

Media release  
20 September 2017

## Finland's centenary is filled with joy and dignity

**The centenary of Finland's independence culminates in Finland's Independence Day, on 6 December. The the climax of the centenary is built together, and the programme will be rich and memorable. The official celebrations start on Independence Day Eve, on 5 December, and take place in Finland as well as abroad. Finland's birthday week includes numerous acknowledgements to the 100-year-old.**

The preparation for the birthday festivities is widely under way. Events are organised by state administration, municipalities, cities, associations, companies, and individual citizens. Independence Day will be surrounded by several festivities, both traditional and new ones, and the programme stretches over several days.

"We have a special moment in the history of our country and we'll celebrate it with joy and dignity. In this year, there's a good reason to celebrate our Independence Day during several days. The official celebrations start already on the Independence Day Eve, 5 December. Moments that will be built together will bring new great tones with the strong Independence Day traditions," says **Pekka Timonen**, General Secretary for the centenary.

### **Joyous preparty, emotional day of celebration**

Independence Day celebration is preceded by Finland's birthday week which contains various acknowledgements to the 100-year-old. During the birthday week, light art installation Luminous will shine a blue and white light around Finland, a Winter War Memorial will be revealed at Kasarmitori in Helsinki, and national Finland 100 celebration will take place in Oulu.

The Independence Day festivities begin already on Independence Day Eve, Tuesday 5 December. The Finnish Parliament will convene in a Jubilee Plenary Session, and the official opening of Finland's centenary of independence takes place at the Helsinki Market Square at 6 pm. At the same time, Finland will hoist the Finnish flag and and blue and white lights will be lit in Helsinki and around Finland. The flagging continues overnight until Independence Day evening, Wednesday 6 December at 10 pm. The flag should be illuminated during the night.

Independence Day Eve, 5 December, is a joyous preparty. Libraries around Finland invite all citizens to take part in the Independence Day preparty, and karaoke restaurants challenge people to sing together at the same moment. Also, Children's independence party and Multicultural Independence party will be arranged in Helsinki.

Independence Day, 6 December, will be filled with official festivities, and the graceful day ends with atmospheric moments in homes and halls. The day begins in most churches with services and choirs singing Sibelius' Finlandia hymn at 10 am. Honorary guards will be organised in different cemeteries around Finland, and national Independence Day military parade takes place in Kuopio. University students' procession, Independence Day Reception of the President of the Republic of Finland, and blue and white fireworks show will crown the evening of the historic day.

## Serve coffee, hoist a flag, illuminate

The Finland 100 centenary year is unique in our country's history, and all kinds of festivities in its honour are welcome. Take part in the celebration with these three national deeds.

**Have a coffee break in honour of the 100-year-old.** Work places, companies, and communities are encouraged to organise a blue and white coffee break for employees, customers, or friends on Independence Day Eve, Tuesday 5 December at 2 pm. If the afternoon coffee break doesn't fit your schedule, you can arrange the coffee break at any other time on that day. The shared moment matters the most.

**It's time to fly the flag.** Let's dress up the 100-year-old with Finland 100 centenary flags and decorations before the birthday. On Independence Day Eve, Tuesday 5 December at 6 pm, the Finnish flag will be flown in every Finnish flagpole. The flagging continues overnight until Independence Day evening, 6 December at 10 pm. The flag should be illuminated during the night.

**Let's make the world blue and white.** Finns are encouraged to illuminate central and symbolic buildings and venues with blue and white light. You can also create your own blue and white lighting at work and at home. Blue and white lights will be lit on Independence Day Eve, Tuesday 5 December at 6 pm, and the lighting ends on Thursday morning, 7 December by 9 am. Traditionally, two candles will be lit on window sills on Independence day at 6 pm.

## Examples of centenary celebration events

Programme info regarding the Finland's Birthday week and Independence Day can be found from [suomifinland100.fi/congratulations-to-the-100-year-old-finland/?lang=en](http://suomifinland100.fi/congratulations-to-the-100-year-old-finland/?lang=en). Additional information on regional programme is available from Finland 100 regional coordinators <http://suomifinland100.fi/info/contact-details/?lang=en#regionalnetwork>

Here you can see sample events of the Independence Day programme. Additional information is available on the Finland 100 event calendar, from project presentations and directly from event organisers. Changes to the programme are possible. The data has been reported by the programme projects themselves; Finland 100 is not responsible for their accuracy.

### Finland's birthday week programme

- Light installation [Luminous](#) creates blue and white light around Finland. Light installation is on show in Olavinlinna, Savonlinna 28–29.11., Näsinneula, Tampere 30.11.–1.12., Kuusisaari, Oulu 2–3.12., Kilpisjärvi, Saana fell 4–5.12., and in Turku castle, Turku 5–6.12.
- 30.11. [The inauguration of the Winter War monument](#). Sculptor Pekka Kauhanen's national monument will be unveiled in a ceremony at Kasarmitori, Helsinki.
- 2.12. National Finland 100 celebration in Oulu to celebrate the 100-year-old Finland.
- Finland 100 ice hockey matches around Finland 29.11.–5.12.

