding vocals and genre-specific compositions.

Best for: Aspiring singers, songwriters,

and content creators.

Why it's great: Type in a prompt like "upbeat pop-punk song about summer love", and Suno generates a complete track in seconds

Perfect for: Our teen rapper who just typed "hard-hitting trap beat with aggressive flow" and got a studio-quality demo in minutes.

Udio Pro – The Ultimate AI Music Collaboration Tool

Udio took a different approach by focusing on human-AI collaboration. Its 2025 "Pro" version lets users start with a melody, hum a tune, or even upload a rough recording, which the AI then refines into a polished track.

Best for: Musicians who want AI assistance rather than full automation.

Why it's great: Udio Pro's "Smart Remix" feature can transform a simple piano riff into a full orchestral arrangement or a synth-heavy EDM drop.

Perfect for: Our opera-loving senior, who hummed an aria idea and watched Udio turn it into a sweeping, orchestrated piece complete with synthetic operatic vocals.

AIVA 4.0 – The Classical and Film

Score Specialist

While many AI tools focus on pop and electronic music, AIVA 4.0 remains the go-to for classical, jazz, and cinematic compositions. It's used by indie filmmakers, game developers, and even professional composers for inspiration.

Best for: Composers, filmmakers, and game devs.

Why it's great: AIVA's "Emotion Engine" lets users adjust the mood of a piece (e.g., "more melancholic" or "heroic climax"), making it ideal for scoring scenes.

The Future of AI Music?

While AI music tools still can't fully replace human creativity, they've become indispensable assistants—helping beginners create professional-sounding tracks and giving experts new ways to experiment.

The best part? Most of these tools offer free tiers, so anyone can start composing today. Whether you're a teen rapper, a retired opera enthusiast, or just someone who loves making music, 2025's AI music generators have something for you.

NEWS

ETYK

The Helsinki Spirits Ten Principles - And Russia Now



THE HELSINKI ACCORDS, signed in 1975, were a landmark achievement of Cold War diplomacy, establishing a set of ten principles to guide relations among participating states. These principles, while not legally binding, were intended to create a framework for peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

They were a cornerstone of the

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the predecessor to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The very spirit of the Accords, often referred to as "The Helsinki Spirit," was a commitment to dialogue, respect for sovereignty, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The ten principles are:

Sovereign equality: All states are equal and possess the same rights.

Refraining from the threat or use of force: States should not use or threaten to use force against each other.

Inviolability of frontiers: Existing borders between states should be respected.

Territorial integrity of states: Each state's territory should be respected and protected.

Peaceful settlement of disputes: Conflicts should be resolved through peaceful means.

Non-intervention in internal affairs: No state should interfere in the

internal affairs of another.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms: This includes freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief.

Equal rights and self-determination of peoples: All peoples have the right to determine their own political status.

Cooperation among States: States should cooperate in various fields.

Fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law: States should uphold their commitments under international law.

The significance of these principles was twofold: they provided a basis for dialogue between two opposing blocs and, crucially, they opened a space for human rights activists and dissidents in the Soviet bloc to demand accountability from their governments.

Russia's Actions: A Systematic Violation

The actions of the Russian Federation since its invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and especially its full-scale invasion in 2022 represent a systematic and comprehensive rejection of every single one of these ten principles.

Sovereign equality and non-intervention: By invading Ukraine, Russia has not only denied Ukraine's sovereign equality but has actively intervened in its internal affairs, seeking to dictate its political future and territorial boundaries. The very act of invasion is a negation of these principles.

Refraining from the threat or use of force: The use of military force on a massive scale is the most flagrant violation of this principle. Russia's aggression is a direct and unprovoked war of choice.

Inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity: The illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, and later the proclaimed annexation of the Donbas, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions, are direct assaults on

Ukraine's territorial integrity and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. These actions are a direct challenge to the post-war European order that the Helsinki Accords sought to solidify.

Peaceful settlement of disputes: Russia's choice to resolve its grievances with Ukraine through military force, rather than diplomatic channels, is a rejection of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Respect for human rights and freedoms: The war has been accompanied by a litany of human rights abuses, including war crimes, targeted attacks on civilians, and the forced deportation of Ukrainian citizens. This stands in stark contrast to the human rights commitments of the Accords.

Equal rights and self-determination: Russia's stated goal of preventing Ukraine from aligning with Western institutions and its denial of Ukraine's distinct national identity directly undermine the principle of self-determination.

Cooperation among states: Russia's actions have destroyed the possibility of meaningful cooperation with many European nations, leading to a new era of confrontation and mistrust.

Fulfillment of international obligations: Russia has not only violated the Helsinki Accords but also numerous other international laws and agreements, including the UN Charter and the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, which guaranteed Ukraine's territorial integrity.

The juxtaposition of the Helsinki+50 conference and the simultaneous, deadly Russian bombing of Kyiv is not merely ironic; it is a profound and tragic demonstration of the failure of the "Helsinki Spirit" to restrain a determined aggressor.

The conference, intended to celebrate a half-century of a diplomatic achievement, was held in the shadow of its total and complete

violation. The presence of Russian and Belarusian delegates at such an event, even in a limited capacity, raises serious questions. While the argument for continued dialogue is often made, one must ask: what is the purpose of dialogue with a state that has shown such open contempt for the very principles upon which that dialogue is based? To invite a representative of a state actively engaged in a war of aggression is not a sign of diplomatic pragmatism; it risks normalizing and legitimizing that aggression. It creates a dangerous illusion that the international order, and the institutions designed to protect it, are functioning as intended, when in reality, they are under a direct and unprecedented assault.

The bombing of Kyiv during the conference

The Helsinki Accords were not just a list of principles; they were a collective act of will, a shared commitment to building a more secure and humane Europe. Russia's actions demonstrate that this shared commitment has been unilaterally abandoned. The bombing of Kyiv during the conference serves as a brutal and undeniable statement from Moscow: the "Helsinki Spirits" are, for them, nothing more than empty words on a piece of paper, to be ignored and even mocked with deadly force. The conference, therefore, becomes not a celebration of a legacy, but a wake for a lost ideal.

Image: President Leonid Brezhnev after signing the Helsinki agreement in 1975. Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Helene Schjerfbeck

10.7.1862, Helsinki

23.1.1946, Saltsjöbaden, Ruotsi

Lärarinnan, 1933

EVENTS

UMEÅ WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM

IN THE SECRET SERVICE OF THE KINGDOM

4.5 - 20.8.2025

Meet the women in the Swedish intelligence service during World War II. Hotel cleaners, cleaners and secretaries are recruited to the Swedish intelligence service. They secretly act as informants, couriers, or infiltrators. Others are employees of the Postal Service, the Telephone Control, or the Defense Staff's cryptography department to write, decipher, translate, and search through letters and calls about suspicious things."

<https://www.kvinnohistoriskt.se/>

EVENING MUSIC

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

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

Classical evening music on Wednesdays from 4.6.25 at 19.30

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

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

WASA FUTURE FESTIVAL

11-16.8.2025

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

This event gathers knowledgeable and motivated individuals from the business world, universities, regional decision-making bodies.

and ministerial corps to focus on solving issues in Vaasa and across Finland. The event can be followed on Wasa Future Festival YouTube channel.

Wasa Innovation Center

Gerbyntie 18

65230 Vaasa

<https://wasafuturefestival.fi/>

Butterfly Exhibition

12-31 August 2025 as part of Wasa Future Festival

Butterfly Symposium 12.8.2025

Butterfly is an international interactive exhibition on new media and performance art, which is a collaboration between the University of Vaasa, Deak University, Umeå University and the University of Tampere, and which is part of the program of the Wasa Future Festival (11-16.8.2025) as well as a related program (symposium

and program for school children).

<https://sites.uwasa.fi/butterfly/>



NIGHT OF THE ARTS

14.8.2025

"Toivottavasti näemme taas ensi vuoden Taiteiden yössä"

<https://www.vaasa.fi/koe-ja-nae/kulttuurivaasassa-ja-seudulla/taiteiden-yo/>

KOKKOLA SKI CHAMBER – KOKKOLA AUTUMN CHAMBER

August 2025 & 2026

www.kokkolansyyskamari.com

VAASA CITY THEATRE

PIAF

Premiere 11.9.2025 AT 6 PM

Romeo Hall

"In September 2025, the musical play Piau – I Don't Regret Anything will premiere on the Romeo stage of the Vaasa City Theatre, which tells the unique and multi-stage life story of Édith Piaf, who rose to world fame from the streets of Paris."

The role of Piaf is interpreted by theatre actress Sonja Halla-aho.

<https://www.netticket.fi/piaf-vaasa>

Jorma Panula - Conductor Course Concert

19.9.2025 at 6 pm

Vaasa City Hall

In cooperation with Panula Academy.

Vaasa City Orchestra

cond. Students of the conducting course

"Over the decades, Jorma Panula's courses in Vaasa have seen both future world stars in the world of conducting and pedagogues doing important basic work. Maestro Panula, who has an enormous amount of experience, finds the essence in music, and the popularity of the courses shows that he also knows how to pass it on to his students. In the final concert of the

conducting course, we will put the lessons learned during the week to full use!"

Las Vegas

2.10.2025 at 6 pm

Vaasa City Orchestra

cond. Antti Rissanen

sol. Juki Välipakka & Chiara Orlandi

Come Fly With Me, Fly Me to the Moon, My Way, I want to be Loved by You....

<https://www.vaasa.fi/koe-ja-nae/kulttuurivaasassa-ja-seudulla/vaasan-kaupunginorkesteri/las-vegas/>

VAASA CITY THEATRE

UNNECESSARY PEOPLE

Premiere 23.10.2025 AT 7 PM

Juliet Hall

One of the most influential dramas in Finnish playwriting.

<https://www.netticket.fi/tarpeettomia-ihmisia-vaasa>

VAASA CITY THEATRE

FOREVER YOUNG

Premiere 31.10.2025 AT 7 PM

Romeo Hall

"Forever Young is a joyful musical comedy full of vibrant joy. As we get older, do we get old? Or are we always forever young?"

<https://www.netticket.fi/ikuisesti-nuori-vaasa>

VAASA LITTFEST 2025

13.-15.11.2025.

Vaasa LittFest is a bilingual literary festival that has been held in Vaasa since 2001. The festival offers in-depth discussions that open up important themes and ideas. This year's theme is Border(s), in-depth days of literature have been promised!

vaasa.fi/littfest

KÄLKKÄBRA Kokkola Opera Festival

14-16.11.25

"From people to people and opera for opera's sake"

www.kpkamariooppera.fi

RUSK

18-22.11.2025

Chamber music at Jakbostad

Artistic Director

Anna-Maria Helsing

Composer of the Year

Dobrikna Tabakova

www.ruskfestival.fi

BEATLES GOES KOKKOLA

Snellman Hall, Kokkola

21.11.2025 at 6 pm

Vaasa City Orchestra

cond. Jussi Lampela

Markku Veijalainen, presenter

"The Vaasa City Orchestra will visit Kokkola with its popular Beatles programme together with Markku Veijalainen, who

ГЕЛЬСІНСЬКИЙ ДУХ

Десять принципів гельсінських духів - і Росія зараз



In Ukrainian

Гельсінські угоди, підписані в 1975 році, стали визначним досягненням дипломатії часів холодної війни, встановивши набір з десяти принципів, якими керувалися відносини між державами-учасниками.

