

# Aurora

2004



UNIVERSITY OF TURKU



***YOUR COURSE:***  
**TURKU, FINLAND**

# Aurora

ENGLISH ISSUE 2004



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■ The European Studies - Programme is coordinated by Susanna Kärki.



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■ First time in Turku and the Baltic Sea.

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## Towards internationality

**The universities** are internationalising at a rapidly increasing rate. Annually, more than 1000 foreign students study at the University of Turku, while 15 years ago the figure was hardly more than a couple of dozen. This trend is bound to change the conditions and objectives of teaching and study at the University.

**The amount of teaching** given in English is increasing, for both exchange students and degree students. Courses intended for exchange students will have to broaden their scope in order to face the increasing competition. But above all, Master's courses aimed at those with Bachelor-level degrees, present a challenge requiring the input of both material and intellectual resources. These should be allocated to areas where the university has a strong tradition of research and teaching, and which in addition have themes that are likely to attract foreign students. Programmes taught in foreign languages should of course also be open to Finnish students and thus promote their "domestic internationalisation".

**There should be** a continuous effort to improve services for foreign students, to ensure that they experience the local study environment as motivating. In this matter the University of Turku and the Student Union are together doing good work. Giving assistance in the day-to-day lives of foreign students helps them to adapt to local conditions. Finland is still rather homogeneous ethnically – although with some 8000 foreign inhabitants, Turku is one of the most multinational cities in the country.

**The transition** to the two-tiered European degree system along with the "Bologna process", to take place in the academic year 2005–2006, will inevitably increase the international mobility of both students and teachers – hopefully also of Finnish students – whose mobility has not increased after the rapid growth of study abroad in the 1990's.

**The amount and intensity** of research carried out at the University of Turku is progressing well. Research is the key prerequisite for the University's internationalisation, because only in the universities can the best possible basic and applied research valued by international scientific community be fed directly into teaching.

**The University of Turku** is characteristically a scientific university leaning on a strong research tradition. Multidisciplinarity is a strength, but certain areas in research and teaching help to profile our activities (biosciences, mathematical methodology, interaction and integration processes in culture and society as well as learning and education).

**The universities** – including Turku University – are increasingly involved in activities requiring considerable resources, in which public bodies, private enterprises, Research and Development funding organisations and the universities set common goals that they hope will promote innovations and their commercial exploitation. An excellent example of this kind of cluster is provided by Turku Science Park, based in Turku, which so far focuses on biosciences and information and communication technology (ICT). I am writing this editorial while attending the Clusters 2003 Conference in Montreal, Canada. There are 300 participants from 18 countries discussing issues concerned with clustering in many other fields as well (forestry research, energy questions, the globalising field of telecommunications and communication, cultural production, functional foods and so on).

**Scientific clusters** are heavily business oriented, but at least to some extent, the international market for university education is moving in the same direction along with the Bologna process. The international university community must be prepared to defend critical research in particular and teaching based on it, but even though it accepts the challenges of today's research and teaching as an integral whole, where both applied research and product development play a role.

**Turku is Finland's oldest city** and also its oldest university town. The University of Turku, which is also the city's biggest university, welcomes all foreign researchers and students to an academic milieu in which long traditions of learning join hands with modern, dynamic innovativeness.





TEXT JAAKKO LOUHIVUORI ■ PHOTO VESA-MATTI VÄÄRÄ

# TURKU SALAMANCA PARIS

PIIA TUOMINEN HEADED FOR SALAMANCA, SPAIN, TO STUDY BIOLOGY. "I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO REGRETS," SHE SAYS. ILONA HONGISTO PURSUED FILM STUDIES IN PARIS. SHE FELT THAT THE EXCITING PACE OF LIFE IN A BIG CITY GAVE A DIFFERENT APPROACH FOR HER THESIS.

Every year over 600 students leave the University of Turku to spend a study period in another country. It is possible to study abroad via a variety of arrangements – although those who are boldest obtain the necessary information and a place to study on their own initiative, the Socrates/ Erasmus Programme is the most popular path to Europe. The Coimbra Network connects various renowned universities situated in the second largest cities of several European countries. The programme offers degree students the unique opportunity to study in universities such as the University of Heidelberg, Bologna, or Oxford.

Piia Tuominen is studying animal physiology at the Department of Biology. She spent the spring of 2003 in Spain, at the University of Salamanca. "Do I have anything to complain about? Nothing at all. Things went wonderfully,

and I can certainly recommend studying in Spain. I never went abroad as an exchange student when I was in high school, so it was rather natural for me to do so now that I was studying at the university. A change of university was good for my studies, and, as a Finnish student, it cost me nothing. Besides, the desire to get to know the Spanish language and culture wasn't the least of the reasons why I wanted to study in Spain," Piia explains.

#### **Language course as a social bridge**

The Department of Biology supported Piia when she was applying for the Coimbra Network Programme. The selection criteria took into account letters of recommendation from professors and academic success. Piia thinks that, before leaving, the orientation for outgoing exchange students arranged by the Student



« Pia ■ Ilona »

Council of the University of Turku and the Web pages of the Universidad de Salamanca were the most helpful sources of information.

After the first few weeks, Piia felt that choosing Salamanca had been a good decision. “The language course for foreigners served as a most effective social bridge. Finally, I felt as if I knew the entire city! I was always saying hello to everyone,” Piia says. Foreign students often form a close-knit community, and may have less contact with the locals.

#### **Shorthand exercises in class**

Students heading abroad hope that their studies will be recognised at home. However, it is often difficult to compare courses. Before leaving, Piia had planned which courses she wanted to take in Salamanca. “Not all the courses I had signed up for were arranged. I was only able to get information about the available courses after I had arrived. Still, the courses I took will be recognised in Finland as part of my Advanced Studies,” Piia says.

Foreign instruction methods may take a Finnish student by surprise. “In class, everybody wrote down every single word the lecturer said. There I was practically the only student looking around and trying to select the essential information for my notes. After the lectures, I had to try and make sense of the word-for-word notes other students had taken in shorthand,” Piia recalls. Even the lecturers themselves criticised this practice, but it is difficult for both parties to change note-taking habits.

“The image of Finland as a land of advanced technology is definitely accurate. In Turku, we have a great deal of equipment that they do not have in Salamanca. I got laughed at a couple of times when I asked for a counter, which is used in microscopic cell counting. They thought that asking for such gadgets in the laboratory was typically Finnish.”

Piia feels that her six-month study period went well. In addition to advancing in her studies, she also learnt more about the Spanish language and culture. “Although I must admit that I did spend more money than I had intended to, I haven’t regretted going to Spain for a second,” Piia sums up her experience.

#### **Passionate about film**

According to Ilona Hongisto, it is possible to combine creativity with scientific work. She is clearly an intelligent young researcher who is stimulated by the exciting pace of life, the films, and the multicultural colleagues she found in Paris.

“I went abroad because I had travelled a great deal. Of course my decision was influenced by all the usual factors! I was interested in foreign cultures and found the French language challenging. However, the most important reason

for going to Paris was my research, because film studies are at a very high level there. In fact, you have access to the entire history of film in Paris,” Ilona explains.

Ilona graduated from the Department of Media Studies at the University of Turku in autumn 2003. Her Master’s Thesis dealt with an experimental film-maker, Maya Dere, and the style of the poetic film. Ilona feels that, due to the rather limited volume of scientific work in the area, the level of film studies is lower in Finland than in France. She is planning to improve the situation as a postgraduate and, in the future, as a researcher.

“It was quite a good idea to spend some time studying abroad at the final stage of my studies, because it also gave me a chance to think more about my own academic goals. It would be interesting to study in another country again at the postgraduate stage,” Ilona remarks.

#### **Efficient Erasmus**

The Erasmus Programme worked well, which smoothed out many bumps along the road. “Student selection and the process itself were easy, and the Erasmus study period was well-organised. The only thing that left something to be desired was the information I received from the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle. I couldn’t get any information about the courses beforehand, and I had to find a hall of residence by myself.” With regard to accommodation, the situation in Paris is difficult, and prices are high. “Hunting for a flat takes time and energy,” Ilona says. “Luckily, I knew some people in Paris who helped me to find a place, and everything was ready when I arrived.”

The Department of Media Research at the University of Turku gave their support to Ilona’s decision to study abroad.

#### **Golden opportunities**

Ilona studied for six months at the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle. Some of the teachers at the university’s Department of Film Studies have published books that form part of the course literature in Finland and all over the world. Top researchers regularly teach basic courses.

“I had the opportunity to study in small groups which were directed by world-renowned experts. Resources in general, both in terms of content and practical matters, were very high,” Ilona concludes. “Paris gave me the opportunity to outdo myself, both academically and culturally. Writing my Master’s Thesis in Paris provided a different approach for my work. I took pleasure in writing it, and the thesis took on entirely new dimensions, which would have been difficult to achieve in Finland.” ■

# FUN-LOVING EUROPEANS

THERE ARE BURSTS OF LAUGHTER AND OCCASIONAL LOUD VOICES AS FOUR EXCHANGE STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF EUROPE SHARE A TABLE TOGETHER. ANNA, ERIK, KATRIEN AND STEFANO HAVE BEEN IN FINLAND SINCE AUGUST, WHEN THEY ATTENDED AN INTENSIVE FINNISH LANGUAGE COURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TURKU; BUT WHAT DO THEY MAKE OF THE COUNTRY SO FAR?

