

Wasa Daily

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VAASA

Young people shine in Vaasa – strong belief in the future defying national concern



The residents of Vaasa continue to rank high on the happiness scale. For the sixth year in a row, the city's happiness survey shows stable well-being, with a score of 74.3 out of 100 - nearly identical to last year and a clear improvement from 69.6 five years ago.

The most striking result concerns young adults aged 15-34. While the national debate highlights growing anxiety among youth, Vaasa's figures point in the opposite direction. The group rates its current happiness at 71 and expects it to rise to an impressive 83 within five years.

– Young people in Vaasa have a surprisingly positive view of the future, says emeritus professor Markku Ojanen. So what makes Vaasa

residents happy? The survey points to close relationships, physical activity and a positive mindset. But one factor stands out: doing good for others. Those who engage in volunteer work are significantly happier.

– Small acts of kindness strengthen both the community and your own well-being, Ojanen notes.

Source: Vaasa.fi

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Machine learning improves position accuracy – integrity and reliability come first



With the help of machine learning, positioning technologies are taking a big step forward. New algorithms improve the accuracy and reliability of positioning while protecting users' privacy even better.

"Traditional GPS solutions rely on satellites and can be faulty in urban areas, for example," says Akpojoto Siemuri in his doctoral thesis at the University of Vaasa. He studies how adaptive machine learning and advanced sensor fusion can improve the accuracy, reliability, and efficiency of posi-

tioning.

"Machine learning enables positioning that uses environmental signals and learns continuously.

New methods can, for example, revolutionize the development of logistics, emergency services and smart cities. At the same time, privacy is ensured, as location data can be processed anonymously.

"In the future, positioning will work seamlessly both indoors and outdoors, without the user having to sacrifice their privacy," says Akpojoto Siemuri.

Source: Siemuri, Akpojoto (2026). Adaptive Localization with Machine Learning: Models, Methods, and Applications. Acta Wasaensia 578. Dissertation. University of Vaasa.

Image: Akpojoto Siemuri studies how adaptive machine learning and advanced sensor fusion can improve accuracy, reliability and efficiency in positioning. University of Vaasa. The image is free to use.

Image of the Week:



Eating healthy really isn't difficult.

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

The science profile: "Research without influence is unnecessary"

The University of Vaasa has appointed Strategy Professor Marko Kohtamäki as the Science Communicator of the Year. He is praised for his ability to make research understandable and for his involvement in the public debate.

Kohtamäki is one of the University's most followed researchers on LinkedIn and a frequent lecturer. "Research has to be useful in order to be meaningful," he says.

Photo: Riikka Kalmi, University of Vaasa



PETALAX

Arvoterveys has a clinic in Petalax

The Finnish diagnostics company Arvoterveys is now expanding its operations to Petalax in Ostrobothnia. From this spring, residents can book an appointment for testing at the new clinic at Petalantie 13 D. The company offers laboratory and imaging services to both private individuals and companies, and appointments can be easily booked online.

Arvoterveys has clinics in Helsinki, Turku - and Petalax! (Source: arvoterveys.fi)

EDITORIAL

Democracy's Important Line of Defense: The US Election This Autumn



The release of the V-Dem Democracy Report 2026 delivers a sobering verdict: the United States is no longer a liberal democracy. For the first time in over 50 years, the nation has been reclassified, its democratic standing eroded with a speed that researchers describe as unprecedented in modern history.

The report's "In Focus" section paints a stark picture of the past year. Under the second Trump presidency, we have witnessed what V-Dem terms the most rapid "executive aggrandizement" in the country's modern history. Legislative constraints on presidential power have plummeted to their lowest point in over a century. Civil rights, equality before the law, and freedom of expression have all deteriorated to levels not seen in 60 years. We see it in the purges of independent inspectors general, the weaponization of government agencies against perceived enemies, and the chilling effect on a free press and academia. The very architecture of checks and balances is being dismantled.

Yet, amidst this bleak assessment, the report offers one crucial caveat: the electoral components of American democracy remain largely unaffected. For now.

This "for now" is the most important phrase in the entire document. It tells us that while the guardrails of institutions are be-

ing systematically removed, the engine of democracy—the vote itself—is still running. The core mechanisms that allow citizens to choose their leaders remain, at this moment, intact. The elections scheduled for this autumn are therefore not just another routine vote. They have become the last line of defense.

The coming months will be a severe stress test. We have already seen attempts to undermine faith in the electoral process, to install loyalists in election administration roles, and to pass laws that could allow for the manipulation of results. The 2026 midterms will be fought not just over policy, but over the very question of whether the United States can begin a "U-turn" back toward democracy, or whether it will take the final, fatal step into electoral autocracy.

If the electoral process itself is compromised or if the results are not honored, the "liberal" aspects of democracy—the checks, the balances, the civil rights—will have no framework to return. The world is watching, because a democratic breakdown in the United States would be the final confirmation of the global "Great Reversal" V-Dem documents. The battle for America's democracy will be won or lost at the ballot box this autumn.

Image: United States Senate - Office of Dan Sullivan Public domain

WELFARE AREA

The wellbeing services county of Ostrobothnia demands a rectification of the funding decision for 2026 – "The injustice is too great to ignore"

The wellbeing services county of Ostrobothnia is requesting a rectification from the state to the funding decision for 2026, because according to the region, the information used as the basis for the funding is incomplete and distorts the distribution of funds between the counties

The Regional Board processed the claim for rectification on Tuesday. According to the wellbeing services county, the funding does not correspond to the actual need for services, and the problems are related to both the quality of data collection and the differences in the systems of different areas. Anne Salovaara-Kero, Chair of the Regional Board, describes the situation as serious. "From the perspective of Ostrobothnia, the injustice is so significant that it is our duty to seek rectification," Salovaara-Kero says.