Ці принципи, хоча й не є юридично обов'язковими, мали на меті створити рамки для мирного співіснування та співпраці. Вони стали наріжним каменем Наради з

безпеки і співробітництва в Європі (НБСЄ), попередниці Організації з безпеки і співробітництва в Європі (ОБСЄ). Сам дух угод, який часто називають «Гельсінським духом», полягав у прихильності до діалогу, поваги до суверенітету та мирного вирішення спорів.

Десять принципів:

Суверенна рівність: всі держави рівні і володіють однаковими правами.

Утримання від погрози силою або її застосування: держави не повинні застосовувати або погрожувати застосуванням сили

одна проти одної.

Непорушність кордонів: Необхідно поважати існуючі кордони між державами.

Територіальна цілісність держав: територія кожної держави повинна поважатися і захищатися.

Мирне врегулювання спорів: Конфлікти повинні вирішуватися мирними засобами.

Невтручання у внутрішні справи: Жодна держава не повинна втручатися у внутрішні справи іншої.

Повага до прав людини та основних свобод: це включає

свободу думки, совісті, релігії та переконань.

Рівні права і самовизначення народів: всі народи мають право визначати свій політичний статус.

Співробітництво між державами: держави повинні співпрацювати в різних сферах.

Добросовісне виконання зобов'язань за міжнародним правом: держави повинні дотримуватися своїх зобов'язань за міжнародним правом.

Значення цих принципів було подвійним: вони забезпечили основу для діалогу між двома протиборчими блоками і, що найважливіше, відкрили простір для правозахисників і дисидентів у радянському блоці, щоб вимагати від своїх урядів підзвітності.

Дії Росії: систематичне порушення

Дії Російської Федерації з моменту її вторгнення в Україну у 2014 році та особливо повномасштабного вторгнення у 2022 році є систематичною та всеосяжною відмовою від кожного з цих десяти принципів.

Суверенна рівність і невтручання: Вторгнувшись в Україну, Росія не лише заперечує суверенну рівність України, але й активно втручається в її внутрішні справи, намагаючись диктувати своє політичне майбутнє та територіальні кордони. Сам акт вторгнення є запереченням цих принципів.

Утримання від погрози силою або її застосування: Масове застосування військової сили є найбільш кричущим порушенням цього принципу. Агресія Росії – це пряма і неспровокована війна за власним вибором.

Непорушність кордонів та територіальна цілісність: Незаконна анексія Криму у 2014 році, а згодом і проголошена анексія Донбасу, Херсонської та Запорізької областей

є прямим посяганням на територіальну цілісність України та непорушність її міжнародно визнаних кордонів. Ці дії є прямим викликом післявоєнному європейському порядку, який Гельсінські угоди прагнули зміцнити.

Мирне врегулювання спорів: вибір Росії вирішити свої претензії до України за допомогою військової сили, а не дипломатичних каналів, є відмовою від мирного врегулювання суперечок.

Повага до прав і свобод людини: Війна супроводжується низкою порушень прав людини, включаючи воєнні злочини, цілеспрямовані напади на цивільне населення та примусову депортацію громадян України. Це різко контрастує із зобов'язаннями щодо прав людини, що випливають з Угод.

Рівні права та самовизначення: заявлена Росією мета не допустити приєднання України до західних інститутів та заперечення особливої національної ідентичності України безпосередньо підривають принцип самовизначення.

Співпраця між державами: дії Росії знищили можливість значущої співпраці з багатьма європейськими країнами, що призвело до нової ери конфронтації та недовіри.

Виконання міжнародних зобов'язань: Росія порушила не лише Гельсінські угоди, а й численні інші міжнародні закони та угоди, зокрема Статут ООН та Будапештський меморандум 1994 року, які гарантували територіальну цілісність України.

Зіставлення конференції «Гельсінкі+50» та одночасного смертоносного російського бомбардування Києва не є просто іронічним; це глибока і трагічна демонстрація неспроможності «Гельсінського духу» стримати

рішучого агресора.

Конференція, покликана відзначити півстолітнє дипломатичне досягнення, проходила в тіні його тотального і повного порушення. Присутність російських і білоруських делегатів на такому заході, навіть в обмеженій кількості, викликає серйозні питання. Хоча аргументи на користь продовження діалогу часто наводяться, слід запитати: яка мета діалогу з державою, яка продемонструвала таку відкриту зневагу до самих принципів, на яких цей діалог ґрунтується? Запрошувати представника держави, яка бере активну участь у загарбницькій війні, не є ознакою дипломатичного прагматизму; Це ризикує нормалізувати та легітимізувати цю агресію. Це створює небезпечну ілюзію, що міжнародний порядок та інституції, покликані його захищати, функціонують так, як задумано, тоді як насправді вони зазнають прямого та безпрецедентного нападу.

Гельсінські угоди були не просто переліком принципів; вони були колективним актом волі, спільним зобов'язанням побудувати більш безпечну та гуманну Європу. Дії Росії свідчать про те, що від цього спільного зобов'язання відмовилися в односторонньому порядку. Бомбардування Києва під час конференції слугує брутальною і незаперечною заявою з Москви: «гельсінські духи» для них – це не більше ніж порожні слова на аркуші паперу, які можна ігнорувати і навіть висміювати зі смертоносною силою. Тому конференція стає не святкуванням спадщини, а поминком за втраченим ідеалом.

Зображення: Президент Леонід Брежнєв після підписання Гельсінської угоди в 1975 році. Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

THE GREAT FIRE OF VAASA

The Great Fire of Vaasa in 1852

Looking back fifty years later – originally published in the magazine Brandluren in 1902, now in modern English.

Few towns in Finland have been spared from the ravages of fire, and among the worst disasters stands the great fire of Vaasa, which occurred fifty years ago. We believe readers will find the following account—originally published in the press of that time—both interesting and moving:

Hardly had the smoke from the great fire in Pori cleared* when another, equally dreadful calamity struck and wiped out yet another thriving Finnish town. On Tuesday, August 3, 1852, the weather was hot and cloudless. A light southwesterly breeze, growing stronger as the day went on, swept through the town when a fire broke out shortly before 10 a.m. in the two-storey wooden house of Councillor Aurén on Kauppakatu—right in the town's most densely built block, surrounded by similar wooden houses. The fire began when a maid attempted to smoke flies out of the cowshed by throwing glowing bricks into an empty tar barrel, which caught fire. In panic, she carried the burning barrel outside, placing it among hay and old baskets—materials that ignited instantly.

That summer was unusually dry and hot. Forest fires raged over a vast area, from Vöyri in the north to Kristiinankaupunki in the south. As soon as the fire began in Vaasa, people feared that the entire downwind part of the town was lost. Water was scarce—most wells had dried up. All efforts to extinguish the fire were in vain. The flames advanced rapidly, consuming the homes of Borgenström and Mannelin, the Hägglund and Vaakman houses (on the current site of the Exchange Bank), and the residence of merchant Wolff, the church, and the entire neighborhood.

The fire spread with terrifying speed and ferocity, moving not only in the direction of the wind but also against it and sideways. By 7 p.m., virtually all of Vaasa had been reduced to ashes, except for the county hospital, the prison, the Orthodox church, and a few buildings south of the Court of Appeal park. The Court of Appeal building—the town's pride, built during the reign of Gustav III—survived.

The following notable buildings were destroyed: the town hall, the Exchange Bank, the upper secondary school and its associated institutions, the real school, the beautiful church (although the altarpiece was saved), the Society House, and the governor's office (then

located in the Eoschier residence), where the archives were lost, along with the records of the town council and the schools. Only a small portion of the school library and its collections was saved. Vast quantities of personal property vanished—inside houses, on streets, in carts, during rescue attempts and looting. The government granary remained standing. But major commercial stockpiles, cash, accounting books, the contents of the bookshop, and much of the printing press's inventory were lost.

Three deaths were recorded: a Russian barber, a laborer, and an elderly woman. Several soldiers went missing. The chaos was overwhelming—but so too were the selflessness, helpfulness, and patriotic spirit that arose. Aid poured in from all directions—especially food supplies.

Vaasa was left desolate. The destruction was so complete that barely any timber remained standing. Smoke continued to rise from the soil, from moss and debris. Hundreds of scorched chimneys stood like gravestones in a cemetery of a once-thriving town—a sight not soon forgotten. Most of the population fled. Only a tenth of the former inhabitants remained. The rest took refuge in Palosaari and the surrounding countryside.

God and the compassion of the people, may they help poor Vaasa!

Another contemporary writer remarked:

“In the twelve years that had passed since the destruction of Hamina, Finland had grown complacent. Each year, as the fire insurance companies reported rising profits and only a few thousand rubles paid in damages, people began to believe that modern building regulations and improved fire protection had made our towns safe. Cities almost forgot the danger entirely, and the early enthusiasm for organized fire brigades had faded.

Then nature gave us a warning and destroyed Pori. A terrible misfortune, people said—but a rare one, they added. Only an extraordinary combination of factors could cause such a disaster, believed those who had the greatest faith in modernity.

But God gave a second sign. Two months and twelve days after the fall of Pori, disaster struck Vaasa. In broad daylight, in the middle of a workday, at the busiest hour of town life, the red bird (fire) landed on a quiet rooftop. Nine hours later, Old Vaasa—a town that had never burned before—was nothing but a smoking ruin.



Det första fotografiet i Finland hade tagits tio år tidigare men det fanns säkerligen inga kameror i Vasa denna ödesdigra dag. De första färgfotografierna togs först på 1940-talet. De bilder som här finns publicerade är rekonstruktioner för hur det kunde se ut i Vasa den 3 augusti år 1852, gjorda av AI.

Ensimmäinen valokuva Suomessa oli otettu kymmenen vuotta aiemmin, mutta Vaasassa ei tuona kohtalokkaana päivänä varmasti ollut kameroita. Ensimmäiset värivalokuvat otettiin vasta 1940-luvulla.

Tässä julkaistut kuvat ovat tekoälyn tekemiä rekonstruktioita siitä, miltä Vaasa on saattanut näyttää 3. elokuuta 1852.

The first photograph in Finland had been taken ten years earlier, but there were certainly no cameras in Vaasa on that fateful day. The first color photographs were not taken until the 1940s. The images published here are reconstructions of what Vaasa might have looked like on August 3, 1852, made by AI.