“To tell the truth, I didn’t choose Finland,” **Anna de Goede** reveals. “My Dutch professor had some contacts here, and that’s how I ended up in Finland. When I found out I was coming here, I just thought ‘that’s fine’. I didn’t know much about Finland, but it seemed new and strange, even exciting.”

## Different from home

International students usually come to Finland through different exchange programmes. The most popular programme for European students is the Socrates/Erasmus one. The programme offers grants for study periods from 3 to 12 months in other EU countries. “My idea was to find something completely different from Italy. That’s why Finland was my first choice,” **Stefano Rigatelli** explains. More than that, being in Finland is useful for Stefano as he is studying intercultural communication.

**Katrien Lindemans** came to Finland because her university in Leuven, Belgium, recommended Finland. She had wanted to go to a Nordic country for the excellent courses – but for sheer exoticism as well. “The English-language courses at Turku Law School seemed really interesting. Finland is also different and unfamiliar. It all made perfect sense.”

**Erik Schoinz**, too, is studying at Turku Law School. “If you want to study international or EU law, there aren’t that many alternatives in Europe. What finally made me decide on Finland were the experiences my friend had here. He was an exchange student in Oulu and was really impressed by the natural beauty and cleanliness of Finland and the study opportunities. Based on what he told

me, it was easy to choose Finland.”

## The efficient Finns

You may often feel rather lost in a foreign country. And if you do not have the information you need, uncertainty can be overwhelming. Finland is known for its stereotypes, such as the eternal winter and polar bears wandering the streets. Both assumptions are, of course, false.

“I have the feeling that everybody knows at least one Finn. When I asked around, I was astonished that so many people knew someone in Finland,” Anna says.

“Everyone thought I was stupid when I told them I was going to Finland. They asked me all these ridiculous questions about what I’m going to do since it’s always so cold. But when I met people who have friends in Finland, they told me I’d made a great choice and were really supportive,” Erik adds.

In Finland, foreign students are well provided for. Universities offer valuable information both in print and on the Internet. “I think Finland is one of the most organised countries in terms of providing information and taking care of foreign students,” Anna believes. “They told me the address of my student apartment two months in advance: ‘Your address is Ritzinkuja 1, room B, rent 244 euros per month.’ I don’t think we’re quite that efficient in Italy,” Stefano quips.

## A different language

“Our teacher began the first lesson by speaking Finnish. We just sat there and looked at each other stunned. Still, it’s amazing how fast and how much you can learn of a new language in three weeks,” Erik says. “After a while I was able to understand what the street signs said, I

knew what food I was eating, but also what the teacher was talking about in class,” Katrien remarks. The others agree.

The language issue is often considered a major obstacle in choosing Finland. However, judging by the opinions of this group, the obstacle can be overcome

“The old cliché is true: Finnish isn’t difficult, it’s just different. Even if the grammar is complex, it’s not impossible,” Erik says. “We’re not fluent after a four-week course, but we reach a level that enables us to get by,” Anna continues. “The partitive case is often in the wrong place, but Finns are patient and simply happy about the fact that we’re trying to speak their language,” Stefano points out.

## The talkative Finns

“We didn’t know much about Finland when we came here. We all had our stereotypes. We also thought that Finns are shy and quiet,” Anna explains. “My experience was totally different. My roommate talks all the time and is really sociable. Then again, the fact that he is from Karelia may have something to do with that,” Stefano says with a grin.

In the language course, Finnish culture is also taken into account. The students have lectures on geography and on how Finnish society works. They even watch Finnish films. “I think Finland is one of the few countries where you can get to know the natives. In Belgium, for example, it can happen that the exchange students spend all their time together. Here everybody has a personal tutor who’s active in trying to get the foreign students to participate and thus get to know Finns and Finnish culture,” Anna says.

"I think Finland is one of the most organised countries in terms of providing information and taking care of foreign students," Stefano, Anna, Erik, their teacher Päivi Paukku and Katrien claim, enjoying the September sun.



### Teaching is a challenge

In Turku, around twenty students from all over Europe took part in the Finnish language and culture course. This year there were more than 300 applications, most of them from Germany. Prior to this, the course has been held five times in Turku.

"For the teacher, the course is very rewarding. You get to know the students well as the group is so small. However, since we have lectures from morning till evening for four weeks it can also be challenging

and hard," explains **Päivi Paukku**, who heads and teaches the intensive course.

In Paukku's opinion, the main purpose of the course is to provide the students with the basic language skills to enable them to manage in everyday life. "However, my wish is that universities would offer additional courses for these students once they've completed the intensive course. I think that has been overlooked in current language teaching."

Before returning to the Aurora office, I see the happy foursome again. They're excited about their plans for the evening. "We're going to go to a sauna in Ruissalo. One of the tutors even has her own sauna! It must be really exotic and 'extreme'. But what's a 'vihta?' wide-eyed Katrien asks, making everybody else laugh. Before the night is over, Katrien will find out what extreme sports are really like in Finland. ■

 is known for its stereotypes, such as the eternal winter and polar bears wandering the streets"

# BUONGIORNO ANDREA

**ANDREA PIBIRI IS A BRAVE MAN. HE CAME TO TURKU THROUGH THE COIMBRA UNIVERSITY NETWORK IN MARCH, WHEN THE FINNISH SPRING WEATHER WAS AT ITS WORST. I MET HIM AT THE END OF AUGUST AFTER HIS VACATION IN HIS HOMETLAND. "HOW IS HE DOING?" I ASK.**

"I'm freezing," Andrea responds, smiling. It is no use telling him that in July it was so hot that it was hard to sleep at night. Andrea has just flown in straight from Bologna to Turku and is pulling his coat more tightly round him.

### **Fascinating working environment**

This young man is an exchange student in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Turku. He is working in the Turku PET Centre shared by the University of Turku, Åbo Akademi University and Turku University Central Hospital. The Finnish National Centre specialises in functional positron emission tomography (PET) and it has special technology to conduct research in a completely new way.

Andrea will graduate in electronic engineering, specialising in biomedical electronic engineering. He has studied at the University of Bologna,

from where he came to the Turku PET Centre in order to work on his Master's Thesis. His work relates to the automation of the radiowater infusor developed and patented in the Turku PET Centre. The infusor produces Oxygen-15 labelled radiowater for blood flow research. His help has been of great benefit to the PET Centre and at the time of my interview with him, it seems clear that Andrea will continue later in the autumn as a researcher at the Centre after completing his studies in his homeland this autumn.

### **Tutor helped in the beginning**

Although the Finnish weather leaves much to be desired in comparison to Italy, Andrea has had many positive experiences in Finland. "When I first came here, I got a lot of help. I had a personal student tutor from the faculty, who helped me to get started.

**Hannu Sipilä**, a radiochemist from

the PET Centre, helped me to find a place to live. He has helped me in many other ways, too. I really enjoy being here.

Andrea likes the Finnish way of life. "I like to spend time in the countryside and I have had the opportunity to visit Lapland, the area outside Turku, and also Hannu's summer cottage in Central Finland. The Finns do a lot of sports just as I do. My Italian friends are all couch potatoes and they wonder why I bother to go on long biking treks. They cannot understand why someone wants to work up a sweat just for fun," he says with a laugh.

"I have tried to avoid the traditional exchange student life where you socialise mainly with other exchange students. I want to get to know the Finnish culture more closely." ■

## **PART OF THE COIMBRA GROUP**

The University of Turku is part of the Coimbra Group University Network, which was constituted by Charter in 1987. The University of Turku has been a member since 1995. The Coimbra Group is an association of long-established European multidisciplinary universities of high international standard. It is committed to creating special academic and cultur-

al ties and promoting internationalisation, academic collaboration, excellence in learning and research, and service to society. It is also an aim of the Group to influence European educational policy and to develop best practice through the mutual exchange of experience. Åbo Akademi University in Turku is also a member of the network.

The Coimbra Group member universities are Aarhus, Barcelona, Bergen, Bologna, Bristol, Budapest, Cambridge, Coimbra, Dublin, Edinburgh, Galway, Geneva, Göttingen, Granada, Graz, Groningen, Heidel-

berg, Jena, Kraków, Leiden, Leuven, Louvain, Lyon, Montpellier, Oxford, Padova (Padua), Pavia, Poitiers, Prague, Salamanca, Siena, Tartu, Thessaloniki, Turku, Uppsala, Würzburg and Åbo Akademi.



During his trip to Lapland in June, Andrea was surprised to learn that it can be +30°C in the Arctic Circle, even though the southern parts of Finland are suffering from a chilly early summer. "In Lapland, it was incredible to go swimming straight from the sauna and then drink the same clean water that you had swum in."



## THE PET CENTRE AND AMERSHAM HEALTH COLLABORATE

In February 2003, the Finnish National PET Centre located in Turku and the leading global provider of radiopharmaceuticals, Amersham Health, signed an important research partnership agreement. This means that the Turku PET Centre will receive

several million euros annually. Amersham will connect Turku to the Imanet network, and a new company producing imaging services will be founded in Turku.

