



# PROGRAMME ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

25 - 28 APRIL 2023

# JOIN US AT THE 2023 AGM

*For surely I know the plans I have for you,  
says the Lord, plans for your welfare and  
not for harm, to give you a future with  
hope.*

*Jeremiah 29:11*

Eurodiaconia is a network of churches and Christian organizations that provide social and health care services and advocate for social justice. As a network of 58 members in 32 countries we work together for just and transformative social change across Europe, leaving no one behind.

Europe needs diaconal work. As the cost-of-living crisis affects more and more people and the war in Ukraine continues we need the hope that comes from the nurture, advocacy and care provided by diaconal work. The prophet Jeremiah speaks of hope as something intrinsic to the Christian faith and the concept of hope brings with it our faith in a world without poverty, war, discrimination and injustice. For now, our role is to bring glimpses of the horizon of God's kingdom – horizons of hope – through our diaconal work.

Therefore our theme for 2023 is **Horizons of Hope - building a Europe of trust, solidarity and diversity through diaconal work**. We want to celebrate the hope that is evident in diaconal work all over Europe and how our prophetic voice can bring hope in finding solutions to the social challenges that face us today.



**HORIZONS OF HOPE**  
BUILDING A EUROPE  
OF TRUST, SOLIDARITY  
AND DIVERSITY  
THROUGH DIACONIA





## HORIZONS OF HOPE

BUILDING A EUROPE  
OF TRUST, SOLIDARITY  
AND DIVERSITY  
THROUGH DIACONIA

Our 2023 AGM will be hosted by **Deaconess Foundation** in Helsinki, Finland, from the evening of the 25 April to lunchtime on the 28 April.

The Deaconess Foundation works for human dignity. Together with Rinnekodit services operator, the 155-year-old foundation provides effective social welfare and health services for people in need of special support. As a social foundation group, we build a more just society. Profits from our operations go to supporting those in the most vulnerable situations. People are always at the center of everything we do

Their work is guided by a common set of values. They aim to be the most courageous workplace in the industry for people who, in addition to their skills, carry their hearts to work with them. Every one of them works to further human dignity.

They develop their services together with their clients and partners. Civic activity is a strong feature of their work. Everyone is valuable to them and deserves to be considered.

They employ 3200 people nationwide and their combined turnover in 2022 was €233 million. They are also owners of the Diaconia College of Finland and the Diaconia University of Applied Sciences.

The AGM is also supported by our other members in Finland who will share their work with us in workshops and study visits where possible.



## HORIZONS OF HOPE

### BUILDING A EUROPE OF TRUST, SOLIDARITY AND DIVERSITY THROUGH DIACONIA

Our programme will begin with a welcome reception on the evening of the 25 April and end with our Business session on the morning of the 28 April. We will have expert speakers on diaconal and social work, on Diaconia and civil society and the future of the welfare state in Europe.

We will have an extensive programme of workshops and invite members to offer to run a workshop that is related to either the broad theme of the AGM or focused around the topics of Quality, Accessibility, Adequacy, Sustainability and Investment in social protection and social services. If we have too many offers of workshops we may ask you to combine with another member.

You will also have the possibility to visit projects in the Helsinki area and perhaps even further.

We will also have an active social programme that will provide time for networking and building community among our members – another sign of hope in Europe.

We want to encourage you to come with as many delegates as you wish – particularly for the first 2 days – and to ensure that at least one person from your organisation attends the Business Session on Friday.

Our AGM and Conference gives us an opportunity to meet, share and build our role in shaping the social policies and services in Europe – join us in Helsinki and build hope!






# Programme


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## TUESDAY 25 APRIL

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>15.00 - 17.00</b> | Eurodiaconia Supervisory Board Meeting at Deaconess Foundation                          |
| <b>17.00 - 17.30</b> | AGM participants registration, Hotel Scandic Helsinki Hub - desk by the hotel reception |
| <b>17.45</b>         | Travel by tram #1 from Hotel Scandic Helsinki Hub to Deaconess Foundation               |
| <b>18.30</b>         | Opening service at Deaconess Foundation church  |
| <b>19.15</b>         | Evening reception   |
| <b>20.30</b>         | Closing<br>Travel by tram #1 from Deaconess Foundation to Hotel Scandic Helsinki Hub    |



Please click [HERE](#) to register for Workshops, Study Visits and the Dinner at National Museum of Finland by 18th of April!  
Click [HERE](#) to register for Helsinki City Hall Reception by 19th of April!