HISTORY

VAASA CITY FIRE ON AUG 3, 1852

Pali-Maja and the poem about the fire in the city of Wasa

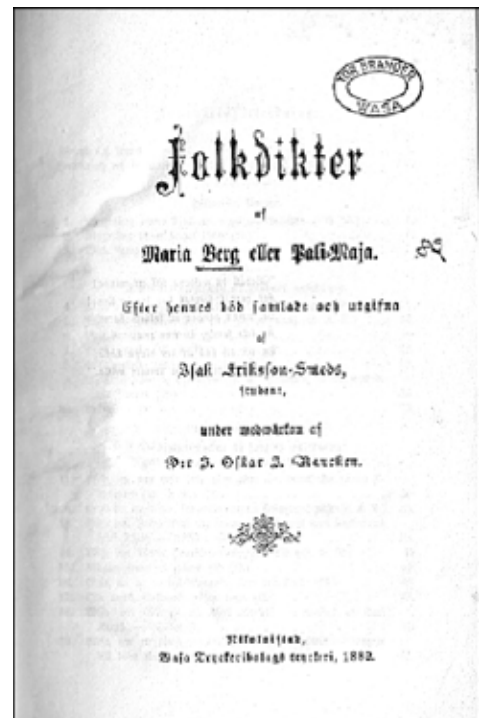


According to hER, fire was God's punishment for the sins of humanity—and many of his contemporaries, including priests, probably agreed.

Marie Johansdotter Berg, known by her pseudonym Pali-Maja, was born on 10 December 1784 in Pali, a farm group on Österlandsvägen in Pörtom. Her father, Johan Hansson Uppgård, had moved to Pörtom from Pjelax in Närpes, after he married Maria Greta Uppgård and thus became the owner of half of a homestead called Uppgård. When the homestead was changed, the family had to move to a meadow called Pala or Pali, a name that lives on to this day. The family had 14 children, 9 of whom survived to adulthood. Isak Smeds tells about the family in the book of poems published in 1882: "All the children were endowed with a wise head and a happy disposition to learn everything that came to their minds."

She died on 11 October 1867 in Närpes. In her time, she was the most prolific female poet in our country.

In her time, she was one of the most respected people in the Närpes area. In 1882 a book was published con-



taining the poems that had been found and in the preface to it, lecturer Isak Smeds from Petalax writes: "The poetess, whose songs are undoubtedly most commonly sung throughout Ostrobothnia and whom I heard in my childhood in my homeland with such great admiration and respect."

Pali-Maj must have been very talented, because already at the age of 18 she became a "schoolmaster" and in that role she was responsible for the education of children in many villages in Närpes. Already at the age of 18 she started writing poems. As a 20-year-old, she visited Stockholm, a trip that went by boat from Närpes. Her fellow travellers are said to have described her as a "songbird".

Vaasa fire and the people's lamentation

One of Palis-Maja's most famous poems is about the great Vasa fire on 3 August 1852, when almost the entire city was destroyed by fire. The fire is one of Finland's largest city fires, and over 2500 people were left homeless. Several died, entire neighborhoods were reduced to ashes and churches and schools were destroyed. She wrote the poem to comfort all those who have been left homeless because of the terrible fire

Palis-Maja's poem about this event, "The Fire of Wasa City", is a unique document of the time. In strong religious images, she describes the despair of people, children fleeing from the fire, church bells falling, and a city punished by an angry God. Pali-Maja was deeply aware of the sinful life that was led in Vaasa before the fire. Entertainment flourished, taverns were plentiful, dances were arranged one after another, travelling theatre companies delighted the townspeople. According to her, the fire was God's punishment for the sins of mankind – and many of her contemporaries, including the clergy, were probably of the same opinion.

At the same time, she appeals to God's mercy, calls for repentance and solidarity with those in need. It is a poem that both mourns and exhorts – it is as much intercession as the collective lament of the people.

Here is Pali-Maja's poem about the fire in the city of Vaasa:

My God, the source of all that's good,
I fall with humble heart to you.
Let all my sighs be understood—
I pray in Jesus' name, so true.
O Holy Spirit, plead for me,
That I in prayer heard may be.

I pray for those, so crushed and poor,
In Vasa's city, burned and lost.

O Father, show your grace once more,
And turn their grief to joy, no cost.
Your stream of mercy flows again,
From heaven's heights to broken men.

I seem to hear the bitter cries,
The weeping rising from each soul.
As flames devoured the darkened skies,
Despair took hold and stole control.
No time remained for prayer or flight,
As hope was lost in fire and night.

The little ones who just could walk
Were snatched from fire's fierce advance.
The sleeping babes no time to talk—
They fled in fear with not a chance.
Their cribs replaced by earth and sky,
The only shelter left nearby.

Vasa stads brand.

Rönnmältigast efter Smeds' uppteckning. I Rändens samling finnas två varianter, som sakna någon strof: den ena upptecknad af rektor A. G. J. Hallström, den andra af dåvarande lyceisten J. Dahlb.

Utgåes som No 288 i gta hv. psalmb.: "Min hjärt och sinne" m. m.

Min Gud, min Gud, all godhetskälla,
jag faller ödmjukt i din samn;
låt mina suckar för dig gälla,
dem jag frambär i Jesu namn!
o, Helge Ande, för mig be',
Så vinner jag bönhörelse.

Jag beder för de usla, arma
i nys förbrända Vasa stad.
O, Fader, nådigt dig förbarma,
gör dessa sorgsna åter glad!
Din godhets källa flödar än
af nåde ifrån himmelen.

Älsk tycks, jag hör den bittra qvida,
den gråt och låt af hvarje man,
hur mången der fick händer wrida,
när staden stod i eld och brand,
när godsats frälsning war förment
och rop till Herren war för sent.

The old with silver in their hair
Had never seen such dreadful pain.
The fire consumed without a care—
And many lives it sought to claim.
Those who would save both wealth and breath
Were taken by the fire to death.

There rose a cry on every side—
From human lips and creatures' moan.
In helpless grief they testified,
Though guilt was not the beasts' alone.



They suffered for the sins of man
Against the holy, just God's plan.

No force could stop the fire's spread,
It raced with fury, none could tame.
All human effort fell and bled—
A day of loss, of ash and flame.
How wretched was that fate and day
When all they had was swept away.

To see one's home in ashes lie,
To watch the walls collapse in dust,
And not to know where one might cry,
Or find a place to sleep or trust—
What pain, what sorrow words can't bear,
To know no haven anywhere.

How mournful was the ringing sound
When church bells fell and broke apart.
As if the angels wept around,
When God, in wrath, withdrew His heart.
The temple burned before their eyes,
Unshielded from the stormy skies.

O Vasa, crown of this proud land,
Who stood in beauty just before—
Have you let go of God's command,
And lived in pride He can't ignore?
For God who will not suffer pride,

Poured out His wrath, no place to hide.

Were there not five who still were just,
Whose prayers might turn the flame away?
The prayers of righteous ones are trust—
They calm the fire, they light the way.
Yes, even greater grief can bend,
When holy hearts to heaven send.

What heart does not in sorrow break
To see the children roam alone?
O God, You weep for mercy's sake—
Give them a roof, a bed, a home.
Bring shelter to the ones who weep,
And food for those who none can keep.

The heart that feels no pity here,
Nor lifts a hand to heal this pain,
Deserves no comfort, help, or cheer
When faced with hardship's own domain.
For God will meet each soul in turn—
No wealth can make His justice burn.

Now I shall end these mournful lines,
Written in tears that cloud my sight.
With heartfelt prayer my hope aligns—
To God, whose wealth is endless light:
Help all who suffer, cold and poor,
And grant them daily bread once more.

VAASA FUTURE FESTIVAL

VAASA FUTURE FESTIVAL

International Art Exhibition Makes Digital Butterfly Effects Visible in Vaasa



An exceptional art exhibition opening in Vaasa this August combines art and science to examine the real environmental impacts of digitalization. The Butterfly exhibition asks what happens to the planet when every click and ChatGPT search consumes natural resources.

The exhibition, running August 12-31, 2025 in the "Catacombs" at Wasa Innovation Center, is a joint international project between the University of Vaasa, Deakin University, Umeå University, and the University of Tampere's Games Research Lab. It is part of the Wasa Future Festival program and critically examines the development between humans and nature globally.

Technology Critiques Itself

The exhibition's central idea is paradoxical: it utilizes the same

technology it problematizes. Artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and audio data technology function both as medium and object of critique. The exhibition demonstrates how these technologies define our lives and how art can use technology to critique itself.

"The more digital we become in one area, the more significant digitalization's impact may become in another area," describes producer Elina Melgin from the University of Vaasa regarding the exhibition's starting point.

The exhibition's philosophical foundation is "ecosophy" – philosophy about the interconnection between ecological systems and human values. The concept combines "eco" (ecology) and "sophy" (wisdom) to reflect on how technological development affects the environment and people.

International Artist Group The Butterfly exhibition presents internationally recognized artists from around the world. Participants include Moa Cederberg from Finland, Jurgis

Peters from Latvia and Finland, Samuel Kujala from Finland, and a broad Australian artist group from Cameron Bishop to Spencer Rose.

Particularly interesting is the collaboration between award-winning Jack Manning Bancroft and Tyson Yunkaporta, who contribute new vocabulary to the rapidly developing digital landscape through Australian Indigenous knowledge systems.

The artists address questions about artificial intelligence, sustainability, and ecosophy, and their impacts on culture, language, society, environment, human agency, and human relationships.

Smart Industry Requires Sustainable Energy Solutions

The exhibition highlights a current challenge: industry is becoming not only digital but presumably "smart" as well. The challenge is finding sustainable energy solutions to maintain the technology that drives this intelligence. Every small click and search on

Google or ChatGPT consumes natural resources. The exhibition makes these hidden environmental impacts visible and reflects on how we can develop technology more sustainably.

Curatorial Team and Side Programming

The exhibition has been curated by an international team including Associate Professor Rebekah Rousi from the University of Vaasa, Associate Professor Toija Cinque from Deakin University in Australia, Dr. Anne Scott Wilson from Deakin University, Aska Mayer from the University of Tampere, and Associate Professor Esteban Guerrero Rosero from Umeå University in Sweden. The exhibition's architecture is handled by Lyndsey Morley from Britain and Finland together with the curatorial group.

The exhibition's side programming includes the Butterfly symposium on August 12, 2025, and programs for school children. The exhibition opening for invited guests is arranged on August 11 at 5:30-7:30 PM.

Catalog and Additional Information

An approximately 80-page art exhibition catalog will be published in July. It contains 18 artist presentations and five scientific articles. The catalog's editors are Rebekah Rousi, Toija Cinque, and Katey O'Sullivan.

The exhibition has emerged through grants and partnerships, with Wasa Innovation Center being the most significant. The exhibition is open to the public August 12-31, 2025, as part of the Wasa Future Festival at Gerbynvägen 16 in Pukinkulma, Vaasa.

CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE

Finnish Meteorological Institute: New temperature record in Finland. And it doesn't stop there.



FINLAND IS experiencing an exceptional heat wave, as the highest temperature of the summer was measured yesterday at the Hiekkapakkka observation station in Lappeenranta. At the same time, 30.3 degrees was measured in Parikkala Koitsanlahti, which today is the 14th day in a row where it has been measured above 30.0 degrees anywhere in Finland.

According to the Finnish Meteorological Institute, this is the longest period of consecutive days exceeding 30 degrees Celsius in the statistics since 1961. The record is clearly better than previous heat

waves and shows how climate change affects weather conditions in Finland.

