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SUOMEN **URANTIA**-SEURA R.Y.  
FINNISH **URANTIA** ASSOCIATION

TO ALL OVERSEAS PARTICIPANTS IN  
**IUA INTERNATIONAL STUDY CONFERENCE**  
Helsinki, Finland, 7 — 10 August 1998

*Practical Advice*

**The Venue of the Conference**

UNITAS Congress Centre / UNITAS-kongressikeskus  
Address: Ramsinniementie 14  
00980 HELSINKI  
Telephone +358-9-31911  
Fax +358-9-3191400

UNITAS-kongressikeskus is situated outside the downtown area, in the eastern sector of the city of Helsinki, on a one-time island called Vuosaari.

The Congress Centre includes the meeting and dining rooms, and a hotel; all under the same roof. Accommodation and all meals must have been paid in advance. Vegetarian food is available. Wine and other alcohol can be purchased at the Reception (not in the restaurant).

Accommodation is provided in one- or two-bed rooms.

There is a reception desk in the lobby of the Congress Centre. Our representatives will be there to welcome you and advise you to your rooms.

**How to Get There**

**From the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport:** The organisers will pick you up if you let us know the exact time of your arrival and the airline you are travelling with. Otherwise, you may take a taxi from the airport and ask the driver to take you to *UNITAS Congress Centre, Ramsinniementie 14, Vuosaari, Helsinki*. The distance is about 15 kilometres and the ride will cost approximately 130 Finnish marks.

**From a Seaport:** The organisers will pick you up if you let us know the exact time of your arrival, the name of the boat and the name of the port (there are several in Helsinki). Otherwise, you may hire a taxi from the seaport and ask the driver to take you to *UNITAS Congress Centre, Ramsinniementie 14, Vuosaari*. The ride will cost approximately 100 Finnish marks.

**From the Central Railway Station:** The organisers will pick you up from the Central Railway Station (don't leave the train until it stops at the Central Station) if you let us know the exact time of your arrival. Otherwise you may take a taxi, (if you want to save expenses it is wise to take the cab from the taxi stand located on the eastern flank of the station building) and ask the driver to take you to *UNITAS Congress Centre, Ramsinniementie 14, Vuosaari*. The ride will be about ten kilometres, and will cost approximately 110 Finnish marks.



## How to Get to the City Centre

If you wish to pay a visit to the downtown area, the easiest, yet the most expensive, way of course is to take a taxi (cab). The number to call a taxi is 700700.

The more complex way is to walk the some 300 metres from the Congress Centre to the bus stop. The bus will take you in ten minutes to Itäkeskus (East Centre) Shopping Mall (the terminal stop of this bus line), and right where the bus comes to a halt there is the entrance to Itäkeskus metro (underground (Br.) / subway (Am.)) station. The metro train will take you to the downtown area. It is advisable to leave the train at Central Railway Station (loudspeaker announcement in English), whose location is in the heart of the city. Buy the ticket from the bus driver (10 Finnish marks) and keep it; it will cover the metro ride as well; the ticket is valid for one hour.

## Useful to Know about Finland

**Currency:** The name of the Finnish monetary unit is 'markka', which is divided into 100 'penni'. One markka (mark) equals about 20 U.S. cents, and respectively 5,5 Finnish marks equal one U.S. dollar. The smallest coin in circulation is the 10-penni coin, and the largest is the 10-mark coin. Banknotes are of the same size but of different colours. The highest nomination is 1.000 marks, and the smallest 20 marks. Currency can be exchanged at any bank, at any currency exchange counter at the airport, the seaports, the Central Railway Station, and at the special exchange booths in the downtown area. The latter give the best rates.

**Credit cards:** All major credit cards are generally accepted, Visa being the most commonly used.

**Tipping:** All gratuities and tips are included in the bills. We do not give tips to cab drivers, waiters, hairdressers, barbers ... (and unwittingly forget to do so in other countries.)

**Languages:** Finland is a bilingual country: Finnish is spoken by 93 per cent of the population; Swedish by less than 5 per cent. English is spoken widely as the second or third language. The majority language, Finnish, is one of the most difficult ones in the world.

**Electric current:** The voltage in Finland, in line with other European countries, is 220 Volts, and the plugs are continental European, divergent from American and British ones. It means that you cannot and **must not** use American electric appliances in Finland, unless you have a transformer and an adapter; the British need an adapter.

**Metric System:** Only the metric system is used and understood in Finland; miles, inches, pounds, ounces, Fahrenheit degrees, etc. are totally incomprehensible to us; most people haven't got a clue how long a mile or how heavy an ounce is. We only know about metres, kilometres, kilograms, litres, and Celsius centigrades.