## Explore Helsinki: The white city of the North

# Programme

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## WEDNESDAY, 26 APRIL FINNISH HORIZONS OF HOPE

*All day conference at Scandic Helsinki Hub - Meeting Room "MEET1"*

<b>08.30 - 9.00</b>	Morning worship and Opening
<b>09.00 - 12.30</b>	Keynotes and dialogue – coffee in between <b>Speakers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Esa Saarinen</li><li>• Marjaana Seppänen</li><li>• Risto Saarinen</li><li>• Sylvia Gale</li></ul>
<b>12.30 - 13.30</b>	Lunch
<b>13.30</b>	<b>Departure for the Study Visits</b> around Helsinki - Please follow the direction for the buses given the day of
<b>13.30 - 15.30</b>	Study Visits around Helsinki - see description below
<b>15.30</b>	Return to hotel & coffee break
<b>16.00 - 17.00</b>	<b>Reflections with politicians</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kristiina Kokko</li><li>• Suldaan Said Ahmed</li></ul>
<b>17.00</b>	Closing
<b>17.30</b>	Departure by walking from Hotel Scandic Helsinki Hub
<b>18.00 - 19.00</b>	<b>Helsinki City Reception</b> Helsinki Old Court House

 To access the reception you need  
to bring your **ID** and **QR Code/**  
 **Confirmation of Registration**





# Programme

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## THURSDAY 27 APRIL EUROPEAN HORIZONS OF HOPE

*All day conference at Scandic Helsinki Hub - Meeting Room "MEET1"*

<b>08.30 - 9.00</b>	Morning worship and Opening
<b>09.00 - 10.30</b>	Keynotes and dialogue – coffee in between <b>Speakers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alfredo Abad Heras</li><li>• Pauliina Parhiala</li><li>• Piotr Sadowski</li></ul>
<b>10.30 - 11.00</b>	Coffee break
<b>11.00 - 12.30</b>	<b>Morning Workshops -</b> See the descriptions below
<b>12.30 - 13.30</b>	Lunch
<b>13.30 - 15.00</b>	<b>Afternoon Workshops -</b> See the descriptions below
<b>15.00 - 16.00</b>	Coffee and connecting members
<b>17.40</b>	Public transportation from Hotel Scandic Helsinki Hub to the National Museum of Finland - Tram #1
<b>18.30</b>	Group photo (at the stairs by the entrance of the museum)
<b>19.00</b>	<b>Dinner at National Museum of Finland (Suomen Kansallismuseo)</b> (address: Aleksanterinkatu 20)

# Programme

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## FRIDAY 28 APRIL



**Hotel rooms to be checked out by 12.00 hrs (luggage room available)**

- 8.30** Conference (Business session) at Scandic Helsinki Hub at meeting room "MEET1"
- 12.30** Closing/Lunch

## ABOUT HELSINKI:

**Helsinki** is the capital city of Finland, located on the southern coast of the country. With a population of around 650,000, it is Finland's most populous city and the cultural, financial, and political hub of the country. Helsinki is known for its stunning architecture, beautiful parks, and vibrant cultural scene. The city boasts numerous museums, galleries, theaters, and music venues, as well as an abundance of restaurants, cafes, and bars. Helsinki is also famous for its design heritage, with many world-renowned designers hailing from the city.

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

### **Eurodiaconia:**

Henriette Umutesi  
henriette.umutesi@eurodiaconia.org  
+32 484222014

### **Deaconess Foundation**

Marjo Höglund  
marjo.hoglund@hdl.fi  
+358 50 444 0112





# Study Visits

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Ph: HDL, D-Asemat

**Study Visits** provide an opportunity to visit five services and projects delivered around Helsinki by our hosts. Participants will be able **to select one study visit to participate in**, with a **maximum of 16 people per study visit excluding Vamos that has a capacity of 18**. The study visits will take place **Wednesday 26/04**. Departure will be after lunch at **13.30**, and we will be back at the main venue at **15.30**, where there will be an hour dedicated to sharing and discussing these impactful experiences. Transportation will be provided (Busses).

## D-STATION HELSINKI

In addition to its social and health care services, Deaconess Foundation runs community programmes aiming to offer social contacts, build a sense of mutual trust and of belonging to a community, and strengthen people's agency. As one of our tactics to do this, we run **four local community centres** – three in Helsinki and one in Oulu. The **D-stations** are meant for and accessible to all kinds of people, regardless of their age, ethnicity or status. The centres reflect the interests of the people who come to them: there are cafes, discussions, parties, games, courses, events, music and cooking. The activities are run by the citizens themselves, while the staff is there to support and encourage them, and, obviously, manage the administration, content and pedagogical consistency and relevance of the centres. They organise community building groups (CABLE) in order to help all kinds of people find their own skills, strengths and interests and become community builders.