The warm weather continues

According to the Finnish Meteorological Institute's forecasts, the heat wave will continue, and next week also looks set to start with general warmth. Warm temperatures will remain high, although thunderstorms will become more frequent as the week changes, which may provide temporary relief.

Meteorologists warn that this year's heat wave is unlikely to be unique. Climate change is causing such extreme weather phenomena to become more common in Finland.

Europe on fire

Finland is not alone in having

exceptional temperatures. In June and July 2025, Europe experienced a widespread heatwave with local temperatures exceeding 40°C, and June 2025 was the warmest June on record in Western Europe with an average temperature of 20.49°C.

According to an analysis by Imperial College London, extreme temperatures may have caused around 2,300 deaths in 10 days in the 12 cities analyzed.

Although there is no more detailed information on the current temperatures in Estonia, the country's all-time previous temperature record is 35.6°C, which is still lower than the current values in Finland.

Effects of climate change

Western Europe is currently affected by a strong

high-pressure system that damages dry air from North Africa into the region and leads to extreme heat. This has significant consequences in all areas of life, leading to increased air pollution and a high risk of forest fires.

According to meteorologists, the weather in Finland is changing permanently. Summers are getting warmer and previously rare heat waves are becoming more frequent. This 14-day heat wave is just the beginning of what can be expected in the future.

The Finnish Meteorological Institute urges residents to prepare for constant heat and to take precautions, especially when it comes to outdoor activities and physical exertion. Thundershowers may provide temporary relief, but the basic trend remains: Finland is warming.

ART

OLAVI LANU

Harmony of Nature and Art – Olavi Lanu’s Eternal Legacy in the Heart of Lahti

IN KARINIEMI, Lahti, within the deciduous forest of Kariniemenmäki, lies one of Finland’s most unique artistic experiences. The Lanu Park was built between 1989–1992 when the city of Lahti commissioned visual artist Olavi Lanu to create a total of 12 sculptures. This exceptional ensemble is more than just a sculpture park – it is the artist’s vision of the inseparable connection between art and nature.

From a Boy in Viipuri to an International Artist

Lennart Olavi Lanu, known as Olli to his friends, was born and raised in the rural municipality of Viipuri on the shores of Viipurinlahti in 1925. His youth during the wartime years profoundly shaped the future artist’s worldview. During the war, while serving in a concrete obstacle unit, he learned the secrets of concrete casting – skills that would later define his artistic expression.

As a sculptor, Lanu’s international breakthrough came at the Venice Biennale in 1978, where he presented his work “Life in Finnish Forests.” This was a pivotal moment, considered the catalyst for the artist’s entire subsequent body of work. In Venice, the world saw for the first time Lanu’s unique vision of art integrating with nature.

The Artist’s Philosophy Realized in the Park

The Olavi Lanu sculpture park is located within Kariniemi park, in the midst of nature. As the artist had planned, his works blend into the scenery. This was not accidental, but a conscious artistic choice. The artist’s goal was also that time and nature would shape the works – a concept that was radically different from traditional sculpture.

The works were completed at a rapid pace, three sculptures per year, but each was a carefully considered part of a larger whole. The sculptures were cast in



concrete at the Renkomäki gravel pit, with help from students at the Lahti Art Institute. Students were also used as models in the works – a method that brought human warmth and genuine community spirit to the pieces.

Whispers of Frogs and the Passage of Time

Over the years, the park has developed exactly as Lanu designed it. The sculptures have become moss-covered and merged with nature over the years, as the artist wished. In Lanu Park, moss is allowed to grow on the sculptures, making them a living part of the forest environment.

Lanu's themes are his pairs of humanoid figures embracing or kissing, or natural forms such as rocks, willows, and twisted trees. The works reflect love, togetherness, and the power of nature – themes that touch every visitor. In winter, the snow-covered sculptures blend into and become part of the surrounding landscape, creating its own atmosphere for each season.

International Recognition and Local Pride

Lanu has been awarded the title of professor, Lahti Person of the Year (1987), the Pro Finlandia Medal, and numerous awards both in Finland and abroad. He is one of the most internationally recognized artists in all of Finland, yet deeply rooted in Lahti.

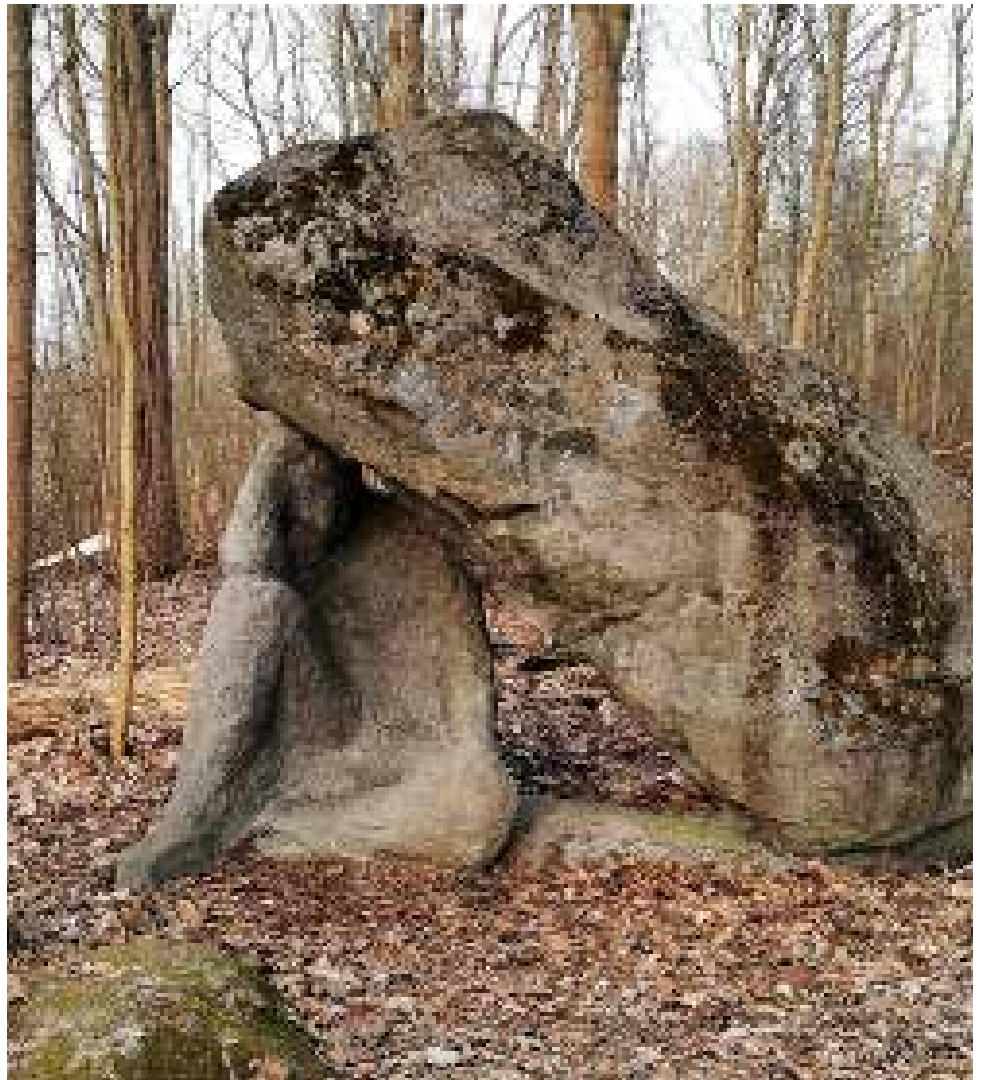
One of Lahti's sources of pride is the Lanu Park located in Kariniemi, where twelve large sculptures together with the surrounding nature form a harmonious whole. It is not just an attraction, but a place that invites reflection on humanity's relationship with nature and time.

A Living Legacy

This year marks one hundred years since Olavi Lanu's birth (1925–2015), and his legacy lives stronger than ever. He mentioned cycling and moving in nature as his favorite hobbies – values that are clearly visible in his art.

Lanu Park is proof of how art can enrich the urban environment and create meaningful experiences. It is a place where every visitor can find their own interpretation of the artist's vision – a vision where nature and humanity, time

and eternity, the search for beauty and its discovery unite into a harmonious whole.



WORLD ECOLOGY

GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

Earth Hits Breaking Point Earlier Than Ever



THE CLOCK RUNS out. Earth Overshoot Day fell on July 24th this year – the earliest date humanity has ever burned through the planet’s annual resources. From here on, we’re stealing from tomorrow.

The math is brutal. Humanity uses nature 1.8 times faster than Earth’s ecosystems can regenerate. We’re strip-mining the future, and the bill keeps growing.

This isn’t some distant crisis. Overshoot drives the chaos we see every day – biodiversity collapse, extreme weather, food shortages, conflicts over dwindling resources. The damage compounds. Every year we run a deficit, the debt gets deeper.

Even as this year’s Earth Overshoot Day is the earliest ever, it has remained within a narrow window for over 15 years. The date holds steady while the pressure builds. We’re maxed out, running on fumes, depleting what’s left.

The market broke. That’s the cold truth. From an economic perspective, overshoot is a clear example of market failure. Resources get underpriced. Overuse gets rewarded. The system cannibalizes itself.

Cities burn through resources. Energy systems leak waste. Food chains collapse under pressure. Population grows while the planet shrinks. The biosphere bleeds out.

But here’s the kicker – solutions exist. They’re profitable. Cutting CO2 emissions from fossil fuels by 50% would move the date by three months. Technologies that restore balance make money as they scale.

Smart money sees what’s coming. Companies that reverse overshoot position themselves for a resource-constrained future. The writing’s on the wall.

“We are stretching the limits of how much ecological damage we can get away with,” warns Dr. Lewis Akenji from Global Footprint Network. “We owe the planet at least 22 years of ecological regeneration, even if we stop any further damage now.”

The choice cuts sharp. Dr. Mathis Wackernagel, who tracks these numbers, puts it plain: “Overshoot cannot last. It will end either by deliberate design or dumped-on disaster.”

Design or disaster. Fix the market or watch it collapse.

The carbon footprint alone devours 61 percent of humanity’s ecological budget. We’re burning the house down for heating fuel.

Countries, cities, companies – whoever adapts first survives what’s coming. The unprepared face catastrophic risk. Resource security becomes the new currency. Access to clean water, fertile soil, stable climate – these determine who thrives and who falls.

The debt clock ticks. Every day past July 24th, we borrow more from a planet that’s already overdrawn. The interest compounds. The damage spreads.

But tomorrow’s decisions still matter. Technology exists to flip the script. Investment flows toward solutions. Political will can shift overnight when survival’s on the line.

The question isn’t whether overshoot ends. Physics guarantees it will.

The question is whether we choose the ending – or let it choose us.

ONLINE TRANSLATIONS

The Best Online Translators in 2025

In 2025, online translation tools have become more advanced than ever, offering near-human accuracy in many languages. For translations between Finnish, Swedish, and English—three languages with different linguistic roots—some AI-powered translators perform better than others. This article compares the top options available today, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses.