THL's decision on data collection was missing

The funding for 2026 is based on the service needs for 2022-2023, which were compiled by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). However, according to Pohjanmaa, THL did not make the data collection decision required by law, which weakens the reliability and legality of the data. Billions of euros in funding has been distributed nationwide on the basis of this information,



which makes the shortcomings particularly significant.

Private sector diagnoses distort funding

The funding calculations also take into account diagnoses recorded by private service providers, even though private health care is mainly funded with private funds. According to Ostrobothnia, this favours areas where private services are used a lot.

The wellbeing services county demands that private sector diagnoses be removed from the background information on funding for 2026, even though the legislation will not be amended until later.

The differences between the systems are reflected in the number of diagnoses

The number of long-term diagnoses has a direct impact on the region's calculated need for services. According to Pohjanmaa, different patient information systems produce significant differences in the

recording of diagnoses.

For example, in areas that use the Apotti system, as many as 57 per cent of long-term diagnoses are recorded, while the average for the whole country is 35 per cent. In Ostrobothnia, the share is only 1.8 per cent of diagnoses in the whole country, even though 3.17 per cent of the population lives in the area.

"The differences are so great that they cannot be explained by the health of the population. It is a question of distortion caused by the systems," says Marina Kinnunen, Director of the Wellbeing Services County.

In addition to Ostrobothnia, several other wellbeing services counties are considering their own claims for rectification. According to Kinnunen, this is not a single error, but a broader structural problem.

Source: Wellbeing services county

PARLIAMENT

Norrback: Finland bears its responsibility in NATO



Member of Parliament Anders Norrback (Swedish People's Party) emphasised in his parliamentary group speech that Finland's peacetime joint defence tasks is a natural part of membership.

He emphasised in particular the role of the Navy in a situation where the security environment in the Baltic Sea has deteriorated and hybrid threats have increased.

"Finland not only receives security, but also produces it for the entire alliance," Norrback said.

He emphasised that participation in NATO exercises and chains of command brings valuable experience that directly strengthens Finland's own defence capability. In addition, he reminded that in addition to operational readiness, it is important to carry out long-term peace work – especially to promote the end of the war in Ukraine. The Swedish People's Party's message is clear: Finland is committed to strengthening common security – responsibly, actively and looking to the future.

CLIMATE

Finnish Meteorological Institute: March has started unusually warm

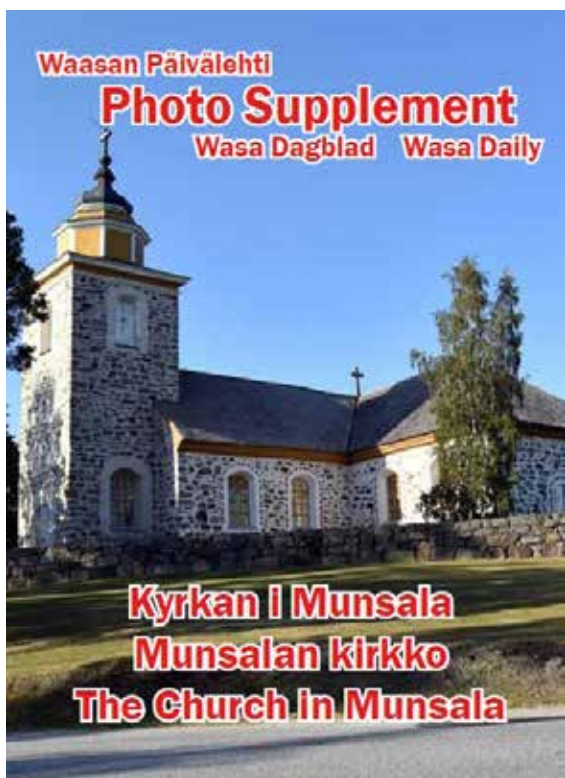
After the cold winter, the weather has quickly cooled down and temperatures have moved to the other end of the scale.

According to statistics from the Finnish Meteorological Institute, the first half of March has been the warmest in observation history, especially in the southern part of the country. In the central and northern parts of the country, it has generally been unusually or exceptionally warm.

"For example, the average temperature in Kaisaniemi, Helsinki, at the beginning of the month was +2.9 degrees, which is the highest recorded in the more than 140-year history of the observation station.

"From the forecast point of view, the beginning of the week will also be clearly warmer than usual. Therefore, it is likely that March this year will be one of the warmest Marches in the history of measurements, unless the weather will cool down significantly at the end of the month," Valta predicts.

Photo Supplement



Wasaan Päivälehti Photo Supplement Wasa Dagblad Wasa Daily

Kyrkan i Munsala Munsalan kirkko The Church in Munsala

NEWS

WELFARE COUNTY

Ostrobothnia to increase support for those who have attempted suicide – six new experts for education



The Ostrobothnia Welfare Service County strengthens the treatment of people who have attempted suicide. Six new experts in the Linity method are currently being trained in the field and are working in Vaasa, Pietarsaari and Närpes.

This is a short-term intervention model developed in Switzerland based

on research-based information on suicide risk factors and their prevention. The training began in December 2025 and will continue this year as customer work.