## AL AMAL HELSINKI

**AL AMAL is a project that works with people who have sought but been denied asylum in Finland.** We offer them community activities and community support instead of inaction. Building trust and a cooperative relationship with them, we offer psychosocial support, counseling, and guidance to any services available for the undocumented, but we also provide them with factual information about what it means to stay in Finland without a residence permit, what kind of consequences it can have and what kind of options they have.



Ph: HDL, AL AMAL

# Study Visits

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Ph: HDL, Vamos

## BREIKKI HELSINKI

In the **substance abuse service unit BREIKKI Helsinki**, we offer opioid substitution treatment mainly to adults living in the capital region. We have been offering opioid substitution treatment for more than 20 years. We have altogether about 400 customers today in Helsinki and Tampere. A person is referred to the services by their municipality of residence. The treatment includes drug treatment, psychosocial treatment, peer support and service guidance. At Breikki activities are planned and implemented together with customer representatives also neighbourhood works is done. All this increases customer engagement.

## VAMOS HELSINKI

In **VAMOS we work with young people between the ages of 16 and 29**. These youth are outside education and working life and/or experiencing difficulty finding their own path in life. We build trust by giving them time and attention. Any young person beginning their path at Vamos is appointed their own employee who has time to get to know them. At Vamos, you get support both for everyday life and for planning your future, based on your needs. Together with the young, we gradually explore their paths to school or employment. In addition to individual support, it is possible to participate in group activities.

## HIRUNDO HELSINKI

**HIRUNDO, a day center intended for Europe's mobile population.** Having operated for more than 10 years, the center has staff to help with work permit issues and other everyday concerns. There are also facilities to cook, take a shower and do laundry. The latest addition to our services is Mobile Hirundo, a minibus offering help within the Helsinki metropolitan area.



Ph: HDL, Hirundo

## LIVING ROOM HELSINKI

**LIVING ROOM** offers help, support and activities for young people who came to the country as minors, without parents, so that they are not left alone. There are always safe adults who help with homework, for example, and the young people also have the opportunity to get to know each other in the Living Room community.





# Choose your Workshops!

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## MORNING WORKSHOPS ( 27/04, 11.00 – 12.30)

We are glad to present to different and exciting opportunities to learn and grow with the guidance of our talented members and staff. Each of these workshops will offer unique insights and skills, so you can choose the one that best aligns with your interests and goals. Please note that each workshop has a maximum capacity of 20 people. Let's dive in!

1

### **FROM PSYCHIATRIC ASYLUMS TO THE PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH IN THE COMMUNITY: PERSON-CENTERED AND RECOVERY-, SYSTEMIC- AND COMMUNITY-ORIENTED**

DIAKONIE DEUTSCHLAND

This process of reforming the psychiatric system received important impulses from international experiences in Italy, England, France, the Scandinavian countries, the USA and other countries. In these almost 50 years, a paradigm shift has taken place in terms of the understanding of mental problems, professional methods and attitudes, forms of participation of mental health service users and their relatives, and the relationship of psychiatry to society. It seems necessary to develop a common understanding of how to address the mental health problems of our time in Europe and within the Eurodiaconia network.

2

### **QUALITY PEOPLE - QUALITY SERVICES**

SLEZSKA DIAKONIE

Providing good quality and person-centred services is closely interconnected with ensuring enough people - our staff members- who are professionally well equipped, but also committed in service provision and mission of the organization. This topic is for many social service providers on the top of their agenda as there are gaps in the labour market and we are facing struggles in recruiting people, but also in retaining them. Social service providers are also challenged by demographic change, because in a lot of care homes, care workers are getting older whereas the social service sectors seems to be more attractive for middle-aged workers than for young people. Why is that? Do we need to search for innovations and strengthen connections between PR, HR and quality? As a faith based social service providers our mission is also to be a "salt" and "light" in the society. Does that impact our HR policies and are we visible enough?



# Choose your Workshops!

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## MORNING WORKSHOPS ( 27/04, 11.00 – 12.30)

3

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO ASSIST PEOPLE AFFECTED BY AND/OR FLEEING CONFLICTS

DIAKONIE POLAND AND THE ARMENIAN ROUNDTABLE

In this workshop we will discuss how diaconal organisations and churches assist people affected by and/or fleeing conflicts. The workshop will build on two different examples of Eurodiaconia members supporting people affected by conflicts. It will show examples of aid programs and provide a space to discuss challenges such as project coordination, partnerships, access to funding, as well as how to deal with changing perspectives of the host community and legal regulations.