1. Google Translate: The Most Reliable All-Rounder

Google Translate remains one of the most widely used translation tools, supporting over 100 languages, including Finnish and Swedish. Its neural machine translation (NMT) system has improved significantly, especially for Finnish, which is a challenging language due to its complex grammar.

Pros:
Fast and free
Handles long texts well
Offers pronunciation and transliteration
Continuously updated with user corrections

Cons:
Sometimes produces awkward phrasing in Finnish
Less nuanced than some AI competitors

2. DeepSeek: The Rising AI Contender

DeepSeek has gained popularity for its high accuracy in Nordic languages. It uses advanced large language models (LLMs)

fine-tuned for Scandinavian and Finno-Ugric languages, making it a strong choice for Finnish-Swedish-English translations.

Pros:
Better context retention than Google Translate
Handles idiomatic expressions well
Free to use (as of 2025)

Cons:
Limited additional features (e.g., no speech translation)
Still improving for less common dialects

3. ChatGPT (OpenAI): Best for Contextual Accuracy

ChatGPT-4.5 (or later versions) excels in understanding context, making it ideal for translating complex sentences. Unlike traditional translators, it can adjust tone and style, which is useful for business or creative writing.

Pros:
Natural-sounding translations
Can refine outputs based on user feedback
Works well with technical and literary texts

Cons:
Requires a subscription for best performance
Slower than dedicated translation tools

4. Gemini (Google DeepMind): AI-Powered Precision

Gemini, Google's advanced AI model, integrates with Google Translate but offers deeper contextual understanding. It performs particularly well with Swedish-English translations due to extensive training data.

Pros:



Strong handling of Scandinavian languages
Can explain translations (useful for learners)
Integrates with other Google services

Cons:
Not as strong with Finnish as with Swedish
Requires internet access for full functionality

5. Claude (Anthropic): Balanced and Safe Translations

Claude focuses on providing accurate, bias-free translations, making it a good option for professional use. While not as fast as Google Translate, it avoids many common errors in Finnish grammar.

Pros:

High accuracy for formal texts
Explains translation choices
Good for business and academic use

Cons:

Limited free access
Not as optimized for casual speech

6. Opera's Aria: The Underrated Option

Aria, powered by OpenAI's models, is a free alternative built

into the Opera browser. It works well for quick translations, especially between Swedish and English, but struggles slightly with Finnish nuances.

Pros:
Free and easy to use
Browser-integrated for convenience
Decent accuracy for short texts

Cons:
Less reliable for long documents
Fewer language customization options

Verdict: Which One Should You Use?

For everyday use: Google Translate (fast, reliable, free)

For business/academic translations: ChatGPT or Claude (better context handling)

For Finnish-specific needs: DeepSeek (strongest with Finno-Ugric languages)

For Swedish-English: Gemini (most natural phrasing)

Ultimately, the best tool depends on your needs. While AI translation has come a long way, human proofreading is still recommended for critical documents.

STREETS AND SQUARES

STREETS

The Transformation of Kasarmintori Begins – Old Trees Replaced, Street Renewed



VAASA's historic Kasarmintori (Eastern Barracks Square) is facing a transformation: on Wednesday, July 30th, the renovation of the church-side section of the street will begin, renewing both the street surface and the green areas. The work will continue until the end of October, and with it, the area will gain new trees, improved water supply, and safer pedestrian areas.

Old Trees Replaced – More and Stronger Trees to Be Planted

The trees along the street have been inspected, and most of them are in poor condition. The stress caused by the groundwork would further weaken their condition, so the old trees will be

replaced with new ones.

"We decided to preemptively remove the trees in poor condition so that they don't cause hazardous situations later. More columnar maples will be planted in their place, which have better conditions to thrive," says the city's responsible person for green areas.

Only one park tree will be removed, and a new one will be planted in its place. In addition, long-lived oaks will be planted in the area, strengthening the park's vegetation for the future.

Street Works Disrupt Traffic – Parking Moves to Nearby Streets

During the work period, parking at Kasarmintori will be suspended, and motorists will be directed to use free parking spaces on nearby streets. Signs will be installed around the work area to minimize disruptions.

"We aim to complete the work as quickly and with as little disruption as possible. After the renewal, the area will be more beautiful and functional for both pedestrians and motorists," promises the project manager.

Fifth Fire Street in Renovation Cycle – Water Supply Renewed

Kasarmintori is the fifth fire street to be renovated as part of Vaasa's street network renewal project launched in recent years. This time, a key part is the improvement of water supply, which ensures a more sustainable infrastructure for the area.

"The renovation of fire streets is a long-term effort that improves the city's resilience. In the coming years, renovations will continue on other streets," says a representative of the building department.

What are the benefits of the renewal?

- ☐ Safer street – new surfaces and better maintained trees reduce risk.
- ☐ Greener environment – more trees and more diverse vegetation.
- ☐ More sustainable infrastructure – new water supply ensures longer-lasting use.

Work Schedule: ☐ July 30 – October 31, 2025 ☐ Eastern Kasarmintori (church-side section)

Parking: ☐ Nearby streets offer temporary parking options.

More information: City's construction pages Map of the work area

The new Square will soon be ready – welcome to enjoy the renewed environment!

Source: www.vaasa.fi

PHARMACY REFORM

PHARMACIES

Major Pharmacy Reform Coming – Prescription Drugs to Get Cheaper, Common Medicines to Be Sold in Stores



FINLAND'S pharmacy system is set for a major overhaul that will make prescription medications more affordable and allow select over-the-counter medicines to be sold in grocery stores. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has released a proposal for changes aimed at cutting public spending while improving medicine accessibility.

Key Changes Coming

Lower Prices for Prescription Drugs

The reform will reduce prescription medication fees, directly lowering costs for patients.

Expected to save €30 million annually in state drug reimbursement expenses.

New Tax Rules for Pharmacies

Pharmacy tax will shift from being based on revenue to profit margins.

Small pharmacies with profits under €250,000 will be exempt entirely.

Over-the-Counter Medicines in Stores

Common medications like heartburn and constipation treatments will be available outside pharmacies.

Selection will be limited to products deemed safe without pharmacist consultation.

Pharmacies Gain New Authority

Pharmacists will be allowed to correct obvious prescription errors under strict conditions.

What Happens Next?

The proposal is open for public consultation until Au-

gust 18, 2025. If approved, changes would take effect January 1, 2026.

"This reform delivers on our government program while protecting nationwide pharmacy coverage. We're making better use of pharmacists' expertise in health-care," said Minister of Social Security Sanni Grahn-Laasonen.

The ministry estimates the changes will create a more efficient, accessible and cost-effective medication system while maintaining safety standards.

INDUSTRY

WÄRTSILÄ

Wärtsilä Delivers 204 MW Power Solution to Major Mining Project in Pakistan



Finnish technology group Wärtsilä from Vaasa has signed a contract to supply a 204-megawatt power plant to the Reko Diq copper-gold mining project in Balochistan, Pakistan.

The order, placed by Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC), was recorded in Wärtsilä's second-quarter order book and marks a major step in sup-

porting one of the world's most significant untapped mining sites.

The plant, which will operate with twelve Wärtsilä 50 engines and auxiliaries, will provide reliable and economical electricity for the mining operations in a remote region of western Pakistan. Delivery of the equipment is scheduled to begin in late 2026.

"Wärtsilä's technical expertise and strong local presence in

Pakistan are highly valued. We're pleased to have them as a reliable partner in this major undertaking," said Tim Cribb, Project Director at RDMC.

The deal is structured as an engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contract, and includes advanced heat recovery systems and infrastructure for future renewable energy integration. The engines are also designed to be converted for use with alternative, more sustainable fuels — align-

ing with Wärtsilä's broader strategy to accelerate the global energy transition.

According to Alexandre Eykerman, Director of Wärtsilä Energy, the mining sector holds "some of the largest growth potential for Pakistan's economy," and projects like Reko Diq are essential to unlocking that potential.

"Pakistan has vast, underutilized reserves of copper, gold, lithium, and rare earth elements — all vital for the global green transition and technological development," Eykerman said.

The Reko Diq initiative is expected to generate significant local economic benefits, including job creation and community development investments.

Wärtsilä – Leading the Energy Transition

Headquartered in Helsinki and listed on Nasdaq Helsinki, Wärtsilä is a global leader in energy and marine technology solutions. In 2024, the company's net sales reached EUR 6.4 billion. With 18,300 employees across 77 countries, Wärtsilä focuses on innovation in sustainable energy and lifecycle services. Its energy segment alone has delivered 79 GW of power plant capacity and over 130 energy storage systems to 180 countries.

Image: Wärtsilä will provide a 204 MW power plant to the Reko Diq copper-gold mining project in Pakistan. © Reko Diq Mining Company

CLIMATE CHANGE

RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY

Kabul On Course To Be World's First Capital To Run Out Of Water



By Farangis Najibullah
Kabul could become the world's first capital to run out of water completely, experts say, blaming the crisis on rapid population growth, climate change, and mismanagement.

The Afghan capital's groundwater levels have plummeted by up to 30 meters in the past decade, while almost half of the city's boreholes -- the main source of drinking water for the residents -- have dried out, according to a recent study by the Mercy Corps NGO.

Demand for groundwater in the city is disproportionately

high: each year, 44 million cubic meters more water is extracted than can naturally be replenished -- nearly double the sustainable rate.

Kabul's population has grown from about 2 million in 2000 to more than 6 million in 2025, putting immense pressure on its water supplies.

The city's aquifers are also being drained by more than 100,000 unregulated borewells and hundreds of factories and greenhouses, according to Mercy Corps and Afghan water management experts who spoke to RFE/RL.

"Kabul has some 400 hectares of greenhouses that consume

about 4 million cubic meters of water annually," said Najibullah Sadid, a water resources and climate change researcher based in Germany. "There are also more than 500 beverage businesses operating in Kabul. Just one such company, Alokozay, the largest soft drink company in the city, uses about 1 million cubic meters of groundwater each year."

The United Nations has warned that without swift action, Kabul's groundwater could be depleted by 2030, posing an existential threat to residents and sparking a major wave of migration.

'Having To Choose Between Water And Food'

Many parts of Kabul have already run dry, and residents rely entirely on the limited amount of water they purchase from tankers.

One person who lives in the relatively affluent area of Taimani in northwestern Kabul says he spends a quarter of his salary on water.

"My monthly salary is 21,000 Afghani (\$300) and I spend at least 5,000 Afghani (\$70) on water for our family of 10 people," he told RFE/RL on June 26. "We use this water for tea, cooking, washing-up, laundry, and bathing."

"There are many families that can't afford to buy water, it's like having to choose between water and food," the Taimani resident said.

He also said that those who can't pay for water travel several kilometers to bring it from areas that have public water pumps. Even in sweltering sum-

mer weather, many apartment blocks in Kabul only get water once or twice a week.

Water contamination is another major challenge that has plagued Afghanistan, where nearly 80 percent of people have no access to safe drinking water, according to the United Nations.

Most of Kabul's groundwater is contaminated with sewage, toxins, and high levels of arsenic, experts say.

Potential Solutions

The Western-backed former Afghan government, which collapsed in 2021, received more than \$4 billion from international donors to overhaul its water sector, according to the World Bank, but the sector remains largely underdeveloped both in the capital and the rest of the country.