“People who have tried to take their own lives are referred to us from the emergency services, health and social centres or student welfare, for example. The client can also contact us directly,” says the acting head of the psychiatric outpa-

tient clinic. Chief Nurse Maija Vuori.

The Linity model includes three to four meetings and a two-year follow-up of letters. The first time, the customer describes the sequence of events in their own words. Later, a personal safety plan is drawn up to prevent reattempts. The client can invite their loved ones to attend if they wish.

Visits are free of charge and no referral is required. However, the method is not suitable for people with psychotic disorder, serious substance abuse problems or memory disorders.

With the new experts, Linity is more accessible in both Finnish and Swedish. Clients are treated in psychosocial centres.

Contact: You can send a text message to Linity experts. Contact information can be found on the county well-being service’s website.

EXHIBITION

Lundgren siblings’ art on display at Vaasa Main Library – for the first time more widely in their hometown

Vaasan pääkirjastossa nähdään huhtikuussa näyttely kolmen vaasalaisen taiteilija-sisaruksen tuotannosta. Lundgrenin sisarusten Pohjanmaa -kiertonäyttely on esillä 2.–29.4.2026.

In April, the Vaasa Main Library will host an exhibition of the works of three artist siblings from Vaasa. The Lundgren siblings’ Ostrobothnia touring exhibition will be on display from 2 to 29 April 2026.

Ebba (1844–1926), Ellen (1860–1953) and Eva Lundgren (1863–1947) depicted the coastal and rural landscapes of Ostrobothnia in particular. The siblings worked



as drawing teachers and hardly exhibited their work during their lifetime.

The eldest sister, Ebba, studied at the Stockholm Academy of Fine Arts and worked as a drawing teacher at the Swedish Lyceum

in Vaasa. Her strengths were portraits, while Ellen and Eva focused on landscape painting.

Source: City of Vaasa
Image: Ebba Lundgren: Hamnen i Vallgrund

FINE DINING

Yesterday a 190 euro dinner was served in St. Michael’s Church in Turku



A lively discussion has arisen around the 190-euro experience dinner at St. Michael’s Church in Turku. The eight-course fine dining dinner served on Saturday 21.3.2026 was popular and sold out quickly, but the event has also received harsh criticism.

The vicar defends the event, emphasizing that the church is open to everyone and that the proceeds of the event will be used to support the activities of the parish. However, the discussion has asked whether the church is the right place for this kind of commercial, eli-

tist dinner, the price of which is an unattainable dream for many Turku residents.

As a positive aspect, the fact that the church opens up to new audiences and that the event highlights Finland’s top restaurant culture has been highlighted. The food is prepared by renowned chefs, and the menu has been carefully planned, also offering lactose-free and gluten-free options. The church facilities create a unique atmosphere, and the event has been seen as an opportunity to bring a new kind of experience to the church.

Critics, on the other hand, wonder how the church’s traditional role

as a supporter of the poor and needy fits in with the organization of expensive dinners. Some have hoped that the church would focus more on its traditional tasks, such as offering help and promoting community. The discussion reflects a broader reflection on what kind of events the church can and should organise – and for whom they are intended.

So, is a 190-euro dinner in church right? The question remains open, but at least it has sparked important discussion about the role of the church in modern times.

THL

Soil products can spread Legionella infections



“The risk should not be underestimated”

A worrying increase in Legionella infections has been observed in Finland, and the use of soil products is suspected to be the cause. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and the Finnish Food Authority warn that the number of Legionella cases last year exceeded a record number. Legionella bacteria can be transmitted through the respiratory tract and can cause severe

pneumonia, which is especially dangerous for the elderly and people with weakened immune systems.

The authorities point out that soil products, such as soil bags and balls, may contain Legionella bacteria. “The risk should not be underestimated, as bacteria can spread in the air, for example when handling soil or watering,” says an expert from the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. The symptoms of a legionella infection

are initially similar to the flu, but the disease can progress quickly and require hospitalization.

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) and the Finnish Food Authority recommend that protective gloves and face masks be worn when handling soil products, and that soil should not be stored in damp conditions. In addition, it is important to wash your hands thoroughly after mulching. “Prevention is key, as the treatment of legionella infection is demanding,” emphasizes the expert.

Authorities are also urging people to immediately report suspected infections to health authorities. The number of legionella infections has increased in recent years, and experts speculate that the climate is getting warmer and rainfall is increasing, which could increase the risk further. Is it safe to work with soil – and how can the risk be reduced? The discussion continues.

Wasa Daily

Nearly everything You want to know, in eight pages

vpress.fi

NEWS

CHOIR SINGING

Now it's proven – choral singing is good for your health



Singing in a choir is not only a pleasant pastime – it is also an investment in both body and brain. New research from the University of Helsinki shows that choral singing can have far-reaching positive effects on health, well-being and healthy ageing.

A recent study shows that people who sing in a choir experience a better quality of life and fewer depressive symptoms than others. The effects do not only apply to the elderly, but are visible throughout adult life – from the age of 20 up to the age of 90. In addition, the connection seems to be clear: the more you sing, the better you feel. ()

But perhaps the most interesting thing is what happens in the brain. Research shows that choral singing affects not only the mood but also the structure and function of the brain. People who have sung in a choir for a long time perform better in tests that measure memory and language ability.

In younger singers, stronger connections between different parts of the brain are seen, while older singers especially show improvements in areas that are important for memory. This suggests that singing can help keep the brain in shape even as we get older.

The impact of music on the brain is nothing new in itself. Singing activates several different systems at the same time – from emotions and memory to language and motor skills. This makes singing an unusually holistic activity for the brain.