Positron emission tomography is an isotopic imaging method that can be applied in scientific research as well as in clinical use. PET imaging is used to study cellular metabolism, blood flow, and neurotransmission. It can be used to study the spread of cancer cells and to estimate the effectiveness of treatments in situations in which the traditional imaging methods cannot give reliable information. The method is also useful in

the diagnostics of cardiovascular, neurological and inflammatory diseases, and other disorders.

The Finnish National Centre in Turku provides services for all the Finnish hospitals. Following the Amersham contract, the Centre now has four PET scanners, which can be used for whole body scanning. In 2002, nearly 1100 PET studies, mainly on cancer patients, were conducted in Turku.



# NEW CRITERIA FOR UNIVERSITY DEGREES

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY DEGREES ARE BEING SPRUCED UP AT THE MOMENT. THE INTENTION IS TO CONVERGE THEM SO THAT IN THE FUTURE STUDENTS CAN MORE EASILY STUDY FOR A DEGREE IN MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY. THE GOAL IS TO CREATE A COMMON EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA.

In Finland, the Bologna Process is moving forward at a brisk pace. The plan is to have the new degree system in place from the beginning of the academic year 2005-2006, while the year 2010 has been established as the deadline for the process for the whole of Europe.

The Bologna Process not only represents a significant structural change, it also involves a change in the content and pedagogy of university education. **Keijo Virtanen**, Rector of the University of Turku, has said that it provides the perfect opportunity to reform the curricula.

Finland aims to reform the degree system within the next two years with quality assurance being a fundamental aspect of the process. On the one hand, the lower intermediate degree will become compulsory, and on the other, the credit system will be modified to make it compatible with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

## **Increasing student mobility**

In essence, the goal of the Bologna Process is to stand-

ardise the structure of European university degrees to the greatest extent possible. The process is an international effort, but it also means that each country must undergo a thorough "spring-cleaning" on a national and internal level as well. The intention is to promote student mobility in Europe and to facilitate the comparison of degrees and course opportunities. Since more than 30 European countries are participating, the process presents considerable challenges on many levels.

The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Turku, **Riitta Pyykkö**, was appointed to coordinate the national project which aims to further the Bologna Process in all the faculties of humanities in Finland. In all, there are seven disciplines, and the responsibility for them has been divided among the universities. In addition to Dr. Pyykkö, the national coordinator for medicine, Dr. **Jouko Suonpää**, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, is based at the University of Turku.

The Finnish schedule is extremely tight. The process



began in 2001, and by the end of this year, 2003, Dr. Pyykkö and her team will file an intermediate report. Then, by the end of 2004, the working group will give its recommendations regarding the objectives of the new degree system. Finland intends to provide a transitional period until the year 2008 for those students who are studying under the old system. "This autumn, the degree requirements were codified in Finnish legislation", adds Dr. Pyykkö.

#### **Pedagogical reform presents a challenge**

**Taina Syrjämaa**, Senior Assistant at the Department of General History, is a member of a project called Tuning Educational Structures in Europe, where she and her discipline represent the University of Turku. She has also taken part in a pilot evaluation project called the Transnational European Evaluation Project. CLIOHnet is called the European History Network. "Transparency, reliability and quality assurance are the essential goals for the process", says Syrjämaa. Pedagogical reform is a complex issue, since different teaching methods must be taken into account.

Syrjämaa believes that freedom of choice and the number of individual degrees will increase along with the reform. Hybrid degrees which comprise, for example, a lower degree and two higher degrees may become more common.

Moreover, social, communicational and linguistic

skills will be integrated into the degree. While the demands of working life will be taken into consideration, the labour market will not, however, dictate the content of degrees in the future.

#### **Professional and scientific goals**

The coordinator of the working group for social sciences is Professor **Kaarle Nordenstreng** from the University of Tampere. The group also includes the heads of academic and student affairs from each university. "We intend to pay attention to both professional and scientific goals", emphasises **Raija Roslakka**, Head of Academic and Student Affairs, and **Susanna Kärki**, International Officer of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Turku.

"The degree structure is going to be a two-tiered one, with the student accumulating 180 + 120 credits. The lower degree could be a genuinely independent degree, after which students could complete the higher degree abroad if they wish, Roslakka argues.

During the discussion, Roslakka brings up issues regarding qualifications and contacts with employers. Furthermore, professional associations will be keeping a close eye on the reform to make sure the quality of education does not deteriorate. Also on the agenda is the selection of students for degree programmes. In addition, the names of degrees and other terms must be addressed, since at the moment these are very difficult to compare. ■



# Ticket to ride: *from Turku to Europe*

EUROPE HAS MANY DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS. THE EUROPEAN STUDIES MASTER'S PROGRAMME INVITES STUDENTS ON A JOURNEY OF EXPLORATION TO EUROPE.

The programme focuses on three aspects, the first one being the methodology and theory of science, with particular emphasis on comparative methods. The issues are viewed from a socio-political and societal point of view. The second aspect includes the activities, structures and inner dynamics of the EU and Europe, while the third consists of the external relations of the EU and its role and position in a global context. The last study block concentrates mainly on human rights issues.

"The programme attracts many students because it offers them specialised knowledge in matters concerning small member states. Transatlantic relations and foreign affairs of the EU are other competence areas that have interested students," says **Susanna Kärki**, International Officer of the Faculty of Social Sciences. She is in charge of coordinating the new study programme at the University of Turku.

The multi-disciplinary one-year programme began in the autumn of 2003. The programme is mainly organised by the Jean Monnet Centre of the University of Turku, together with the Swedish-language Åbo Akademi University and the Turku School of Economics and Business Administration.

## Wide range of expertise

The University of Turku has top experts in social policy and also in matters concerning the EU, whereas Åbo Akademi University can provide expert knowledge on human rights issues. The Director of the Jean Monnet Centre of the University of Turku, Professor **Esko Antola**, is one of the top Finnish specialists in European affairs. He is frequently interviewed on national television and for newspaper articles as an expert on matters relating to the European Union. Every time something significant happens in the

European Union, Antola is asked to comment. This happened, for example, last autumn in connection with the drafting of the EU Constitution.

For expertise on human rights issues, you can turn to the neighbouring Åbo Akademi University, where Dr **Martin Scheinin** is Professor of Constitutional and International Law and Director of the Institute for Human Rights. Professor **Mika Widgren** from the Turku School of Economics and Business Administration provides an economic perspective, while Dr **Olli Kangas** is Professor of Social Policy, and one of the foremost Finnish specialists in his field. All these experts, as well as international guest lecturers, teach in the European Studies Master's Programme.

## Courses partly virtual

Thirteen students started the study programme at the beginning of the autumn term. "The programme attracted a lot of attention, and we received a huge number of applications," Kärki points out. "The study programme comprises 120 ECTS, of which the Master's Thesis accounts for 40 ECTS. It is open to students who have completed a Bachelor's degree at university level. The instruction is given in English, and the programme includes both lectures and seminars. New technology and virtual instruction is also used: for instance, students may write essays online and receive comments in the WebCT environment. The Turku University Centre for Extension Studies is providing us with the necessary competence in this field."

The first participants come from Germany, Estonia, Latvia, the USA, Great Britain, Spain, China, and Finland. They can also participate in social activities: for instance, the students were introduced to Finnish sauna culture on an excursion to the island of Hirvensalo, just off the coast of Turku. ■

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# THE NEW IDENTITIES OF THE BALTIC SEA REGION



THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE OPENING UP OF EASTERN EUROPE HAVE CREATED A NEW ATMOSPHERE IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION. THE NEW REGIONAL AND EUROPEAN CONNECTIONS GIVE RISE TO FRESH IDEAS AND NEW CO-OPERATION. THE PROCESS IS BEING FURTHERED BY THE ONGOING EXPANSION OF THE EU.

The new approach was reflected in the international scientific conference entitled *The Baltic World as a Multicultural Space*, held in Turku in June.

National identity, the role of minorities in society, the economy, research and education systems, and information flow were studied, not in the spirit of opposition and rejection but in a spirit of open cultural interaction.

“The content of the conference was as successful as we had hoped,” says the scientific director of the conference, docent **Marko Lehti**. All in all 135 researchers from 16 different countries shed light on the dimensions of multiculturalism from various viewpoints.

Conferences on Baltic Studies have been held since the 1960s in alternate years in the United States and Sweden and, since 1995, also in the Baltic countries.

## Frontiers are falling

Whereas the previous conferences have mainly focused on studying the three Baltic countries, the perspective was now essentially broader and scientifically more productive. According to Marko Lehti, the conference showed that the special quality and uniqueness of the historical and social phenomena in the traditional Baltic countries can be seen only if they are examined in a wider context. The geographical and national boundaries are always too restrictive and categorical.

For instance, the conference brought together North European and Baltic researchers, who had formerly kept to their own circles. Lehti mentions Professor **Bernd Henningsen** from Greifswald. In his speech, Henningsen discussed the Nordic education system and found it to be a suitable model for the development of the whole Baltic Sea region, which would give the area a special stamp in rela-

tion to the European Union.