Officials of the current Taliban-led government in Kabul did not respond to RFE/RL's request for comment. However, many local experts believe the Afghan capital could still resolve its water crisis relatively quickly if decisive steps are taken.

"This problem is not new. For over a decade, various proposals on how to tackle the problem have been presented to Afghan authorities, but it has never been a priority for them," Sadid told RFE/

Source: <https://www.rferl.org/a/kabul-water-crisis-running-out-of-water-afghanistan-2025/33461892.html>

The text above is an excerpt.
Copyright (c)2025 RFE/RL, Inc. Used with the permission of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE

C3S: June was hot - but not in Finland



The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) has released its monthly climate bulletin revealing that June 2025 was the third-warmest June globally, but Nordic countries including Finland experienced notably different conditions compared to the scorching heat that gripped much of Europe.

Global Heat Records Continue June 2025 was the third-warmest June globally, with an average ERA5 surface air temperature of 16.46°C, 0.47°C above the 1991-2020 average for June. While this represents a slight cooling from the record-breaking June 2024, global temperatures remained significantly elevated, standing 1.30°C above the estimated 1850-1900 average used to define the pre-industrial level. Europe's Tale of Two Climates The continent experienced dramatically contrasting conditions between its western and northern regions. Western Europe as a whole saw its warmest June on record, with an average temperature of 20.49°C, 2.81°C

above the 1991–2020 average. This narrowly surpassed the previous record set during the infamous heat of 2003. Two major heatwaves in mid- and late June 2025 affected large parts of western and southern Europe. Much of the region saw feels-like temperatures exceeding 38°C, corresponding to 'very strong heat stress'. Parts of Portugal saw feels-like temperatures reach around 48°C or 'extreme heat stress'.

Finland and Fennoscandia Buck the Trend

However, the Nordic region painted a different picture entirely. It was wetter than average in Iceland, Ireland, the northern UK, Denmark, much of Fennoscandia, the Baltic states, Belarus, and parts of Ukraine and Russia. This pattern meant that while much of Europe sweltered, Finland and its Nordic neighbors experienced cooler, more humid conditions. The contrast was particularly stark when considering precipitation patterns. While it was drier than average in western

and southern Europe, as well as much of the UK and regions of southern Scandinavia, Finland benefited from above-average rainfall that provided relief from the continental heat wave. Mediterranean Reaches Unprecedented Temperatures Adding to the intensity of the European heat wave, an exceptional marine heatwave developed in the western Mediterranean in June, leading to the highest daily SST ever recorded for the region as a whole in June (27.0°C), corresponding to the highest daily SST anomaly for any month (3.7°C above average).

Climate Expert Warns of Future Trends

Samantha Burgess, Strategic Lead for Climate at ECMWF, emphasized the significance of these patterns: "June 2025 saw an exceptional heatwave impact large parts of western Europe, with much of the region experiencing very strong heat stress. This heatwave was made more intense by record sea surface temperatures in the western Mediterranean. In a warming

world, heatwaves are likely to become more frequent, more intense and impact more people across Europe."

Global Climate Context The June 2025 data fits into a broader pattern of climate extremes. The 12-month period of July 2024 – June 2025 was 0.67°C above the 1991-2020 average, and 1.55°C above the pre-industrial level. Notably, June 2025 was only the third month in the last 24 with a global temperature less than 1.5°C above the pre-industrial level. The contrasting conditions between Finland and western Europe highlight the complex regional variations in climate change impacts, demonstrating that even as global temperatures rise, different regions can experience vastly different weather patterns within the same time period.

The Copernicus Climate Change Service provides monthly climate bulletins using data from billions of measurements from satellites, ships, aircraft and weather stations around the world.

SCIENCE

BILINGUALISM

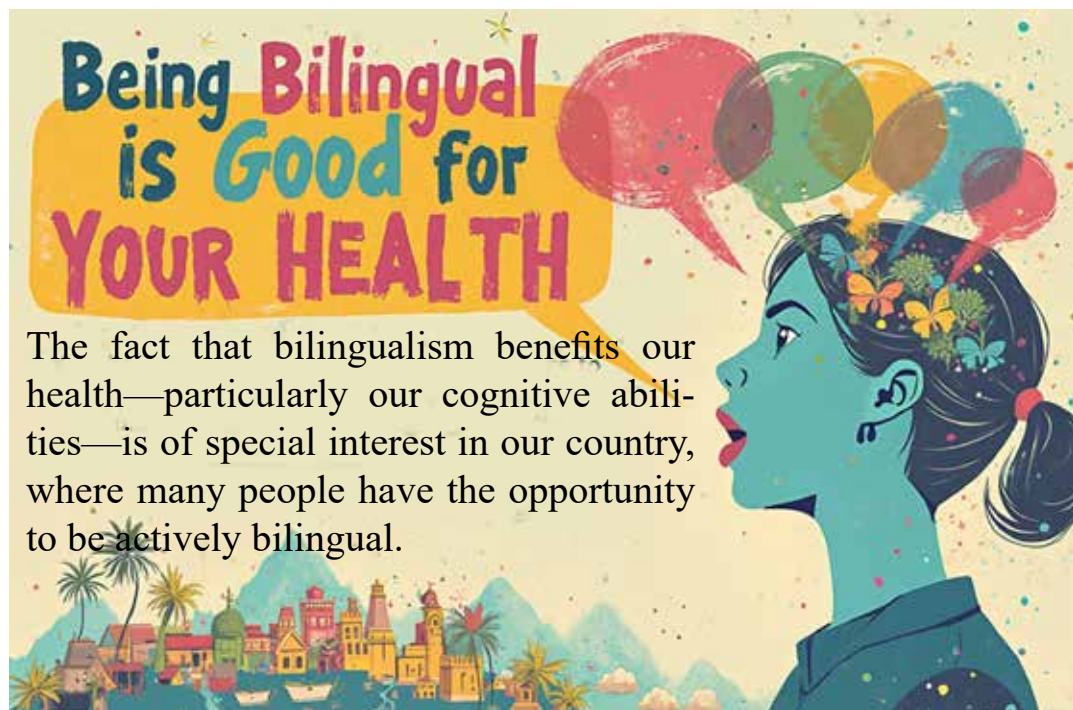
Being Bilingual Is Good for Your Brain

THE ABILITY to speak more than one language has long been associated with cognitive, social, and professional advantages. However, recent neuroscientific research has revealed that bilingualism also confers significant neurological benefits, enhancing brain function, delaying cognitive decline, and even protecting against neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's (Bialystok 2011, 229).

This article examines the cognitive advantages of bilingualism, drawing on empirical studies in psychology, neuroscience, and linguistics to demonstrate how speaking multiple languages reshapes the brain and improves mental resilience.

The ability to speak more than one language has long been associated with cognitive, social, and professional advantages. However, recent neuroscientific research has revealed that bilingualism also confers significant neurological benefits, enhancing brain function, delaying cognitive decline, and even protecting against neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's (Bialystok 2011, 229). This article examines the cognitive advantages of bilingualism, drawing on empirical studies in psychology, neuroscience, and linguistics to demonstrate how speaking multiple languages reshapes the brain and improves mental resilience.

The fact that bilingualism benefits our health—particularly our cognitive abilities—is of special interest in our



The fact that bilingualism benefits our health—particularly our cognitive abilities—is of special interest in our country, where many people have the opportunity to be actively bilingual.

country, where many people have the opportunity to be actively bilingual.

Cognitive Benefits of Bilingualism

1. Enhanced Executive Function

Bilingual individuals constantly switch between languages, a process that engages the brain's executive control system. This mental exercise strengthens cognitive flexibility, attention regulation, and problem-solving skills. According to a study by Costa et al. (2008, 280), "Bilinguals outperform monolinguals in tasks requiring inhibition of irrelevant information and task-switching, suggesting that bilingualism enhances executive control mechanisms."

Neuroimaging studies support these findings, showing that bilinguals exhibit increased gray matter density in the prefrontal cortex—the brain

region responsible for decision-making and self-regulation (Abutalebi et al. 2012, 1056).

2. Delayed Cognitive Decline and Dementia

One of the most striking benefits of bilingualism is its protective effect against age-related cognitive decline. Research by Bialystok et al. (2007, 459) found that bilingual individuals developed symptoms of Alzheimer's disease four to five years later than monolinguals, despite having similar levels of brain pathology.

A longitudinal study by Craik et al. (2010, 1378) corroborated these findings, concluding that "the constant mental juggling required by bilingualism builds cognitive reserve, effectively shielding the brain from neurodegeneration."

3. Improved Memory

and Learning Abilities

Bilingualism enhances working memory—the ability to hold and manipulate information in the mind—which is crucial for learning and comprehension (Morales et al. 2013, 225). Children raised in bilingual environments often exhibit superior metalinguistic awareness, allowing them to better understand grammar rules and language structures (Kovács & Mehler 2009, 6556).

Neurological Adaptations in Bilingual Brains

1. Structural Brain Changes Bilingual individuals show increased connectivity in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) and left inferior frontal gyrus, areas linked to language control and conflict resolution (García-Pentón et al. 2016, 118). Diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) studies reveal that bilinguals have



more robust white matter integrity, indicating faster neural communication (Luk et al. 2011, 3942).

2. Enhanced Neuroplasticity

Learning and using multiple languages promote neuroplasticity—the brain’s ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections. A study by Li et al. (2014, 8) found that bilingual seniors maintained better cognitive function than monolinguals, suggesting that bilingualism helps preserve brain plasticity well into old age.

Social and Psychological Benefits

Beyond cognitive advantages, bilingualism fosters greater empathy and cultural adaptability. Research by Fan et al. (2015, 120) indicates that bilingual children are better at perspective-taking, as they must constantly navigate different linguistic and cultural contexts. Additionally, bilingualism has been linked to hig-

her academic achievement and career opportunities, as multilingual individuals often possess superior problem-solving skills and adaptability (Dewaele & Wei 2013, 231).

The scientific consensus is clear: bilingualism enhances brain function, delays cognitive decline, and improves mental flexibility. From structural brain changes to improved executive control, the benefits of speaking multiple languages extend far beyond mere communication. As societies become increasingly multilingual, fostering bilingual education could be a powerful tool for cognitive health and lifelong learning.

REFERENCES

Abutaleb, Jubin, et al. 2012. "Bilingualism Tunes the Anterior Cingulate Cortex for Conflict Monitoring." *Cerebral Cortex* 22 (9): 1056–1064.

Bialystok, Ellen. 2011. "Reshaping the Mind: The Benefits of Bilingualism." *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology* 65 (4): 229–235.

Bialystok, Ellen, et al. 2007. "Bilingualism as a Protection Against the Onset of Symptoms of Dementia." *Neuropsychologia* 45 (2): 459–464.

Costa, Albert, et al. 2008. "The Bilingual Advantage in Executive Functioning: The Role of Language Proficiency." *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 11 (2): 279–283.