But choral singing has another dimension: the community. Singing with others strengthens social bonds and reduces feelings of loneliness, which in itself is important for health. Previous studies have shown that choir singers often experience better social well-being and a stronger sense of coherence than others. ()

The researchers' conclusion is clear: choral singing is a simple, accessible and effective way to promote health. It is not a question of stopping ageing, but of influencing it in a more favourable direction.

Maybe it's time to dust off the notes and start singing – not just for fun, but for health. Nella Moisseinen defended her doctoral thesis on 27 February 2026 at 12:00 noon at the University of Helsinki

Faculty of Medicine on the topic "Neural processing and the benefits of singing in the aging brain. The thesis is also available as an electronic publication and can be read in Helda.

Source: University of Helsinki

Pictures from the Choir Festival 2025



UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Hitachi Energy and the University of Vaasa are developing hydrogen production to become more efficient – waste heat from transformers can be used

The goal is to significantly improve the energy efficiency of hydrogen production through new research collaborations. Hitachi Energy and the University of Vaasa are starting a project focusing on optimising the efficiency of transformers and recycling waste heat. The goal is to reduce the costs and carbon footprint of hydrogen production.

"Current methods of hydrogen production consume a lot of energy, and a large part of it is lost as waste heat," says Professor [Name] from the University of Vaasa. "If we can recover even some of this heat, we can improve the profitability of the whole process.

Hitachi Energy will contribute its expertise in electrical transformers to the project, while the University of Vaasa will be responsible for research on heat recovery and energy efficiency. The collaboration is part of a broader effort to move towards more sustainable energy solutions.

"This can play a key role in making hydrogen a competitive alternative to fossil fuels," said a representative of Hitachi Energy.

Source: STT Info, 2026-17-03-17

Photo: University of Vaasa. Image freely available.



LAIHIA

Diabetes events in Laihia

Laihia will hold an open evening for diabetes on 23 April. There will be support and information from colleagues for diabetics, relatives and families of children with diabetes.

Tasamaan Kukkopalvelu also serves coffee from 18:00 to 20:00. Organized by the Ostrobothnia Diabetes Association and the municipality's social welfare services.

"Come and hear about upcoming events," says Arja Lehtinen.

Admission is free!

Source: laihia.fi

YLE

"Yle's quality is at risk"

The Theatre and Media Workers' Union (TME) is concerned about outsourcing the design of Yle's set design. This decision applies to 13 employees.

"It is sad that Yle is cutting back on its own staff to buy work from outsiders," says CEO Carolina Huovila.

At the same time, Yle is burdened with cuts in Parliament – a total of 66 million euros. Her own production of dramatic productions has declined over the years.

Source: TME ry

ABORTIONS

8,645 candles

Yesterday, 8,645 candles were lit on the steps of the Parliament building. Each of them is a memory of a child who had an abortion in Finland in 2024.

The event is organised by Pro Life Finland. The number of candles corresponds to previous data from Statistics Sweden.

"We want to remember those who did not have the opportunity to live," says the association.

Light makes the discussion about the rights of the unborn visible.

Source: Pro Life Finland

HUMAN RIGHTS

The obstacle to equality is the unwillingness to put oneself in another's place."

Human rights activist Katarina Räikkönen received the Minna Canth Gender Equality Award. The prize, which is awarded by the University of Jyväskylä, was awarded on Memorial Day.

Räikkönen has long spoken on behalf of the most vulnerable.

"The obstacle to equality is the unwillingness to put oneself in the other person's shoes," she says.

The prize is named after Minna Kant, a pioneer in gender equality.

Source: University of Jyväskylä

ALLERGIES

Spring brings pollen – help is available at pharmacies

The pollen season started extremely early. Now it's time to prepare!

"Pharmacy products make a big difference," says Keio Lukkarinen, Chief Medical Officer of the Central Finland Health District.

Antihistamines, nasal sprays and eye drops help with the symptoms without a prescription. Rinsing your nose is worth it.

If symptoms are severe or wheezing, a doctor should be consulted.

Source: Welfare Administration of Central Finland

PEOPLE CHEMISTRY

Why do you sync directly with certain people?

New study finds out

At the University of Jyväskylä, we look for why chemistry meets some people directly and never meets others.

The study measures how bodies are tuned to the same scale during a conversation. We are looking for 300 couples: friends, spouses, colleagues and even strangers.

"Synchronicity is already noticeable at the level of the nervous system," says Academy Research Fellow Anu Turunen.

The results can be used to improve interaction skills.

Source: University of Jyväskylä

NEWS

RUSSIA

In Novosibirsk, all cows are killed. Why?

A mysterious epidemic has swept the Novosibirsk region, leaving the agricultural sector in shock. Thousands of cows are being euthanized in a desperate struggle to stop the spread of a disease whose cause is still unknown. The authorities have introduced strict quarantine measures, but the questions are piling up: What is it that affects the animals? And why right here?



COPILLOT

An invisible enemy Since the beginning of March, reports of sick cows have been pouring in from farms around Novosibirsk. The animals show symptoms such as high fever, severe respiratory problems, and sudden death. Veterinarians have quickly isolated the affected herds, but the disease is still spreading. So far, over 5,000 cows have been killed, and the numbers are rising daily.

"We have never seen anything like this," says a local veterinarian who wishes to remain anonymous. It is as if the animals are affected by a combination of several diseases at once.