Many speeches touched on the questions raised by the future expansion of the European Union. Doctor **David Smith** from the University of Glasgow discussed the position of the Russian population in the Baltic countries. After the expansion, the EU is going to have a minority of some 1.5 million Russians. How will they identify themselves in relation to Russia, to their home, to their national state, and to the European Union?

Smith noted that the Russian population in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania cannot be considered as uniform a group as the Baltic Germans – the Russians in Estonia and those in Latvia are rather distinct groups. On the other hand, the Russian population has a more positive attitude towards the EU than the rest of the Estonians and Latvians. Will they be “the model citizens” of the European Union?

### THE BALTIC SEA REGION UNIVERSITY NETWORK

The Baltic Sea Region University Network was founded in Turku in 2000. The Network utilises the expertise and cooperation of the Universities of the Baltic Sea region. Its activities are coordinated by the University of Turku. At the moment, the network includes 19 member institutions.

### MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

Estonian Agricultural University  
Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia  
Kaliningrad State Technical University  
Kaliningrad State University  
Kaunas University of Technology  
Klaipeda University  
Medical University of Gdansk  
Riga Technical University  
St. Petersburg State University  
Tallinn Pedagogical University  
Tallinn Technical University  
Gdansk University of Technology  
University of Gdansk  
University of Latvia  
University of Tartu  
University of Turku  
University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn  
Warsaw School of Economics  
Vilnius University



Marko Lehti, the scientific director of the conference.

Professor **Vejas Liulevicius** from the United States pointed out that in the previous decades, national identity in the Baltic countries has been exclusive and very much based on ethnic background. This has efficiently inhibited open interaction. However, this need not be the case, nor has it always been so. As an example, he discussed four Germans, who, at the beginning of the 20th century, adopted Lithuanian nationality and were active in the Lithuanian national movement. The borders between nationalities can be open.

#### The discussion continues

The history of the conferences on Baltic Studies reflects the great upheavals that have affected Eastern Europe and the whole world. Originally, the conferences were held by Baltic organisations in Sweden and the United States. The meetings reflected the Cold War situation and

the emigrant perspective.

In the 1990s, the conferences were characterised by the new situation created by the liberation of Eastern Europe, and the efforts of the Baltic countries to come to terms with the past and to face new challenges. However, two years ago in a conference held in Tartu, a strong need arose to widen the perspective to include the whole of the Baltic Sea region and questions concerning European interaction.

Professor **Riitta Pyykkö** and coordinator **Tarja Hyppönen** from the University of Turku participated in the Tartu Conference. "It was in Tartu that we first offered to host the conference, which was held in Turku in June," Pyykkö and Hyppönen explain.

"The offer was accepted and we were expected to bring a new and more expansive perspective to the

content of the conference. We seem to have succeeded," Pyykkö says. "The preparations were made easier by the fact that during the last few years we have been constructing the Baltic Sea Region University Network, which already includes 19 of the universities in the region. The City of Turku also participated in the organisation of the conference."

"A lively discussion on the themes of the conference continued in the symposium on the multicultural metropolis held a week later at St. Petersburg State University," says Marko Lehti. The next European Conference on Baltic Studies will be held in 2005 in Latvia. Through the conferences, international cooperation among the researchers makes an important contribution to facing the challenges of the region's future. ■



Members of the Student Union of the University of Turku, gathered together in this picture in 1926.

## Students in the Twenties

The Student Union, which was founded in 1922, had 236 members at the beginning of the fall term of 1926. Nearly everyone could thus be present on occasions such as this. Today, in 2003, the Student Union has around 12,000 members!■



# THE BALTIC SEA IS BECOMING EUTROPHIC AND TURNING INTO A LAKE

THE BALTIC SEA IS TURNING INTO A LAKE, ITS SALINITY IS DECLINING, AND THE BALTIC HERRING IS SUFFERING FROM LACK OF NUTRITION. FINNISH ARCHIPELAGO SEA RESEARCHERS ARE MAKING GRIM PROGNOSSES.

**Ilppo Vuorinen**, Director of the Archipelago Research Institute, and station manager **Jari Hänninen** base their opinion of the state of the Baltic Sea on research that has documented, among other things, water temperature and salinity levels so that they form a totally comprehensive series extending over decades. The Institute personnel conduct extensive field studies on the island of Seili during the summer season and work the other half of the year in Turku.

## Significant decrease in benthic organisms

The Archipelago Research Institute of the University of Turku is located on the island of Seili in Nauvo, which is about an hour away from Turku. The Institute has facilities at the University campus in Turku, while the Institute proper is situated on Seili. A field station on the island of Lohm and the research vessel Aurelia are also at the disposal of researchers. "In summer 2003, we conducted a study with students that documented plankton specimens from a fairly large sea area. For instance, the amphipod

*Monoporeia affinis*, which was abundant ten years ago, is now almost extinct."

The Baltic Sea is becoming eutrophic because it is quite shallow and its coasts are densely populated. In addition, drainage from the land is increasing and the exchange of water with the open ocean is slow, because the Danish straits are shallow and narrow. Every year around Christmas, an influx of saline water is expected through the Danish straits to the Baltic Sea, but the basins of the Gotland Deep are filled first and no saline water is left for the northern parts of the Baltic Sea. Coastline erosion is increasing, partly due to the busy passenger ferry traffic between Finland and Sweden, which accelerates the disintegration of the soft coastal sediments.

## Baltic herring suffering from the lack of nutrition

"The sea water forms separate layers so that the freshwater layer is on top of the salt water, and so the lower layer is soon left without oxygen," Vuorinen explains. "The herring is simply starving for lack of nutrition. In a study conducted in the 1980s, the herring's mean length was 22 cm. In the 1990s, it measured only 16 cm. The consequences of eutrophication are severe." ■



The Archipelago Research Institute has facilities on the island of Seili with a beautiful sea view. The history of the island is unique. It used to house a hospital for lepers, where these poor souls were literally abandoned. Later, the facility became a mental institution for 'difficult' women. However, Jari Hänninen (on the left), Ilppo Vuorinen, and Paula Räsänen work on the island voluntarily. Seili is a popular location for conferences. In October, the island was populated by "batmen", researchers involved in the study of bats

# BROWNFIELDS FOREVER? BRINGING URBAN WASTELANDS INTO USE

DECAYING INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS, WAREHOUSES, RAILWAY TRACKS, TRAFFIC AREAS, LAND THAT IS CONTAMINATED OR LITTERED WITH RUBBISH, OFTEN WITH UNCLEAR OWNERSHIP – AND ALL THIS PRACTICALLY IN THE CITY CENTRE. SOUNDS ATTRACTIVE, DOESN'T IT?

At least that seems to be the opinion of **Harri Andersson**, Professor of Human Geography at the University of Turku, who finds these obscure wastelands fascinating. They even have a fine name – urban brownfields. The development of such areas is a typical phase in the evolution of Western cities.

Towns that had previously depended on trade and crafts for their livelihood started to industrialise rapidly in the 19th century. Factories were built outside the actual grid-plan area, usually along railway lines, waterways, or roads. Urban settlement spread beyond this industrial zone to new suburban areas. Later on, the original industries disappeared or moved further away to locations with better communications, which created a wasteland area, called an industrial crater, between the inner city and the suburbs.

## Turku Brownfields

Because Turku has also gone through the above-mentioned process, a multi-disciplinary research team, led by Professor Andersson, has started to work on a project focusing on the brownfield sites of Turku. The venture is being carried out in cooperation with the City of Turku and is mainly financed by the Ministry of the Environment.

Urban development and planning are starting points for Andersson's research team. The team, encompassing geographers, biologists, sociologists, and historians, will study the brownfield sites lying between the eastern edge of the grid-plan area and the southwestern corner of

the city, i.e. the port, following the railway tracks.

Turku is still going through the last phase of the development – industrial areas, warehouses, and other such facilities are being moved further and further away from the city into less expensive and more suitable areas. Thus, brownfield sites can contribute to inner city development by provid-



ing more open space. Nevertheless, these areas may also cause problems, the most serious of which tend to be the poor condition of the buildings and the severely contaminated state of former industrial areas.

## Integrating the city

International research on brownfields is primarily concerned with cleaning up the soil in former industrial areas and restoring these areas for beneficial use. While research on these issues has been carried out in North American cities for a long time, the same themes have also attracted interest in Europe, where information on this field is collected through the Clarinet Network. Research on brownfields was in fact a sub-theme in the EU's Fifth Framework Programme. Because urban areas are

valuable, the starting point of the research is, first and foremost, the financial gain that can be obtained by reusing the land.

In Finland, the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland has also focused its research on soil-related issues. However, the principal goal of the research team in Turku is to integrate and rehabilitate the city and make it into the best possible functional environment.

"Of course the contamination levels of land areas and buildings are also an important research topic in Turku, but they represent only one of the five theme areas of the project," Andersson explains. The other four themes are environmental history, biodiversity, the built environment, ownership issues, and the renewal capacity of the areas.

Environmental history looks at the evolution of the area, first from undeveloped land into a built environment, and then into an urban wasteland. It is classic historical research, based on sources such as town surveys, research reports, newspaper articles, old maps and photographs.