1,6 kilometres make one mile. An inch is approximately 2,54 centimetres. A pound is roughly 0,4 kilograms, and a gallon about 4 litres. The temperatures are measured in the Celsius scale:

- 40 C = - 40 F

- 20 C = - 4 F

- 17,8 C = 0 F

- 10 C = + 14 F

0 C = + 32 F

+10 C = + 50 F

+15 C = + 59 F

+20 C = + 68 F

+25 C = + 77 F

+30 C = + 86 F

100 C = + 212 F



**Time Markings and Other Numerical Differences:** The 24-hour clock is in use in Finland. All formal time markings are made with a dot (not a colon) to separate the hours of the 24-hour clock from the minutes. Thus, 23.45 means 11:45 p.m. Dates are never marked in the American way, and slashes are not used as separators, but dots instead. The Finnish (and European) way of marking e.g. the 7th of August 1998 is 7.8.1998, never ever \*8/7/1998. A Finn would interpret the American date to mean the 8th of July 1998. This difference can be a source of much confusion, so beware.

A dot is used to separate thousands and millions; a comma is used to separate decimals. For example 1,122 is to be understood to mean one and 122 thousandth parts; 1.000 means a thousand. Our decimal point is not a point but a comma instead.

In Finland, and in continental Europe, 'billion' means million millions (1.000.000.000.000), it can never mean a thousand million. The American billion (1.000.000.000) is called a 'milliard'. And the same difference concerns all high numbers: trillions, quadrillions, quintillions etc.

**Telephone and Television:** Telecommunication technology in Finland is of world-top quality. You will, for example, observe that almost everyone is carrying a cellular (portable) phone.

The country code for Finland is 358, the area code for Helsinki is 9. If you dial to another city in Finland, you need to know the respective area code; they are listed in telephone catalogues. To place an overseas call, you need first to dial the international access code, and the number is different for each operator:

00 (general; the most expensive one, which only unaware foreigners use)

990 (Sonera, formerly called Telecom Finland)

999 (Helsinki Telephone Company)

994 (Telia; the least expensive, which for example the Foundation Helsinki Office is using)

Following the international access code you need to punch in the respective country code. Country codes are listed in telephone catalogues.

The cellular phone system in use in Finland is GSM. American cellular phones (unless they are GSM phones, which system is not widely employed in the USA) do not work in Finland; all European cellular phones work excellently.

The television transmission system employed in Finland (and in many European countries) is PAL. Should you for example buy video cassettes here, make sure that you can view them in your country. You cannot view European videos in America unless they be converted, or if your video cassette player recognises the two different systems (as the most modern video recorders do).

**Climate:** Climate in Finland is on the average moderate, but there is much variability. August can be steaming hot and sunny, or cold, rainy and miserable; or if we are fortunate, it is pleasantly mild. Daytime temperature can be as high as +25°C, nighttime temperature may drop down to +10°C. In August, unfortunately, there will be no nightless nights any more (you may experience them in June and early July). So dress accordingly.

#### *Contacts during the Conference:*

Seppo Niskanen: cellular phone 040-526 8283

Seppo Kanerva: cellular phone 040-524 3795

Kalevi Eklöf: cellular phone 0400-451 471

Hannu Stenroos: cellular phone 050-551 3077

URANTIA Foundation Office

Runeberginkatu 54a A 5

00260 HELSINKI

Telephone: 496 561 (if the call is from outside Finland, dial +358-9-496 561)

Fax: 496 225 (if the call is from outside Finland, dial +358-9-496 225)

E-mail: [kanerva@personal.eunet.fi](mailto:kanerva@personal.eunet.fi)

E-mail: [seppo.niskanen@pp.kolumbus.fi](mailto:seppo.niskanen@pp.kolumbus.fi)

**Your Arrival:** If you need transport from the point of your arrival (airport, seaport, or railway station) to the Congress Centre, let us know the exact time of your arrival, along with the flight number, the name of your boat and the port of mooring.

Please fill in the attached form and **fax** it to +358-9-496 225

or **e-mail** the same information to [kanerva@personal.eunet.fi](mailto:kanerva@personal.eunet.fi)

or **airmail** it to Finnish URANTIA Association, Runeberginkatu 54a A 5, 00260 Helsinki, Finland. Observe that it takes about five workdays for a letter to travel from the United States to Finland, about three days from Europe. If we do not receive any note from you, we have to assume that you need no transport from your point of arrival to the Congress Centre.



# URGENT

## FILL IN IMMEDIATELY

MY / OUR TIME OF ARRIVAL IS

NAME(S)	
Arriving from (state the airport wherefrom the flight to Helsinki departs)	
Date of Arrival	
Time of Arrival	
Flight number	
Name of boat	
Name of port	
Train and coach (Br.) (car, Am.) number	

AND FAX TO + 358 - 9 - 496 225

OR E-EMAIL TO *kanerva@personal.eunet.fi*

OR PHONE TO + 358 - 9 - 496 561

OR AIRMAIL TO

Suomen URANTIA-seura r.y.

Runeberginkatu 54a A 5

00260 HELSINKI

Finland

(Airmailing is discouraged; mail from the United States has sometimes taken months to reach the destination.)

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