### Independence Day Eve, 5 December

- Parliament's centenary year climaxes into jubilee session at 12 pm.
- [Libraries throughout Finland are inviting everyone to enjoy a pre-party](#) on the day before the Independence Day.
- National Finland's Independence Day celebration for children is organised at the House of the Estates in Helsinki and hosted by the Prime Minister Juha Sipilä.
- Two-day-long independence celebration takes place in Koli 5-6.12., in the Province of Northern Karelia.
- **The official opening ceremony of the Independence Day celebrations** at the Helsinki Market Square at 6 pm. At the same time, Finnish flags will be hoisted and blue and white lights will be

lit. The flagging continues until Independence Day evening, Wednesday 6 December at 10 pm. The flag should be lit during the night. The blue and white lighting ends on Thursday morning, 7 December by 9 am.

- All karaoke bars in Finland are invited to take up the challenge and participate in an event to join in singing well-known, Finnish hit songs celebrating Finland. Karaoke pre-parties will start at 9 pm.

### **Independence Day, 6 December**

- Several churches across Finland start their 10 am services by choirs singing Sibelius' Finlandia. Helsinki Cathedral's jubilee service takes place at 12 pm.
- At forenoon Honorary guards are formed on different cemeteries across Finland. Persons with the same age as the deceased will stand on graves of the servicemen and women who died in Finland's wars. Honorary guards will be set up in Helsinki's Hietaniemi cemetery, in Tampere, Oulu, Kuopio and Lappeenranta, among other places.
- The Defence Forces' [Independence Day parade](#) in 2017 will take place in Kuopio at 1 pm.
- [The Multicultural Independence Day celebration](#) will be held at Finlandia Hall in Helsinki at 1:30 pm. Mrs. Jenni Haukio acts as the honorary guardian of the celebration.
- Lahti arranges jubilee celebration at 1 pm at Sibeliusstalo in Lahti.
- [Finland sjunger 100 år](#). Finland's svenska sång- och musikförbund (FSSMF) arranges sing-along events around Western Finland at 2 pm, where people sing in tune Finnish classic songs, such as, Vårt land, Suomis sång, Finlandia and Modersmålets sång in Swedish.
- Children's Independence Day ball in Tampere from 2 pm to 5 pm.
- Espoo's Independence Day concert at Metro-Areena from 2:30 pm to 4 pm. The event is open for everyone and free of charge.
- Vantaa's Independence Day jubilee concert at Energia-Areena from 3 pm to 5 pm. The event is open for everyone and free of charge.
- Ajankulkue parade in Oulu at 4 pm. The parade tells the stories of 100-year-old Finland and Oulu.
- Independence Day celebration in Tampere at 5 pm.
- Students' Independence Day parade in Helsinki.
- The Independence Day Reception of the President of the Republic.
- Around 10 pm Finland's centenary of independence evening climaxes with a fireworks show in Helsinki and other Finnish cities.

### **Key moments of Finland's road to independence in 1917**

- 18 July: Parliament passes the Power Law transferring supreme power over internal affairs in the Grand Duchy of Finland. The power had previously belonged to the Emperor of Russia. Russia's interim government didn't approve the law and dissolved the Parliament.
- 9 November: The parliament decides to move the highest power to three regents. After a quarrelsome process, the regents never got chosen.
- 15 November: Parliament passes the new Power Law and the supreme power is shifted entirely to the Parliament.
- 27 November: The Senate appointed by Parliament begins work, under the leadership of P.E. Svinhufvud.
- 4 December: Svinhufvud's Senate, that is the Finnish government, reads its Declaration of Independence to Parliament.
- 6 December: The Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Finnish parliament with votes 100-88. This day was later established as Finland's national day, Independence Day.
- 31 December: Russia recognises Finland's independence.
- 4-10 January 1918: Northern countries, Germany and France recognize Finland's independence.

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**Further information and materials** on the Finland 100 anniversary year for the media is available [here](#).

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*Finland 100 Years. The year 2017 will mark Finland's 100th anniversary as an independent state. It is the most important anniversary year of this generation which will be celebrated throughout 2017 all over Finland. The theme selected for the centenary year is 'Together'. Anybody can submit a proposal for inclusion in the centenary year programme up until the end of October 2017. Responsibility for the preparation and coordination of the centenary year rests with the Finland 100 set up by the Prime Minister's Office, assisted by the Project Secretariat and the regional network in the counties. suomifinland100.fi, #suomi100, #finland100*