## Digital geographic information archive

For research into the other four theme areas of the project, it is vital to have a digital geographic information archive of the area. The archive is constructed by entering factual information about different themes into a common database. Geographical coordinates are also incorporated into the archive, enabling map-based searches of the area. It is also possible to produce map profiles, which



allow one to describe and analyse various features of an area when making plans concerning its future use.

The natural conditions, flora and fauna, buildings, real property owners, and possibly contaminated areas may be presented in one map. The map profiles may also show past or future urban development projects and city plans.

Early this year, Andersson participated in the Brownfields as Opportunities for Sustainable Development conference in Venice. What especially attracted the attention of the conference audience in Andersson's presentation was the inventory of greenfield sites, which was a completely new perspective. Nature has returned to the wastelands: there are species in these areas that are not found in the city. There is always a great demand for green belts, so the question remains: how can these areas be brought into recreational use? In the worst-case scenario, a good greenfield site is destroyed, while a new one is constructed in its place.

The Department of Geography at the University of Turku is planning to participate in an international exhibition organised by the EU called In-

dustrial Heritage between Land and Sea. Other project participants come from Southern Europe: Portugal, France, Italy, and Greece. The aim of the project is to build a large exhibition, which will tour all the participating cities.

#### **Checklist for city planning**

As part of the project, an inventory of the current buildings and functions of the brownfield sites of Turku has already been made, and the data have been entered in a geographic information system. Current and past functions have been compared, and the possible reuse of the built environment has also been investigated. The visual environment of the area has been photographed and archived in its entirety.

The database may be used, for instance, as a 'checklist' by urban planners. The project has also influenced many of the objectives of the recently approved environmental strategy of the City of Turku.

A book will be published on the research done within the project so far. "We believe that our research project will help Turku become a more integrated, enjoyable, and functional city," Andersson says. ■

- Brownfield sites can contribute to inner city development by providing more open space, says Professor Harri Andersson.





## A new boom in the

TEXT KIMMO AHONEN & JUHA ROSENQUIST ■ PHOTO THE FINNISH FILM ARCHIVE

**The turn of the new century marked a boom period for Finnish films. The success could be seen both in increased film production and, specifically, in the significant rise in attendance figures.**

The general public has found its way back to the box office to see new Finnish films. This has not merely benefited a few major productions, but also a large number of very diverse films. The three-year period between 1999 and 2001 has entered the record books as one of the most productive times in Finnish film history, with the number of feature films and documentaries in distribution totalling 62. The year 1999 in particular proved to be a miraculous year: in the first three months alone, almost a million people had gone to see new Finnish films. What, howev-

er, does the boom in the Finnish cinema imply, and what are the factors that made it possible?

The status of the Finnish cinema and its public image are distinctly different from what they were ten years ago. The economic recession of the early 1990s had a drastic effect on the film industry. As far as attendance figures and the general production atmosphere were concerned, the period was nothing short of dismal. The nadir was reached when tabloid papers began to write about the slump in domestic film production and to calculate how much of the taxpayers' money was being squandered to subsidise films. However, the industry did recover from this slump, with success finally culminating around the year 2000.

### **'Art' vs. 'entertainment'**

Economic recovery enabled a significant increase in subsidies after the mid-1990s. It became evident that, in a small market such as Finland, film production cannot prosper without public funding. As late as the 1980s, much of the funding was doled out to productions that were considered to have no commercial prospects.

In the 1990s, however, the notion of subsidies totally changed: funding is no longer allocated only to so-called art films that have a very narrow audience base, but to all films, including those that may become box-office hits. In fact, one of the reasons for the boom is the abandonment of the terms 'art' and 'entertainment', which were previously regarded as polar opposites. Now

Almost half a million people saw Aki Kaurismäki's *Drifting clouds* in 1996. *The Man Without a Past* won the Grand Prix at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival.

# Finnish Cinema

the most important aspect is to provide for film culture as a whole, in which even lightweight entertainment serves a specific function.

Another important factor for the growth in the late 1990s is undoubtedly the development and increasing popularity of Finnish soap operas. TV productions have offered increased job opportunities, through which film crews have gained valuable experience. At the same time, young filmmakers have been able to combine national themes with Hollywood-style narrative techniques. Then, by casting actors who are popular among teenagers, the blueprint for making a box-office hit was discovered. On the one hand, viewers and critics who have been reared on television and Hollywood action were now given a shared cinematic language, and on the other, the older audience members still find the national themes very appealing. Finally, the publicity value of the Finnish cinema was utilised in a novel way, and as a result of Hollywood-style marketing, film premieres have become national media events.

## From rural pics to relationship dramas

At times, the enthusiasm for the boom in the Finnish cinema has been excessive, so that it runs the risk of turning into an exaggerated marketing spiel. After all, the current success is not unique in the history of national film production. During the genuine golden age of Finnish cinema, between the 1930s and 1950s, even box-office failures could attract audiences as wide as the major blockbusters of today.

Therefore, it is only fair to ask whether the recent boom offers anything new in terms of content to the Finnish cinema, or if the mainstream film production is merely imitating American narratives.

The recent boom cannot be traced back to a single film or filmmaker. Although the success peaked around 2000, the first steps on that road were taken in the early 1990s when the nostalgia-evoking hit films of director **Markku Pölönen** blazed the trail for others. In all, themes that deal with Finland's recent past and the Second World War have been strongly represented in the contemporary cinema. Depictions of rural societies, for instance, appeal to the general public, which still remembers rural depopulation and the subsequent urbanisation of Finnish society in the 1950s. Finnish war films, on the other hand, have traditionally depicted a collective group of men, but have lately examined war from the standpoint of individuals, emotions or the home front. Another popular theme has been the depiction of 'great men', nostalgic insights into popular culture, films that paint an affectionate picture of the colourful lives of pop and rock musicians. Lightweight relationship dramas intended for young people have also been successful.

However, the success of these movies has paved the way for films that deal with loftier social issues, such as **Jarmo Lampela's** body of work. Therefore, the public is obviously interested in a wide variety of films, both artistically ambitious projects and dramas with sheer entertainment value.

## Drifting on cloud nine

On the whole, the success of the Finnish cinema has been confined to our own linguistic and cultural area, as is typical with any national film industry. The only well-known Finnish filmmakers beyond our borders are the Kaurismäki brothers, Aki in particular. The success of **Aki Kaurismäki** is, in fact, one of the key factors that have contributed to the recent boom in the Finnish cinema. His widespread popularity has demonstrated that even international audiences can find Finnish themes appealing.

Kaurismäki's minimalist films already garnered attention in the 1980s, and he established an avid group of followers even when the general public in Finland did not show great interest in his films. While only 55,000 people saw *Drifting Clouds* (*Kauas pilvet karkeaavat*, 1996) in Finland, almost 400,000 went to see it across Europe. It was not until *The Man Without a Past* (*Mies vailla menneisyyttä*, 2002) won the Grand Prix at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival, and received an Oscar nomination the following year, that the film made its mark on the Finnish box office. Now Kaurismäki is regarded as a driving force behind the Finnish cinema, although his films used to be considered difficult or too arty.

In conclusion, it may not be particularly accurate to talk about a collective boom for the Finnish cinema. The recent growth has, in fact, more to do with the success of a diverse group of individual films, which are all aimed at different segments of the audience. ■



TEXT PAULA HEINO ■ PHOTO VESA-MATTI VÄÄRÄ

# THE ART TREASURES OF TURKU

FOR A LONG TIME, TURKU SERVED AS A GATEWAY THROUGH WHICH CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC INFLUENCES ARRIVED IN FINLAND. EVEN TODAY, A STROLL ALONG THE RIVER AURA OFFERS OLD AND NEW ARTISTIC TREASURES.

A compelling exhibition Pop International was recently held in the Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art (WAM). The works were from the collections of the Ludwig Museum in Cologne. Even after decades, these large colourful works challenge the viewers to take a stand and dare them to look: this is our everyday life! In the midst of Pop Art classics, such as the works of *Andy Warhol* and *Robert Rauschenberg*, **Lars Saari** draws a broad curve with his hand and conducts us through the artistic history of Turku. Saari is a lecturer in Art History at the University of Turku.

## Focus moved from Turku to Helsinki

Throughout the period of Swedish rule from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, Turku was Finland's foremost town, the intellectual and cultural centre of the country. A castle was built at the mouth of the River Aura, and the country's only cathedral was consecrated in 1300. In 1640, Finland's first university, the Academy of Turku, was established, although it was moved to Helsinki af-

ter the great fire of 1827, which almost completely destroyed the city. For a few years in the early nineteenth century, Turku was in fact the official capital of the country.

"The first institution in the country to teach fine arts, the Drawing School of Turku was founded in 1830, and it is still fully functional as part of Turku Polytechnic," Saari points out.

In Turku Polytechnic, it is possible to study Music, Performing Arts, Communication and Media Arts, Fine Arts, Design, and Restoration. Art History can be studied in two universities: the University of Turku and the Swedish-language Åbo Akademi University. In both institutions, the focal point of the education is modern art, which has broken away from the traditional realistic representation, and the contemporary art of the last few decades, which emphasises the idea and the realisation of the work.