Suspicious and theories

The authorities have not yet been able to determine the exact cause of the epidemic. There is a lot of speculation: some believe that it is a new, mutated variant of a known animal disease, while others suspect that environmental factors, such as contaminated water or feed, may be behind it. One theory that raises concerns is that the disease may have links to global warming, which has changed ecosystems and disease spread patterns.

"We are investigating all possible leads," says a spokesperson for the

region's agriculture ministry. But until we know more, we must act quickly and decisively.

Consequences for the region

Novosibirsk is one of Russia's most important agricultural regions, and the loss of thousands of cows threatens both the local economy and food security. Many farmers are now facing financial ruin, while consumers are beginning to notice shortages of meat and dairy products.

"This is a disaster," says a farmer who has lost his entire herd. We don't know how we're going to cope.

What happens now?The authorities have promised financial support to the affected farmers and are working hard to find the source of the disease. At the same time, a massive information campaign is underway to reassure the public and prevent the spread of rumours

But the question remains: Why Novosibirsk? And what does this mean for the future? One thing is certain - the consequences of this epidemic will be felt far beyond the borders of the region.

HAPPINESS

HAPPINESS

The Geography of Happiness - A Chronicle from Finland



Nine years in a row! It's like an Olympic gold medal in a marathon, but in happiness. Finland, this northern country with thousands of lakes and even more mosquitoes, has once again been crowned the happiest country in the world. The World Happiness Report 2026 is here and Finland is once again at the top.

Vaasa must be the happiest city in the world? I imagine happy Vaasa residents walking along the promenade, eating ice cream and laughing with seagulls. Or they can sit in peace and quiet in the park, enjoying the sun and feeling an inner peace that only a Vaasa resident can feel.

One may wonder what is in Finnish waters? Or maybe it's fresh air, long summer evenings or a licorice-scented sauna? Or maybe, just maybe, is it the quiet, yet so warm Finnish folk soul?

When you look at the list, you will see a clear pattern. The Nordic countries dominate Denmark, Iceland and Sweden close behind. Then comes the Netherlands and Costa Rica as an exotic surprise. But at the bottom of the list are countries such as Malawi, Lebanon, Sierra Leone and last but not least Afghanistan.

The contrasts are striking. From a safe and prosperous Finland to war-torn and poor countries at the bottom. It makes you think about what happiness really is. Is it material wealth or something else? Something more intangible, such as security, community and trust?

And then there is Vaasa, the city that is said to be the happiest in Finland. If Finland is the happiest country in the world, then surely

Those who have not been to Vaasa probably feel a strong longing to someday visit this happy city. They want to see with their own eyes this Mecca of happiness. They want to breathe the happy air, taste the happy water and maybe, just maybe, get a little glimpse of the Finnish happiness that everyone is talking about.

But whether it's Vaasa, Helsinki or elsewhere in Finland, it's clear that there's something special going on in this country. Perhaps it is not a single factor, but a combination of many. Perhaps it is precisely the Finnish sisu, a mixture of stubbornness and perseverance, that gives Finns the opportunity to survive both dark winters and difficult neighbours. Not to mention bada bada bastu.

Whatever the secret, we can all learn something from Finland. Maybe it's about appreciating the little things in life, being grateful for what you have and taking care of each other.

Or maybe it's just a good sauna and enough licorice and crispbread.

RUSSIA

Ilya Remeslo: Five reasons why I stopped supporting Vladimir Putin

The person behind this statement on Tuesday, Ilya Remeslo, is a 42-year-old lawyer who was previously a dedicated pro-Kremlin activist with a past as an attacker of the regime and oppositionists, including Alexei Navalny.

His move is unique because he has 90,000 followers on Telegram and was considered part of the system. His sudden U-turn has caused shock and confusion in Russia, with speculation about everything from account hijacking to mental illness or a staged provocation attempt by the Kremlin. Remeslo himself insists that it is genuine and says he is prepared for legal consequences.

1. The war in Ukraine: What started as a "police operation" has claimed millions of victims. It is a hopeless war that is only waged for Putin's complex, ordinary citizens lose out on it.

2. The damage to Russia's economy and the prosperity of its people: Sanctions and destroyed relations have cost trillions of dollars that could have gone to schools and hospitals. Instead, palaces are being built for the regime. In our rich country, millions live in poverty.

3. The suffocation of the internet and free media: Putin lied in 2017 when he said we would not go China's way. Now social media is blocked, and Telegram is 80% blocked (planned to be blocked completely on April 1). This even affects soldiers at the front.

4. Putin's time in power: He has been in office for 26-27 years and is 74 years old. Absolute power corrupts completely. We need a new, modern president.

5. Putin does not respect his voters: His live question time is a circus. He does not care about the problems of the people and is afraid of honest elections because it



META

would show that "the emperor is naked".

Conclusion: Vladimir Putin is not a legitimate president. He should resign and be tried as a war criminal and thief.

So far, Remeslo has not been arrested as far as is known. He lives in St. Petersburg.

But it is quite obvious that this text crosses all conceivable red lines in Russia. It is unclear whether this could be part of a larger phenomenon in Russia? In Moscow, rumors abound that the army is planning some kind of change of power

AI

AI

Le Chat – Europe’s own AI voice takes its place in global competition

META - A NEW AI

AI competition is intensifying. Images made by META AI, which can be freely used by anyone.

Ancient Egyptians building pyramids.



In a world where artificial intelligence is dominated by American giants such as OpenAI, Google and Anthropic, Europe now has its own strong voice: Le Chat, developed by the French company Mistral AI. This European AI model has quickly emerged as a major player, not least due to its technical expertise and focus on European values.

particularly important for European companies and authorities, which often need to deal with sensitive information.