Craik, Fergus I. M., et al. 2010. "Delaying the Onset of Alzheimer Disease: Bilingualism as a Form of Cognitive Reserve." *Neurology* 75 (19): 1378–1384.

Dewaele, Jean-Marc, and Li Wei. 2013. "Is Multilingualism Linked to a Higher Tolerance of Ambiguity?" *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 16 (1): 231–240.

Fan, Samantha P., et al. 2015. "The Exposure Advantage: Early Exposure to a Multilingual Environment Promotes Effective Communication." *Psychological Science* 26 (7): 120–128.

García-Pentón, Lorna, et al. 2016. "The Neuroanatomy of Bilingualism: How to Turn a Hunch into a Fact." *NeuroImage* 113: 118–125.

Kovács, Ágnes Melinda, and Jacques Mehler. 2009. "Cognitive Gains in 7-Month-Old Bilingual Infants." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106 (16): 6556–6560.

Li, Ping, et al. 2014. "Bilingualism Enriches the Poor: Enhanced Cognitive Control in Low-Income Minority Children." *Psychological Science* 25 (2): 1–10.

Luk, Gigi, et al. 2011. "Lifelong Bilingualism Maintains White Matter Integrity in Older Adults." *Journal of Neuroscience* 31 (46): 3942–3947.

Morales, Julia, et al. 2013. "Working Memory Development in Monolingual and Bilingual Children." *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 114 (2): 225–237.

SHORT STORY

STRÖMSÖ

Not everything goes like in Strömsö



Matti had watched every single episode of Strömsö for the past fifteen years. He knew exactly how to prune roses in March, could recite the perfect rye bread recipe from memory, and had memorized the precise angle for hanging Christmas lights that would make his neighbors weep with envy. So when he decided to renovate his own summer cottage on the Ostrobothnian coast, he figured it would be a breeze.

"How hard can it be?" he muttered, adjusting his brand-new checkered shirt that looked suspiciously like the ones worn by the TV hosts. "I've practically got a PhD in cottage renovation from the University of Strömsö."

The first sign of trouble came when Matti tried to install what the show called "charming vintage shutters." In the program, this task took exactly three minutes and resulted in perfect symmetry and rustic charm. In reality, Matti spent four hours with a crooked drill, three bent nails, and shutters that made his cottage look like it was permanently winking at passersby.

Next came the garden makeover. On Strömsö, wildflowers bloomed in perfect disorder, creating that effortless "natural" look that screamed sophisticated design. Matti's wildflower seeds, however, seemed to have attended a different design school. Half refused to grow entirely, while the other half grew with such enthusiasm

that his cottage disappeared behind a wall of aggressive lupins that towered over the windows.

The pièce de résistance was supposed to be a cozy outdoor sauna renovation. The TV version featured smooth-talking carpenters who made it look like adult Legos. Matti's version featured a lot of colorful Finnish swearing and a sauna door that opened inward, trapping him inside for twenty minutes until his neighbor heard the muffled cries for help.

By midsummer, Matti's cottage looked less like a Strömsö showcase and more like a cautionary tale about the dangers of DIY enthusiasm. But as he sat on his wonky deck, watching the sunset through his crooked shutters while his jungle of lupins swayed in the coastal breeze, he realized something: his imperfect cottage had more character than any TV renovation ever could.

"Well," he chuckled, raising his coffee mug to toast his wonderfully flawed creation, "at least the coffee still tastes perfect. Some things you just can't mess up."

The mug promptly slipped from his hand and shattered on the deck.

Even the coffee, apparently, doesn't always go like in Strömsö.

IMAGE: Reality is not all here in the world.

CULTURE

VAASA LITTFEST

Vaasa LittFest in November – A Cultural Festival to Look Forward To



Pajtim Statovci. Foto: Ano Kurki / Otava

As November's darkness settles over the city, Vasa will once again light up—through literature, culture, and engaging dialogue. Vasa LittFest, taking place from November 13 to 15, 2025, brings together literature enthusiasts, renowned authors, and timely themes for a unique and thought-provoking festival weekend.

The theme of the 2025 festival is *Border(s)*, inviting reflection on physical, cultural, linguistic, and mental boundaries—and the ways literature helps us cross them. Literature, by its nature, constantly moves beyond borders, opening windows into other realities.

Among the first confirmed

guests are a number of celebrated Finnish and Nordic authors. *Pajtim Statovci*, twice awarded the Finlandia Prize, will present his latest novel *Lehmä synnyttää yöllä* (2024), which has become an international literary sensation. Translation rights have already been sold to publishers in the U.S., Germany, Italy, and beyond. Statovci's previous works, including *My Cat Yugoslavia* and *Bolla*, have earned critical acclaim at home and abroad.

From Sweden, *Mikael Niemi* will join the festival. He is best known for his August Prize-winning novel *Popular Music from Vittula* (2000). Niemi's storytelling explores life in Tornedalen, where three cultures intersect. His latest novel, *Sten i siden* (2025), is a multigeneratio-

nal family saga set in the far north.

The festival will also feature multi-talented artist *Laura Malmivaara*, who performs with the Vaasa City Orchestra and composer-percussionist Arttu Takalo. Together, they will present excerpts from Malmivaara's recent novel *Iltatähti* through a unique combination of literature and live music—a rare treat for festival audiences.

Among the featured Finnish authors is folklorist and novelist Mikko Kamula, known for his popular *Metsän kansa* series. Kamula delves into the historical borders of Finland through richly detailed novels rooted in 15th-century Finnish folk beliefs.

Science journalist and author *Marcus Rosenlund* will explore the planet's natural boundaries. His works traverse the realms of meteorology, outer space, and microorganisms. His latest book takes a closer look at the underground world—the life and systems that exist beneath our feet.

But the tone isn't all serious. Beloved dialect poet and author *Heli Laaksonen* will bring laughter and warmth to the stage at Vaasa City Theatre. Known for her witty and nature-themed verse, Laaksonen rose to fame with her debut *Pulu uis* (2000) and has since written both

poetry and nonfiction about the Finnish landscape and environment.

One of the festival's most unique events is a late-night session that explores folklore and true crime. Author duo *Tiina and Marko Hautala* will host an evening with religious studies scholar Tuomas Äystö, whose new book *Paholaisen perilliset* (2025) dives into the history of Satanic Panic. The evening will also feature a panel on mythology and magic, with folklorist and author *Jenna Kostet*, Finland's most famous modern witch Kuparikettu, and writer-crafter Riina Peltonen, who has studied magical sites in Ostrobothnia.

— The festival program offers a chance to explore identity, politics, history, and society from both personal and global perspectives. We aim to inspire dialogue not only about literature but also about contemporary issues, says cultural producer Ilkka Nyqvist.

Vasa LittFest is more than just a literary event—it is a space for encounters that transcend generations, languages, and borders.

Vasa LittFest 2025 – a festival that crosses borders and connects people through the power of stories.

VAASA UNIVERSITY

VAASA UNIVERSITY AND VAMK

University of Vaasa and VAMK - Stronger and More Competitive Together



The University of Vaasa and Vaasa University of Applied Sciences (VAMK) have taken a significant step toward a shared future - a new higher education consortium has now been officially established.

This historic merger is strengthened by the university's 70% ownership stake in VAMK, while the City of Vaasa retains 30%. Both institutions will keep their

names, but the consortium's new name will be announced this fall.

This strategic initiative creates a strong, internationally competitive higher education community in Ostrobothnia that addresses workforce skill gaps and enhances research impact. The collaboration isn't new - the institutions have long worked closely together, particularly in engineering education through Technobothnia's laboratories and the Tritonia Academic Library.

"Our goal is to create an internationally significant higher education unit that offers students flexible study paths and high-quality learning environments all the way up to doctoral education," says Minna Martikainen, Rector of the University of Vaasa.

The new consortium aims for regional, national and international influence. Resources will be used more efficiently, research groups will be strengthened, and cooperation with businesses will intensify. "We're developing research infrastructure, which will also strengthen Finland's export potential," empha-

sizes Hannu Vahtera, Managing Director of VAMK.

This merger isn't just an administrative change - it's a strategic investment in a future where education, research and working life interact even more effectively. The combined strengths of these institutions will create new opportunities for students, researchers and businesses throughout the region and beyond.

Image: Vaasa University. The image can be freely used.

WASA FUTURE FESTIVAL

The University of Vaasa participates in Wasa Future Festival 11–16.8.2025

The Wasa Future Festival, which will be held in August, will be bigger and more international than ever before.

The University of Vaasa is once again strongly involved in the festival's programme throughout the week from 11 to 16 August 2025. The event offers a wealth of content for those interested in science, energy, technology, art and social issues.

The main themes of the festival in 2025 are the environment, innovations and energy. The diverse programme consists of lectures, panel discussions, exhibitions, seminars and workshops. The event will be held at the Wasa Innovation Center (Gerbyntie 16), but the program will also be held elsewhere, such as the University of Vaasa and Tritonia.

Sustainable development, science and art meet

The festival week will open on Monday 11 August with a discussion event that will focus on the culture of overconsumption, climate change and solutions to biodiversity loss. In the evening, the spectacular Butterfly exhibition will also open, which combines art, science and technology. The exhibition examines global interactions between humanity, technology and the environment.

Tuesday 12.8. The University of Vaasa will have a strong presence in the morning when Rector Minna Martikainen, Chair of the Board Mari Kiviniemi and Vice Rectors Mika Grundström, Martin Meyer and Tanja Risikko open the day. Energy experts Jan Segerstam and Kimmo Kauhanen will also participate in the discussions. On the same day, a multidisciplinary Butterfly



Symposium will be held on sustainability in digitalisation, energy and business. Speakers include architects Juhani Risku and Anne Stenros.

Other themes on Tuesday include artificial intelligence, regional energy systems, greenhouse gas emissions and the resilience of society. The day will culminate in an international Thought Leaders Roundtable discussion on the energy transition and an interesting panel on the appeal and leadership of populism, which will include Professor Esa Hyyryläinen, Mari Kiviniemi and journalist Olli Seuri, among others.

Space, youth and lightless experiences

On Wednesday 13 August, the theme of the festival is energy and technology. The day will begin with the Space Day event, organised by the European Space Agency Business Incubation Centre and ESA PhiLab. The Butterfly Immersive Learning

Experience for young people offers an experiential way to explore future phenomena under the guidance of Rebekah Rousi. In the evening, there will be an atmospheric Lights-off experience, where works of art and performances are experienced without electric light.

Towards northern innovation

On Thursday 14 August, we will focus on the opportunities for the Nordic countries to attract investments. The panel organised by the University of Vaasa and Borenus will discuss how to make Finland a leading international investment destination. The panellists include Minister Joakim Strand, Casper Herler and Minna Martikainen.

On the same evening, the Butterfly exhibition will be open longer than usual as part of the Vaasa Night of the Arts. In addition, an art exhibition by Australian artist Katey O'Sullivan will be opened at Tritonia.

Culture and well-being

On Friday 15 August, the festival continues with a new Nordic culture and well-being. The programme includes virtual reality-based well-being at work games and classes. The weekend's program will be confirmed later.