In the twentieth century, the importance of Helsinki as a city for education and culture grew significant-

ly. "It is clear that the present cultural centre of Finland is its capital, Helsinki. Nevertheless, Turku is still a modern and visual city with numerous museums and interesting exhibitions."

## Modernism and functionalism

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, new ideas streamed across the Baltic Sea to Finland, particularly via Turku.

"In the 1920s and 30s, the artistic atmosphere in Turku inspired a number of innovative artists and sculptors, whereas Helsinki was influenced by the more conservative nationalist tendencies from Germany. For instance, the artist **Otto Mäkilä**, who taught in the Drawing School of Turku, embraced Surrealism, which had developed in Central Europe. Modernism was reflected in pictorial art and architecture.

"Finnish functionalism was born in Turku. The architect **Alvar Aalto** lived in Turku and became a functionalist during those years. Aalto designed the Turun Sanomat news-

paper office building and the Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Paimio, which still attract foreign architects.

“**Erik Bryggman** is another renowned functionalist, whose works can be admired in Turku.”

The search for new ideas continued in the late 1960s. There was a strong underground movement in Turku and the radical artists looked for new ways of expression and style, for example in Pop Art. It was in this period that the World of Pigs by **Harro Koskinen** was created. Koskinen’s Pig Messiah even led to charges of blasphemy. At the time, art museums were so conservative that they did not exhibit his works until the 1980s.

### **Museums, Galleries, and Education**

According to Lars Saari, the long artistic traditions are still one of the strengths of Turku. “The Turku Art Museum, the Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, and the museums Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova are all excellent art museums. We also have several intriguing galleries, such as the Turku Graphic Artist’s Gallery Joella and Titanik, the gallery of the Artists’ Association Arte.”

All the above-mentioned museums and galleries, with the exception of the Turku Art Museum, are located by the River Aura, which runs through the city. The Turku Art Muse-

um has a special position in the Nordic arena, because it was founded by the Turku Art Society, which, after over 110 years of existence, is still in charge of the museum’s extensive collections. The Museum has the second most significant art collection in the country after the Ateneum Art Museum, located in Helsinki. The Turku Art Museum is in possession of some of the most remarkable works of Finnish visual art.

The Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art has multifarious functions. It serves not only as the museum of the local sculptor and as a caretaker of the permanent collection, but equally as the Turku City Art Museum and the Office of Fine Arts. The art education of children and young people is also an important part of the museum’s work. Together with the Pro Cultura Foundation, WAM has coordinated the Turku City Environmental Art Project, the results of which can

be seen all over Turku.

The two museums Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova, both well worth visiting, are supported by a private foundation. They house both a museum of history and archaeology and a museum of contemporary art.■

**Lars Saari next to Brillo Boxes (1964) by Andy Warhol. His own interests also lie in Pop Art. Saari has studied at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, which has the largest concentration of art research and museums in the world. The soap pad boxes and their clearly commercial, everyday world was found offensive in the 1960s.**



” Finnish functionalism was born in Turku

## ■ TURKU RESEARCH IMAGING SOLUTIONS FORMED

**Turku Research Imaging Solutions Oy (TRIS)** was formed in February 2003 by Amersham plc, in collaboration with the **Turku PET Centre (TPC)**. Together, this collaboration provides state-of-the-art imaging technology for the pharmaceutical industry.

PET is a nuclear medicine imaging technique and Amersham Health is the leading global pharmaceutical provider of diagnostic and predictive products and services.

TPC acquired the status of a Finnish National Research Institute in 1996. The centre employs over 40 members of staff, working together with over 50 researchers from various fields. Top scientific expertise is combined with excellent facilities and equipment. Turku PET Centre is located centrally within the university campus and the University Central Hospital..

# NEWS IN BRIEF

COMPILED BY PAULA HEINO JA ANNE PAASI ■ PHOTO VESA-MATTI VÄÄRÄ, TIETOKUVA OY AND COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS UNIT

## ■ INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL STARTED

The Turku International School started in Turku in August. The pupils come from international families or Finnish families from abroad living permanently or temporarily in Turku. The school is an integral part of Aurajoki school and the Teacher Training School of the university.

The International School boasts highly qualified teachers and about 70 pupils.



**Diabetes concerns the whole family, little Roosa in front. Professor Olli Simell from the DIPP Project behind Roosa.**

## ■ MANY FACTORS PREDISPOSE TO DIABETES

The annual incidence of childhood-onset insulin-dependent diabetes (**type 1 diabetes, IDDM**) is at a record high of nearly **50/100,000** children in Finland, where one child in 180 develops IDDM before the age of 15. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease, and about 500 Finnish children develop the disease every year.

The symptoms of diabetes are an abundant need to drink and urinate, tiredness and loss of weight. There are many external factors that may be related to the disease. It has been found that gaining a lot of weight as a baby and

later as a child may be a risk factor. Type 1 diabetes requires strict daily care. There is still no cure for diabetes.

In the Diabetes Prediction and Prevention (DIPP) project, individuals in the population at genetic risk for IDMM are recognised at birth. Those at genetic risk are invited to participate in an immunological follow-up.

The DIPP Project is being carried out at the Departments of Pediatrics of Turku, Oulu and Tampere Universities. So far, some 75,000 newborns have been screened for the risk alleles. Susceptibility alleles for type 1 diabetes are carried by 15 percent of the newborns. Of those at genetic risk, 80 per cent are participating in the immunological follow-up.



**From the left: Professor emer. Kauko Mäkinen, Akira Hamura attending the course and docent Sára Karjalainen.**

## ■ JAPANESE DENTISTS TRAINED IN TURKU

The **Turku University Institute of Dentistry** is unique. It is the only institute in the world that offers international adult education in its field. "We are proud of exporting Finnish know-how in the field of dentistry. Caries is the most expensive disease known to mankind. The euros, yens and dollars invested in preventive dental care are wisely invested," says docent **Sára Karjalainen**, having welcomed a new group of Japanese dentists to Turku last August. The Turku Institute can boast of being the 'mother' of xylitol, used in preventive care against caries.

### ■ CELL IMAGING CORE ESTABLISHED

A new centre called the **Cell Imaging Core (CIC)** was established within the Centre for Biotechnology in Turku in October 2003. Here, living cells can be investigated with top-level technology. This offers a new perspective, e.g. on cancer research.

For the first time in Finland the new, demanding and expensive technique is within the reach of the ordinary researcher. According to **Kaisa M. Heiskanen Ph.D.**, the coordinator of the centre, the new centre will serve university research and private enterprise, and right from the start the capacity of the centre has been used from dawn to dusk. The Centre for Biotechnology is a joint research centre of the University of Turku and the Åbo Akademi University.



**THE TEAM OF TRANSLATORS**  
The translation of this English-language issue of *Aurora* was undertaken as a project by a team of translators from the Department of English Translation and Interpreting, under the guidance of lecturers Rosemary Mackenzie, Beryl Sandlund and Jacqueline Välimäki. From the right, *Beryl Sandlund, Rosemary Mackenzie, Jacqueline Välimäki, Piia Montonen, Kimmo Paukku* and missing from the picture *Taru Laine*.

### ■ THE SPANISH LANGUAGE GAINS GROUND

Is the Spanish language exotic, as the Finns usually think? "Not at all", says Professor of Spanish Language and Culture, **Alberto Carcedo González**. "Spanish is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, and in the near future its significance will grow immensely". Professor Carcedo pleads with the Finnish authorities to make sure that there are enough teachers and translators of Spanish in Finland.

Alberto Carcedo was among 40 experts nominated for professorships in the University of Tuku in 2003.



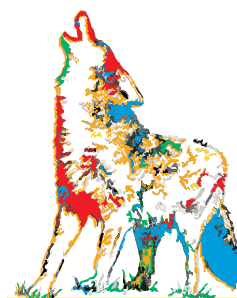
### ■ ITALIAN NOVEL TRANSLATED BY STUDENTS

The students of **Italian Language and Culture at Turku University** have translated a novel by the Italian author Dino Satriano. **Pauliina de Anna**, a lecturer in the department says how happy she is to be able to do real translation work with the students. Altogether 23 students were involved in the workshops producing the translation, starting from January 2003. The work is now completed. This was not the department's first book project and Pauliina de Anna hopes it will not be the last either.

"Un matrimonio" tells the story of an Italian-Finnish marriage and two very different societies. The book has been published by Like, a Finnish publishing company based in Tampere.



From the left: *Taina Salesto, Liisa Sivonen, Pauliina de Anna, Suvi Parviainen* and *Sanna Autere*.



# THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE

WHAT IS EITHER GREEN, RED, BLUE, YELLOW, PURPLE, WHITE, BLACK OR PINK? A TURKU STUDENT IN HIS OR HER OVERALLS. WHERE CAN YOU GO TO PARTIES, LOOK AFTER YOUR INTERESTS, RIDE A UNICYCLE AND PLAY INSTRUMENTS OR ROLE GAMES? IN DIFFERENT TURKU STUDENT ORGANISATIONS, OF COURSE.