Where Le Chat competes – or surpasses in several areas

Le Chat keeps up with, or even surpasses, its American competitors such as GPT, Claude, and Gemini. When it comes to language comprehension and the generation of text in European languages, including Swedish, French, and German, Le Chat has proven to be particularly proficient. The model handles nuances and cultural references in a way that American models sometimes miss.

The background of Le Chat

Mistral AI was founded in 2023 by a team of experienced AI researchers and entrepreneurs, with the goal of creating advanced language models that can compete with the US systems. Le Chat was launched as an open, transparent and efficient AI, with a clear ambition to strengthen Europe’s digital sovereignty. The model is trained on large data sets, including European literature, law, and culture, which gives it a unique understanding of the European context.

Le Chat is also strong in technical documentation, legal analysis, and academic research, thanks to its training on European sources. Additionally, it has proven to be effective in creative writing and code generation, where it often delivers as good, or better, results than its competitors.

Differences from American systems

Le Chat differs from its American counterparts in several ways. Firstly, Mistral places a strong emphasis on transparency and openness. Unlike some American models, where training data and algorithms are often kept secret, Mistral has published technical details of its models and offers open versions for researchers and developers. This makes Le Chat an attractive option for those who value transparency and control. Another important reason is data protection. Le Chat is designed to comply with the EU’s strict data protection rules, such as the GDPR, giving users greater peace of mind when it comes to privacy and personal data. This is

Images

Le Chat cannot create or generate images at this time. However, it can analyze and describe images that the user uploads (e.g., what they represent, text in images) and provide advice on how to create images using other tools (e.g., Midjourney, DALL·E, Stable Diffusion).

The future of Le Chat

With a rapidly growing user base and increased interest from both the private and public sectors, Le Chat faces a promising future. Companies and organizations looking for a reliable, European AI solution now have a strong alternative. Le Chat proves that Europe can not only compete with the American tech giants – it can also set its own standard.



UKRAINE PRESIDENT

Russia Must Clearly See and Truly Feel that Ukraine Will Be in Europe – and that This Cannot Be Stopped – Address by the President to Participants of the European Council Meeting

19.3.2026

Thank you so much, António, Ursula, dear leaders, dear friends,

Thank you for your attention to Ukraine and for your support – it is vital for us. And because this support exists, others in Europe can also feel that they will not be left alone in a critical moment.

This is the core of European unity. European nations stand together so no one is left alone, and so everyone knows there is someone to rely on. This is how Ukraine has always seen Europe. And Ukrainians are among the strongest believers in the European idea and its most dedicated defenders – for years. Russia's war against us is also a war against the idea of Europe – shown through Ukraine. Each of you knows this.

And that is why we in Ukraine hope that Europe will find a way out of the difficult, very difficult situation we all face now, especially when it comes to the destabilization of European support for Ukraine.

An important part of our defense against Russian aggression is what we have built over the years – all of us together – Ukrainians and all Europeans, our friends around the world. We have made sure that – during this war – Russia doesn't feel stronger. The aggressor must weaken – and this is the key to ending the war. This means that the aggressor must weaken on the battlefield, and Russia's heavy losses on the frontline, around 30-35 thousand soldiers each month, ensure that. Russia must also lose economically – and this is what sanctions are for. And there is also the moral side – it is important that support for us stays strong, steady, and long-term, for years,

and that the aggressor feels its future is uncertain – the aggressor, not us. I thank each of you, and Europe as a whole, that this has worked – and it must continue to work.

We are doing everything we can to make diplomacy effective and end the war. And you have all seen this. Working with the team of the President of the United States, I involve Europe as much as possible and keep you informed. Europe's involvement is the cornerstone of our approach, and peace in Ukraine is peace in Europe. It is our common goal. And in the past few days, we have received signals from the American side that talks may resume soon. But with what mindset will the Russian side come to the talks this time?

It depends on all of us together to make sure the Russians do not come to these talks feeling that their position has grown much stronger. And it is not only because of the situation around Iran, which is pushing global oil prices higher.

First, Russians see active use of air defense missiles in the Middle East and the Gulf region, and they may think Ukraine will face a shortage of such missiles.

Second, the EU's 20th sanctions package against Russia is stalled. It could have continued the pressure on Russia to move toward real peace.

Third, the United States has eased some sanctions on Russia, and this brings significant money into Putin's war budget.

Next, for the third month now, the most important financial security guarantee for Ukraine from Europe is not working – the 90-billion-euro support package for this year and the next. This is critical for us. It is a resource to protect lives.

And the fifth point, even today, we do not know for sure whether this support will be unblocked.

Dear leaders, united Europe, We need to take and implement decisions. Strong and steady support matters. Pressure on Russia matters. And it is important to stay focused – even while watching Iran – that war is ongoing on European soil.

We count on you to unblock the 90-billion-euro package of financial security guarantees for this year and the next. This package was supposed to work in spring, but it was blocked. Ukraine, for its part, is doing what is needed – including on the oil pipeline, as we discussed with António and Ursula – to make this possible. Our team from the energy companies – Naftogaz and UkrTransNafta – is working productively to deliver on what we discussed. But the decision is yours – whether you want Russian oil to be imported by Europe, knowing that it helps the aggressor.

... Russia must clearly see and truly feel that Ukraine will be in Europe – and that this cannot be stopped. That is why we are carrying out internal reforms and working externally to secure a clear date for EU membership. If there is a clear date, it will mean that Russia will not be able to block our accession in any way. – this is a matter of trust, security, and the future, of course.