The University is building a more sustainable future

The goal of Wasa Future Festival is to bring together experts from different fields and find solutions to society's major challenges. The participation of the University of Vaasa reflects its strategic goal to be an active player in regional development and global change.

The up-to-date programme and further information can be found on the Wasa Future Festival website: wasafuturefestival.fi

PHOTO: Vaasa Futurefestival 2023

SOURCE: University of Vaasa

ONLINE COURSES

AI-COURSE

VAMK and University of Vaasa Offer AI Course for Entrepreneurs and Professionals – Free Online Course Explores AI's Business Potential



Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming businesses at an unprecedented pace, enabling automation, improved customer service, and even entirely new business models.

But how can small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs harness AI in practice? Vaasa University of Applied Sciences (VAMK) and the University of Vaasa now offer a solution: a free online course to help identify AI opportunities in business.

AI Isn't the Future—It's Here Now

The new AI2Business online course is designed for SMEs, entrepreneurs, and professionals who want to learn how AI can enhance business growth. The course provides practical knowledge without requiring deep technical expertise.

"Companies need concrete

guidance on AI implementation. Our goal is to accelerate AI competence building," says Sanna Peltonen, project manager of AI2Business at VAMK.

The self-paced course is available in English, making it ideal for busy professionals.

How AI is Reshaping Business

While many see AI as just a tool for automation, its impact is far broader. "AI doesn't just streamline processes—it changes business logic," emphasizes Marko Kohtamäki, professor at the University of Vaasa.

The course covers AI from three perspectives:

Business – How can AI create competitive advantages?

Technology – What applications exist?

Design – How to develop user-friendly AI solutions?

"AI adoption isn't just about technology. If a solution doesn't serve users, it remains disconnected," Peltonen notes.

Real-World Examples: How Businesses Use AI Today

The course features three company-driven AI experiments demonstrating practical applications:

Document processing – Automated data extraction and report generation.

Price prediction – Dynamic pricing models based on market conditions.

Production quality control – Machine learning detects defects in real time.

"These experiments are based on real business needs, showing how AI can be applied across industries," says Jani Boutellier, assistant professor at the University of Vaasa.

How to Join the Free Course?
Currently in pilot phase,

the course is free and ideal for SMEs, managers, and anyone interested in AI.

Participation is simple:

Register on the AI2Business Moodle platform: <https://moodle.muovadigital.net/mod/page/view.php?id=680>

Study at your own pace – 24/7 access.

Receive a certificate upon completion.

As part of the EU-funded AI2Business project, participants are encouraged to join the project's monitoring system to help measure AI training impact in Finland.

"No need to worry about details—we guide you every step of the way," assures Peltonen.

AI is the Future—Start Learning Now

AI offers vast potential for businesses, but leveraging it requires understanding how it fits into operations. This course helps companies take their first steps into AI without major investments.

Ready to future-proof your business? Enroll now!

AI2Business is an EU-funded project promoting AI skills for SMEs. Learn more: VAMK website.

WASA DAILY
Nr 23 Sunday, June 8, 2025
ISSN 2965-2456
The year of the City Theatre
Korsholm cheapest in Finland
Prostate Cancer
Inkeri Julkunen
A new era in weight loss
A New Dwarf Planet

WASA
DAILY

Wasa Daily



Welcome to a new era of newspapers! Say hello to **Wasa Daily** - the smart news source that you can read anywhere and that keeps you well-orientated.

So, what exactly is **Wasa Daily**? Well, it's your weekly dose of news, information, laughter, insight and everything else that makes life a little wiser, and more fun. And the best of all? Its free! Exactly, you read that right. No hidden fees, no subscriptions. We believe news should be accessible to everyone, whether you're on a beach in Thailand or in your favorite cafe around the corner. So how does it work? Easy! Just download our **Wasa Daily** to your tablet, and you have the whole world in your hand.

We at **Wasa Daily** know that Finns love their coffee. Every Sunday morning you can enjoy your favorite coffee and at the same time update yourself on world events. So take out the coffee cup, sit comfortably and read the **Wasa Daily**.

In a world full of boring news, someone like us is needed to spice things up. Welcome to **Wasa Daily** - we make news easier to swallow!

UKRAINE

UKRAINE PRESIDENT

President Honors the Memory of Those Killed at the Site of the Russian Strike on a Nine-Story Residential Building in Kyiv



President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy honored the memory of those killed at the site of the Russian strike on a nine-story residential building in Kyiv's Sviatoshynskyi district.

On the night of July 31, Russia destroyed an entire section of the building. The attack claimed the lives of 28 residents, including five children, and injured 21 people.

The President laid flowers at the destroyed section and spoke with residents of the building, who are now in need of assistance.

"We will help you all. Tomorrow, ministers will meet and quickly adopt decisions to support you. I don't want to burden you with bureaucracy right now. They've already prepared everything needed to ensure you receive the money and understand where you'll be living – so that everything is clear," the Head of State said.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked everyone who worked at the site – those who responded to the aftermath, helped people, rescued victims, and cleared the rubble.

Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko informed the Head of State that 216 personnel and 54 units of State Emergency Service equipment had been involved in the response at this site alone. Search and rescue operations were completed only this morning.

According to him, 470 house

residents have filed reports about lost or damaged property.

In total, during this massive attack on Kyiv, Russia killed 31 people and injured 179.

COPYRIGHT: The Presidential Office of Ukraine. All materials featured on this site are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International. The use of any materials posted on the website is permitted provided you link to www.president.gov.ua regardless of full or partial use of materials.

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

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



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

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

The Emergence of AI-Generated Podcasts

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Wasa Daily

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

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

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

The magazine is available online for free.

Editor-in-chief Hans Björknäs.

Readers' writings are welcome!

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

Editorial office: Wasa Daily, Koulukatu 37 B 7, 65100 Vaasa, tel. +358-40-5462455.

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

Email: wasadagblad@gmail.com



HOROSCOPE FOR AUGUST 2025

August Horoscope – The Stars Are Mumbling (And Maybe Making Some Sense)

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)

You'll have a brilliant idea this August! Unfortunately, someone already had it in 2003. Console yourself with ice cream. And more ice cream. With sprinkles – obviously.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)

Money is coming your way! Well, a discount coupon at best. Love may blossom – but only if you remember to water it. (Yes, this includes your plants.)

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)

You're everywhere and nowhere – just like your vacation plans. Try deep breathing. It won't help, but at least you'll look peaceful while searching for your keys.

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)

You're feeling emotional. That's okay. Everyone cries over overcooked

pasta now and then. A surprise awaits at the end of the month – possibly pizza.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)

It's YOUR month! The world revolves around you – just the way you like it. Enjoy the spotlight, but remember: other people exist too. Sadly.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22)

You try to control everything. August has other plans. Let go – at least of your color-coded to-do list. But keep the Excel sheet. We're not crazy.

Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)

You can't decide: sunhat or raincoat? Take both. August weather can't decide either. Love? Yes. Confusion? Also yes.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)

Mysteries attract you this month: "Who took my charger?" "Why aren't they texting back?" Keep your cool – and your sting sharp, just in case.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)

Adventure calls! Unfortunately, only to the corner store. Still, every bagu-

ette run is a journey. Remember: all epic tales start small – often with snacks.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)

You're trying to be responsible – but August wants you to chill. Ditch the blazer, wear flip-flops. The world will survive without your spreadsheets for two days. Maybe.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)

Your head is full of wild ideas. Some are even good! Don't start a podcast. Or do – but only if it's about guinea pigs and existential dread. That could work.

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)

You're daydreaming more than doing. And that's fine. August feels like a watercolor painting – beautiful but slightly soggy. Write your thoughts down. They may become a book. Or a very weird shopping list.



HUMOUR ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

BÄ BÄ

Doctor K- and his brother the veterinarian get into a dispute about whose profession requires the greatest ability to diagnose. Both hold their ground, but the vet's argument seems to be the strongest because the animals cannot tell where their pain is.

Some time later the vet falls ill and the doctor is called.

— Well, where do you hurt?

No answer.

— You can tell where the evil is, right?

The only answer that comes from the sick person is; BÄ BÄ The doctor writes out a prescription, which he hands to the nurse with the words:

"Give him this and if he's not well the day after tomorrow, we'll shoot him."

THE DAD IN A GOOD MOOD

The daughter:

— You know, mother, father was in an unusually good mood today, when he went to the office.

Mother:

— Crosses in all the world! That reminds me I forgot to ask him for money.

AT THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S

The photographer;

— Should it be a bust?

The customer:

— No, I'd like to include some of the face as well.

WIFE'S INTEREST IN THE ANTIQUITY

— How did you cure your wife of her antique fly?

— Well, I gave her a dress of the 1907 model for her birthday.

THE SUITOR NEEDED THE ENCOURAGEMENT

The suitor:

— I have something important to tell you, but I don't know how to begin.

The lady:

— If I say "yes", maybe you will be helped to start.

Astronomic picture of the week:



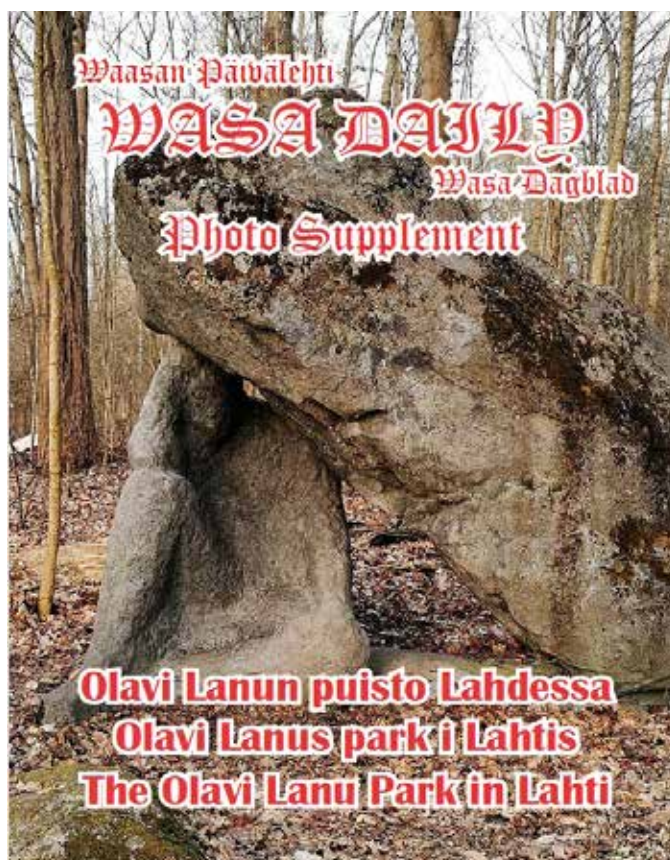
PSYCHE (Asteroid).jpg

An illustration depicting the target of NASA's Psyche mission: the metal-rich asteroid Psyche, in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. Credits: NASA/JPL-Caltech/ASU

 NASA

 Public domain

Next week:



From our readers

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

Advertise in Wasa Daily

Being among the first to advertise in this historic and hyper-modern daily may have some PR value.

Send ads to wasadagblad@gmail.com

WASA DAILY
wasadagblad@gmail.com