University students are easy to recognise because of their strange dress-sense. On special occasions, they often wear overalls in a different colour for every major subject. Chemists, for example, wear red, students of educational sciences dress in white, while history majors scurry about in their black capes.

On May 1, Finnish students also put on a white cap, which they can wear after graduating from secondary school. Since May Day is an uninhibited celebration of spring, students and workers, most caps are soon moistened with splashes of sparkling wine.

### **The Student Union brings students together**

There are other things besides funny hats that bring students together in the University of Turku. In Finnish universities every undergraduate belongs to a student union, in our case, the Student Union of the University of Turku (TYU).

The Student Union looks

after your interests and offers a variety of services. In addition, the Union has numerous sub-organisations, such as faculty and departmental associations or clubs for each study programme. They attend to your particular interests, throw parties that may have something or nothing at all to do with your field of study, and, in general, make you feel more than welcome.

The total number of student associations means there is something for everyone. There are associations for students from particular regions in Finland and for all political and religious viewpoints or sexual preferences. You can also find a club for every imaginable interest, be it scouting, singing in a choir or playing in a brass band, photography, anime, theatre, sports, drinking, literature, organic food, heavy metal, computers or strategic games.

Life simply cannot be dull if you study in Turku. And if you don't have the energy to go to parties, you can always be elected to a committee so you'll be able to organise them. Go out and have fun! Don't spend the best years of your life alone.■

**The Student Union of the University of Turku offers the following services to all international students: Tutors meet exchange students at the airport or harbour and offer help with the practical matters during the first few days. The tutor is the first Finnish contact for the foreign students, making sure they can manage in their everyday affairs. They also keep the exchange students company in their spare time.**

**With the starting package, each international student is provided with basic household items. The starting package costs 35 euros, including a 25-euro deposit, which is refunded when the package is returned.**



**All members of the Student Union receive the following benefits:**

**HEALTH CARE**

- Subsidised student meals in student restaurants and cafés
- Reduced fares on trains, buses etc.
- Student discounts in certain shops etc.

**COUNSELLING**

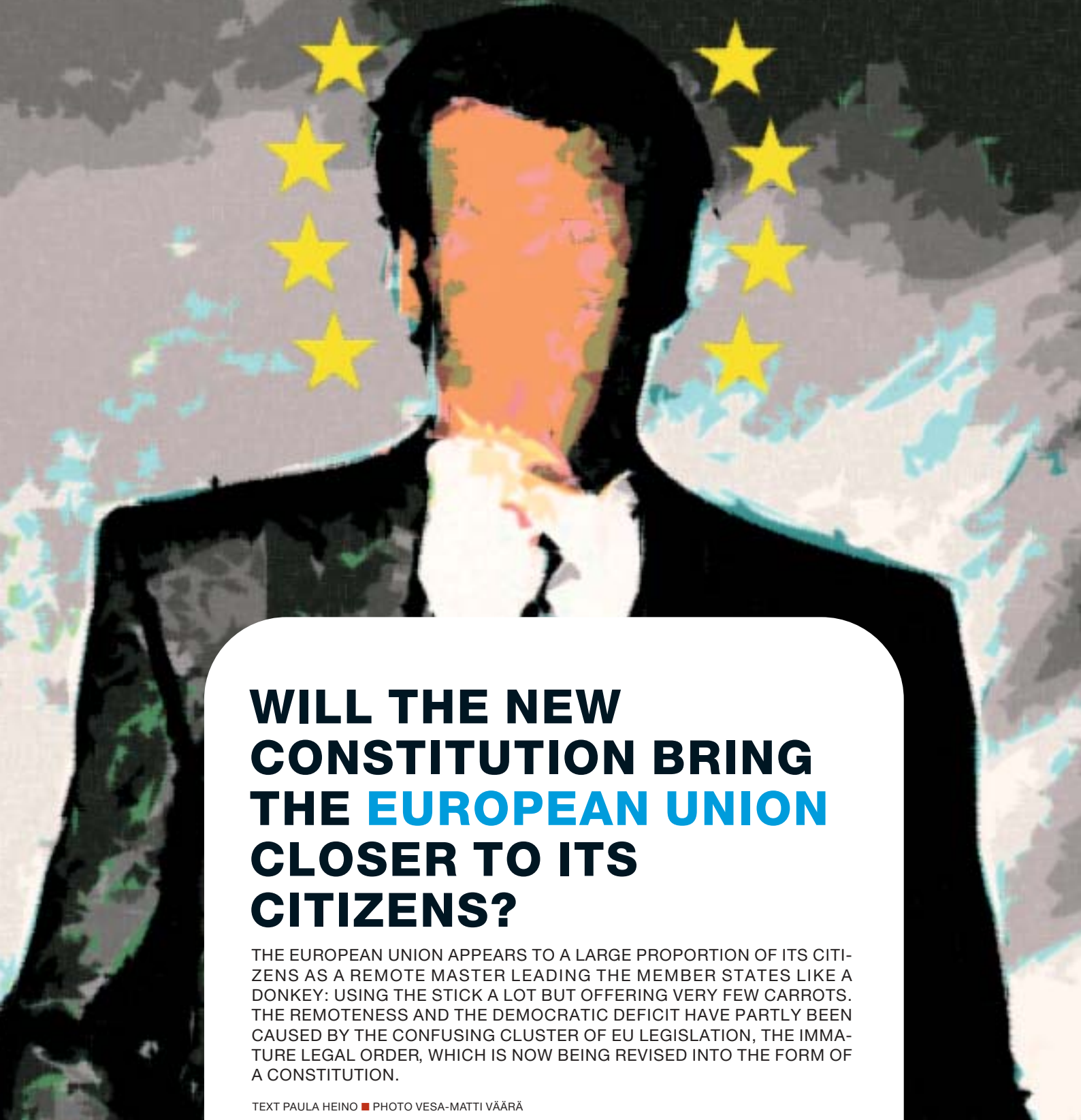
- Legal consultation
- Loan Fund
- Cultural and sporting events

**The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) of the Student Union offers the international students among other things:**

- Trips and country weekends
- Parties
- Skating and ice-hockey

**Jenni Nikula introducing the starting package for international students.**





## WILL THE NEW CONSTITUTION BRING THE EUROPEAN UNION CLOSER TO ITS CITIZENS?

THE EUROPEAN UNION APPEARS TO A LARGE PROPORTION OF ITS CITIZENS AS A REMOTE MASTER LEADING THE MEMBER STATES LIKE A DONKEY: USING THE STICK A LOT BUT OFFERING VERY FEW CARROTS. THE REMOTENESS AND THE DEMOCRATIC DEFICIT HAVE PARTLY BEEN CAUSED BY THE CONFUSING CLUSTER OF EU LEGISLATION, THE IMMATURE LEGAL ORDER, WHICH IS NOW BEING REVISED INTO THE FORM OF A CONSTITUTION.

TEXT PAULA HEINO ■ PHOTO VESA-MATTI VÄÄRÄ

A treaty establishing the constitution for the European Union is currently being drafted. It outlines the nature of the Union, its jurisdiction, and the rights of its citizens.

It is hoped that the new constitution will make the Union's operations more open, clearer, efficient and democratic.

No one knows yet what the final result of the Intergovernmental Conference of the EU Member states will be. At least the legal experts are hoping that it will result

in a common legal order fulfilling the demands for a uniform content. The system should be coherent in order to benefit the citizens.



### From legislative odds and ends to a constitutional document

"The European Union has lacked a strong constitutional document, which the work of the EU convention will now provide. Instead of a constitution, the Union has had a very incoherent cluster of treaties, which from the constitutional point of view

seems as a motley collection of rules and regulations", say Professor of Constitutional Law, **Veli-Pekka Viljanen**, and acting Professor of European Law, **Janne Salminen**, from the Faculty of Law of the University of Turku.

The chair of European law is a new one at the University of Turku and the first permanent chair of its kind in Finland. The discipline covers the development of Constitutional Law at European level and provides the opportunity to study international issues, such as human rights issues.

A significant number of the decisions concerning the Finns is not covered by the Finnish Constitution. What is the position of the individual as an EU citizen?

“All Finnish citizens have dual citizenship. The constitution will make the exercise of power by the European Union more visible and more understandable. Currently, there is a democratic deficit. The central rules and regulations of the EU have been incoherent and only the experts have been able to decipher them. It is important to increase the credibility of the Union in the eyes of the citizens,” says Professor Viljanen.

The ongoing process deals with making the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights legally binding. The structure of the decision-making process in the Union and the principles concerning the position of its citizens are being made clearer.

**Core questions defined by the European Court of Justice**

“Many regulations of a very technical nature are to be found in the treaties establishing the European Union, hence at a very high level of legislation. On the other hand, some issues that are at the core of the judicial system have been unregulated and they have depended solely on judgments by the European Court of Justice of the European Community based in Luxembourg,” says Professor Salminen.

As the integration of the Union deepens and the Union expands in 2004, the citizenship dimension will be emphasised. This means that the nature of the judicial pillars of the whole system on which the union stands will have to be considered.



According to legal experts, one of the central issues is the attitude towards the European Convention of Human Rights within the Union, especially after the new member states enter the field.