Please, let us all continue to move forward together and do everything so that our positions are felt as strong, and the positions of those who want to break us and break Europe – are felt as weak.

Thank you so much.



ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Fanny Churberg
12.12.1845, Vaasa
10.5.1892, Helsinki
Church on the Shore, 1878
Finnish National Gallery Collection / Ateneum Art Museum, Gift from Arvid Sourander
Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Jenni Nurminen

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George Orwell 1984 22

That, he reflected, might almost have been a transcription from one of the Party textbooks. The Party claimed, of course, to have liberated the proles from bondage. Before the Revolution they had been hideously oppressed by the capitalists, they had been starved and flogged, women had been forced to work in the coal mines (women still did work in the coal mines, as a matter of fact), children had been sold into the factories at the age of six. But simultaneously, true to the Principles of doublethink, the Party taught that the proles were natural inferiors who must be kept in subjection, like animals, by the application of a few simple rules. In reality very little was known about the proles. It was not necessary to know much. So long as they continued to work and breed, their other activities were without importance. Left to themselves, like cattle turned loose upon the plains of Argentina, they had reverted to a style of life that appeared to be natural to them, a sort of ancestral pattern. They were born, they grew up in the gutters, they went to work at twelve, they passed through a brief blossoming-period of beauty and sexual desire, they married at twenty, they were middle-aged at thirty, they died, for the most part, at sixty. Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbours, films, football, beer, and above all, gambling, filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult. A few agents of the Thought Police moved always among them, spreading false rumours and marking down and eliminating the few individuals who were judged capable of becoming dangerous; but no attempt was made to indoctrinate them with the ideology of the Party. It was not desirable that the proles should have strong political feelings. All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working-hours or shorter rations. And even when they became discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontent led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances. The larger evils invariably escaped their notice. The great majority of proles did not even have telescreens in their homes. Even the civil police interfered with them

very little. There was a vast amount of criminality in London, a whole world-within-a-world of thieves, bandits, prostitutes, drug-peddlers, and racketeers of every description; but since it all happened among the proles themselves, it was of no importance. In all questions of morals they were

allowed to follow their ancestral code. The sexual puritanism of the Party was not imposed upon them. Promiscuity went unpunished, divorce was permitted. For that matter, even religious worship would have been permitted if the proles had shown any sign of needing or wanting it.

They were beneath suspicion. As the Party slogan put it: 'Proles and animals are free.'

Winston reached down and cautiously scratched his varicose ulcer. It had begun itching again. The thing you invariably came back to was the impossibility of knowing what life before the Revolution had really been like. He took out of the drawer a copy of a children's history textbook which he had borrowed from Mrs Parsons, and began copying a passage into the diary:

In the old days (it ran), before the glorious Revolution, London was not the beautiful city that we know today. It was a dark, dirty, miserable place where hardly anybody had enough to eat and where hundreds and thousands of poor people had no boots on their feet and not even a roof to sleep under. Children no older than you had to work twelve hours a day for cruel masters who flogged them with whips if they worked too slowly and fed them on nothing but stale breadcrusts and water. But in among all this terrible poverty there were just a few great big beautiful houses that were lived in by rich men who had as many as thirty servants to look after them. These rich men were called capitalists. They were fat, ugly men with wicked faces, like the one in the picture on the opposite page. You can see that he is dressed in a long black coat which was called a frock coat, and a queer, shiny hat shaped like a stovepipe, which was called a top hat. This was the uniform of the capitalists, and no one else



was allowed to wear it. The capitalists owned everything in the world, and everyone else was their slave. They owned all the land, all the houses, all the factories, and all the money. If anyone disobeyed them they could throw them into prison, or they could take his job away and starve him to death. When any ordinary person spoke to a capitalist he had to cringe and bow to him, and take off his cap and address him as 'Sir'. The chief of all the capitalists was called the King, and---

But he knew the rest of the catalogue. There would be mention of the bishops in their lawn sleeves, the judges in their ermine robes, the pillory, the stocks, the treadmill, the cat-o'-nine tails, the Lord Mayor's Banquet, and the practice of kissing the Pope's toe. There was also something called the JUS PRIMAE NOCTIS, which would probably not be mentioned in a textbook for children. It was the law by which every capitalist had the right to sleep with any woman working in one of his factories.

How could you tell how much of it was lies? It MIGHT be true that the average human being was better off now than he had been before the Revolution. The only evidence to the contrary was the mute protest in your own bones, the instinctive feeling that the conditions you lived in were intolerable and that at some other time they must have been different. It struck him that the truly characteristic thing about modern life was not its cruelty and insecurity, but simply its bareness, its dinginess, its listlessness. Life, if you looked about you, bore no resemblance not only to the lies that streamed out of the telescreens, but even to the ideals that the Party was trying to achieve. Great areas of it, even for a Party member, were neutral and non-political, a matter of slogging through dreary jobs, fighting for a place on the Tube, darned a worn-out sock, cadging a saccharine tablet, saving a cigarette end. The ideal set up by the Party was something huge, terrible, and glittering--a world of steel and concrete, of monstrous machines and terrifying weapons--a nation of warriors and fanatics, marching forward in perfect unity, all thinking the same thoughts and shouting the same slogans, perpetually working, fighting, triumphing, persecuting--three hundred million people all with the same face. The reality was decaying, dingy cities where underfed people shuffled to and fro in leaky shoes, in patched-up nineteenth-century houses that smelt always of cabbage and bad lavatories. He seemed to see a vision of London, vast and ruinous, city of a million dustbins, and mixed up with it was a picture of Mrs Parsons, a woman with lined face and wispy hair, fiddling helplessly with a blocked waste-pipe.

HUMOUR ONE HUND-RED YEARS AGO

THE FAIRY TALE OF THE FORTY ROBBERS.

A father was reading the newspaper when his seven-year-old son came and said: Dad, tell me the tale of the “forty robbers!” The father, who had just been reading revelations about the oilfield raids and other atrocities committed by the rulers, looked at his son for a moment, then shook his head and said; No, you can wait until you are older. You are still too young to understand the politics of this country.

HE NOTICED THE ERROR.

In a grammar lesson, the teacher wrote a deliberately incorrect sentence on the board, asking the students to tell him where the error was. The sentence was as follows: “The horse and cows goes in at the gate.” The manly little boy immediately raised his hand. “Well, tell me what is wrong with it,” the teacher said. The boy: “The women should go in first.”

ON A SINKING SHIP

the captain shouted: Can any of the passengers pray? Yes, I am a priest, I can pray, a frightened voice was heard from the crowd of bewildered passengers. —All right! shouted the captain, you may pray ... the others will take these life-belts, because there are just one too few of these.

PESSIMIST.

A hasty grandfather, starting work on his farm early on Monday morning, quite irritable: “Yeah, yeah. It’s already Monday morning and tomorrow is Tuesday and the day after tomorrow is Wednesday . . . the whole week is almost half over, and God forbid a stick has been put on the cross on this farm.”

WATCHMAKER

Buyer: But if these watches cost you twenty dollars and you sell them for twenty dollars, then you won’t make anything with them. Watchmaker: Oh, yes, I do. Buyer: How? Watchmaker: By repairing them later.

SHE KNEW SHEEP.

A young city girl came to the farm to be a teacher. During the math lesson she said; Now, children, if there are ten sheep on the other side of the yard and one of them comes this way, how many will be left behind? The little girl finally said: Not a single sheep. That’s right, said the young teacher reproachfully. You’re not that stupid. Think about it. If there are ten sheep there and one of them runs this way, of course there will be

nine left behind. Don’t you know the difference? No, no, the little girl protested. If one sheep goes, all the others will run after it. My father has sheep. Noticing that the teacher was embarrassed, the little girl explained; Yes, you know arithmetic, but I know sheep.

POETICAL REVIEW.

— Your dancing resembles a dream, said the girl. Is that what you think! exclaimed the young man in delight. Yes, because you dance like a sleepwalker.

A SICK MAN’S RELAXATION.

Patient: — It’s very kind of you to come and greet me, an old sick man. Friend: Yes, by chance I met Dr. Sahur and he told me that if you want to see your friend Heinonen once more, you’d better hurry.’

SUSPECT

Somewhat suspicious is the story of the chicken that had developed its taste so that it ate clay and then laid bricks.

Astronomic picture of the week:



Two very different glowing gas clouds in the Large Magellanic Cloud

ESO's Very Large Telescope has captured a detailed view of a star-forming region in the Large Magellanic Cloud — one of the Milky Way's satellite galaxies. This sharp image reveals two glowing clouds of gas. NGC 2014 (right) is irregularly shaped and red and its neighbour, NGC 2020, is round and blue. These odd and very different forms were both sculpted by powerful stellar winds from extremely hot newborn stars that also radiate into the gas, causing it to glow brightly.

Credit: ESO
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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, Toinen linja 9 B 36, 00530 Helsinki. Phone +358-40-5462455. Email: wasadagblad@gmail.com

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

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WASA DAILY

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HOROSCOPE FOR MARCH 2026

Fabulous March Horoscope

Aries (March 21–April 19)
Spring energy is rushing through your veins! Unfortunately, you keep forgetting your umbrella everywhere. No worries — you’re not made of sugar (probably).

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
The slushy remains of winter make you grumpy, but you pretend to be fine. Curl up on the couch, drink a liter of tea, and refuse to acknowledge that March is technically a spring month.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
Your brain is overflowing with ideas and plans! Too bad you’ll only follow through with one. But hey, thinking about doing something is practically the same as doing it, right?

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
You’re feeling extra emotional and nostalgic. Try not to call your ex or cry over old weather forecasts. Spring is coming — promise!

Leo (July 23–August 22)
The sun is finally peeking out, and you can return to your natural habitat — the center of attention. Just remember, wearing sunglasses doesn’t make March a summer month.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
You’re already spring-cleaning, but spring doesn’t seem to be cleaning up for you. Breathe deeply and accept that dust bunnies, like old friends, always come back.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
Do you know what you want? No. But that’s okay, because you just accidentally mixed up three different coffee orders at the café. Let the adventure begin!

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
You are mysterious and irresistible — except when you’re struggling to put on your winter boots in a hurry. Let spring arrive at its own pace, like a really good thriller.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
March brings big opportunities! Or maybe just more slush. But your attitude is everything, so keep your shoes dry and your spirits high.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
You have a plan for spring. The universe has another. Flexibility is the key to success — and to not losing your temper when the bus is late.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
Your creative mind is inventing a new spring fashion trend. Too bad it involves sandals and wool socks. Maybe not yet, but we admire your vision!

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Birthdays and spring vibes turn you into a hopeless romantic. Just make sure you don’t wander straight into a snowdrift while gazing at the sunshine. Dream big — but watch where you’re going!!