According to Viljanen and Salminen, the preparations for the constitution have formed a successful and genuine Intergovernmental Conference. “It is no doubt difficult to make political changes to the draft Constitution.”

Finland has traditionally been seen in connection with the other Nordic countries. The themes common to the Nordic countries in the European Union have been those concerning openness and action on the small country front. However, the alignments have now partly disintegrated, as Finland is the only Nordic country to have adopted the single currency, the euro. Denmark is seen as trying to slow down the integration, while on the other hand, Sweden has now favoured the idea of a President of the European Union, whereas Finland has been sceptical about it.

Finnish legislation has taken quite a leap in an European and international direction in the past decade. Previously, the emphasis was on the national character of the law, but today the windows have been opened to the world. This is a natural consequence of the fact that many issues concerning, for example family legislation, have to be solved by several different states since international marriages and divorces are becoming increasingly common. Human rights and fundamental rights are also universal questions.

“Naturally, internationality is spreading farther than just across the EU,” Janne Salminen points out. It has been estimated that as many as a third of legal cases in the Supreme Administrative Court of Finland have a European Community dimension. This change in the legal culture is also an interesting learning experience. The legal discussion is spreading in waves not only within Europe but also to the other side of the Atlantic.



Professors Janne Salminen (left) and Veli-Pekka Viljanen strolling along the River Aura.

**TURKU LAW SCHOOL** Turku Law School is a cooperation organization involving the three universities in Turku: the Faculty of Law of the University of Turku, the Department of Law of Åbo Akademi University and the unit of Business Law of the Turku School of Economics and Business Administration. Currently, more than 30 law courses are being taught in English on a yearly basis. For example, International human rights is one theme that is becoming more relevant year by year. “Our Faculty is very qualified also on the Scandinavian level. We have a teacher exchange with e.g. the University of Louisville in the United States and the University of Upsala in Sweden, and we have very close cooperation with Åbo Akademi University,” says acting Professor Salminen.

For further information, please contact Ms Minna Kettunen, International Affairs Coordinator, Faculty of Law / Turku Law School, University of Turku, FIN-20014 Turku, Finland, Tel. +358 (0)2 333 6307, Fax +358 (0)2 333 6570 and e-mail [tls@utu.fi](mailto:tls@utu.fi)



## Women better drivers than men?

Female drivers are more safety-oriented than male drivers. Women drive less than men. They drive proportionally more on errands and less just for fun. Women also express more positive attitudes towards traffic regulations and safety than men, they commit fewer traffic offences and are more seldom involved in accidents.

Typical accidents for female drivers are accidents involving reversing and minor single-vehicle accidents. Female drivers typically lose control of their car in slippery road conditions while they are sober and driving at moderate speed. They have problems in vehicle handling and mastering traffic situations. The most typical male driver's loss-of-control accident takes place in good road conditions, when the driver is drunk and speeding.

**Sirkku Laapotti** M.A. (Psych.) did her Ph.D. on differences in attitudes, exposure, offences and accidents between young Finnish female and male drivers.

**What are young female drivers made of? Differences in Attitudes, Exposure, Offences and Accidents between Young Female and Male Drivers, *Annales Universitatis Turkuensis*, B 264, Turun yliopisto, Turku, 2003, ISBN 951-29-2517-6**

## Cardiovascular risk factors in childhood

Exposure to cardiovascular risk factors early in life induces changes in the arteries that contribute to the development of atherosclerosis. The risk factor profile, assessed in 12- to 18-year-old adolescents, predicts common adult carotid artery IMT, independently of contemporaneous risk factors. Earlier, there has been only limited direct evidence of the relationship between risk factors in childhood and adult atherosclerosis.

The cardiovascular risk in young Finns is probably the largest follow-

up study of cardiovascular risk factors from childhood to adolescence ever made. In 1980, over 3,500 children and adults all around Finland participated in the baseline study. Since then, they have been examined regularly. More than 200 publications and 20 Doctoral Dissertations have been generated from these data.

The 21-year follow-up study was carried out in winter 2001–2002. Over 2,200 young adults, now aged 24 to 39 years, participated in the study. The study team consisted of researchers from the universities of Turku, Helsinki, Kuopio, Oulu and Tampere.

**Raitakari OT, Juonala M, Kähönen M, Taittonen L, Laitinen T, Mäki-Torkko N, Järvisalo M, Uhari M, Jokinen E, Rönkä T, Åkerblom HK, Viikari JSA. *JAMA*, Nov 5, 2003; 290(17): 2277-2283.**

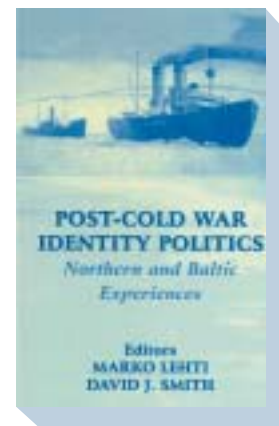
## Different forest types in Amazonia

In spite of their uniform appearance, the rain forests of the Amazonian lowlands consist of a mosaic of dozens or even hundreds of floristically differentiated forest types. Species distribution patterns are often linked with geology and soils and, in certain habitats, unique species assemblages and adaptations can be found.

The Turku University researchers **Hanna Tuomisto** and **Kalle Ruokolainen** have documented the rain forest plants in over 160 sites in the rain forests of Ecuador, Columbia and Peru. Together with **Markku Yli-Halla**, a researcher from MTT Agrifood Research Finland, they published an article in *Science* magazine in January 2003. The article is about the Western Amazonia rain forests and their plant variation. The results are of practical significance when planning the use of rain forests and their protection.

Tuomisto and Ruokolainen belong to the University of Turku Amazon Research Team.

**Tuomisto, H., Ruokolainen, K. & Yli-Halla, M. (2003) Dispersal, environment, and floristic variation of western Amazonian forests. *Science* 299: 241-244.**



## Post-Cold War Identity Politics

"Post-Cold War Identity Politics" maps the politics of identity and the emerging forms of co-operation and interaction in northern Europe.

It assesses whether the expanded conception of "Northern-ness" has the potential to become a new marker on the map of Europe. Of particular importance is the question of whether regional co-operation might yet bridge the divide between Russia and an ascendant and expansive Euro-Atlantic space. In this respect, the European North can be seen as a kind of litmus test for the new Europe as a whole.

This work highlights the existence of several co-existing region-building projects in northern Europe. The unifying factor is that they can all be understood as efforts by existing nations to redefine their role in Europe at a time when the meaning of sovereignty and boundaries is changing. **Marko Lehti and David J. Smith, (eds), Post-Cold War Identity Politics, Northern and Baltic Experiences, Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, ISBN 0714683515.**

# Babies learn as they sleep

**Newborn babies can learn to discriminate speech sounds even in their sleep. They cannot, however, yet distinguish between natural and synthetic sounds. Learning while sleeping seems to be particularly effective in infancy, when sleep is decidedly different than it is in adulthood.**

This last summer, **Olga Martynova**, M.Sc., completed her doctoral dissertation in psychology at the University of Turku. She had previously studied biology at St. Petersburg State University in Russia.

Martynova conducted her research at the Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience in cooperation with Turku University Central Hospital. The hospital provided a laboratory for the research team in its neonatal unit. Permission to study the newborn babies was obtained from the parents.

As part of the research, babies less than a week old had a small electrode cap placed on their head for a few hours in order to record changes in their EEG. The newborns were divided into groups, and certain sounds were repeatedly played to some of them at night when they were sleeping. This stage of the research provided a reliable database and took about two months to complete. In all, the study included 80 newborn babies

Initially, Martynova began her research in Docent **Marie Cheour's** team, but when Cheour moved to the United States to work as a researcher, Professor **Heikki Hämäläinen** became Martynova's advisor. The results of the study were reported in *Nature*.

## A RELIABLE METHOD

From the standpoint of speech and language acquisition theories, it is vital to know how newborn babies discriminate between sounds and learn speech. The aim of Martynova's dissertation was to study whether newborn babies and adults discriminate in different ways between speech sounds and whether newborn babies can also discriminate between sounds while sleeping. Research on speech acquisition is important, so that in the future speech impediments in young children can be treated.

The method used in the study is called mismatch negativity (MMN). This can be used as a reliable tool in research on newborn speech discrimination in all sleep stages as well as when the baby is awake. Mismatch negativity is an event-related potential (ERP) that provides an objective means of evaluating auditory discrimination.

## LEARNING BY PRACTICE

Martynova's doctoral dissertation demonstrates that sleeping newborn babies can be 'trained' to discriminate between speech sounds. In addition, the results show that newborn babies, unlike adults, probably process natural and synthetic sounds similarly. On the basis of the results, one can assume that newborn babies not only learn speech, but also hear other ambient sounds in their sleep.

In conclusion, the infant brain is not yet so specialised that it can process speech in the same way as the adult brain, but it begins to practise this effectively soon after birth.

■ **Olga Martynova worked on her dissertation in Turku for 3 years. "I'm going back to St. Petersburg now. I'm thinking of becoming a qualified psychologist, but the future is still open," says Olga, who has a husband and a two-year-old son in the city, which celebrates its tricentenary.**