4

### DEBUNKING MYTHS FOR A REAL AND AN EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS & REFUGEES'

DIACONIA SPAIN

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has brought up to light the EU's capacity for the reception of refugees and the level of sensitivity of citizens. In the same way, host societies have perpetuate stereotypes, prejudices and biases, which further hinder the integration of migrant and refugees. Thus, the elimination of discriminatory behaviours motivated by steteorypes is crucial to ensure the effective integration and the well-being of all migrants and refugees. This workshop will explore the integration and social inclusion of all refugees by tackling prejudice, addressing discrimination and fostering social inclusion through community and cultural mediation.

5

### ELDERLY PERSONS DIGITAL PARTICIPATION AND THOUSAND VOICES- GIVING A VOICE TO SERVICE USERS

HELAMANNISKAN SWEDEN AND CARITAS FOUNDATION

This will be a joint workshop divided into two parts. In the first part, We will explore how digitalization can be an opportunity for participation for elderly persons. We will look at how digital connections can enable participation in activities for those who otherwise find it difficult to attend close meetings. As such, discussions will focus on what digital participation means to you/your organisation. The second part will look at -Thousand voices-giving a voice to service users. This will focus on empowering service users by having them tell their stories which could be a tool for lobbying. Discussions will focus on what your organisation is doing in this regard. And how political representation of persons with lived experiences can be stronger developed.





# Choose your Workshops!

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## AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS ( 27/04, 13.30 – 15.00)

### 1 ADEQUACY OF SOCIAL POLICY

MAGDALENA BORDAGORRY

POLICY AND MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Social safety nets & essential services at the national level must be adequate to ensure a decent life for everyone, tackle poverty and foster social inclusion. However, defining adequacy in this context and throughout all European countries can be challenging. Therefore, in this workshop we want to discuss what is needed for social policy measures to be adequate, how adequacy is reflected in social benefits at the different national levels and which constraints need to be overcome in order to achieve social protection measures that are adequate and fight poverty & social exclusion. Furthermore, we will discuss how Eurodiaconia members' work relates to this topic.

### 2 QUALITY SOCIAL SERVICES: THE ROLE OF DIACONIA

KEWAN MILDRED

POLICY AND MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Everyone in Europe should have access to quality social services, these services range from childhood education and care, long-term care, housing, education, training and counselling. However, quality social services vary significantly across Europe, partially because social services are unevenly and unequally developed across the EU. Quality is being challenged by lack of adequate financing, shortage of qualified staff and lack of national quality assurance or standards. In this workshop, we aim to identify challenges you face in the delivery of quality social services. We will discuss the ways you have adopted to solve these challenges and together come up with proposals for our future work.

### 3 SUSTAINABILITY AND DIACONIA

ANNE-SOPHIE WISLOCKI

HEAD OF ADVOCACY

Sustainability and the green transition are playing an increasing role at EU level and in many national contexts. The topic we want to discuss in this workshop is twofold. On the one hand, we want to explore how the green transition is affecting low-income households and vulnerable groups. On the other hand, we will also discuss the role of diaconal actors as social services providers in the green transition. Finally, we will explore how the question of sustainability should be reflected in Eurodiaconia's work.



# Choose your Workshops!

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## AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS ( 27/04, 13.30 – 15.00)

### 4 ACCESSIBILITY: EQUAL ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

GISELA GUARI CANADA

POLICY AND MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Social services must be accessible to all. However, people at risk of social exclusion and in vulnerable situations (such as migrants, refugees, EU mobile citizens or ethnic minorities) often face difficulties in accessing social services across Europe –such as education, healthcare, housing, or employment.

A non-discriminatory and equal access to these services is essential to promoting social inclusion and preventing people at risk of exclusion or in a vulnerable situation from falling through the cracks of our social systems. Therefore, in this workshop, we will identify the specific challenges that Eurodiaconia's members encounter in their daily work and that prevent vulnerable groups from accessing social services. The overall aim of this workshop will be to discuss together how we can address these challenges and achieve equal opportunities for all.

### 5 INVESTING IN DIACONIA

HEATHER ROY

SECRETARY GENERAL

Investment in social services and social policies has been a call from Eurodiaconia members for some time. However, given the cost of living crisis, the war in Ukraine, and post-covid recovery, the room in national budgets for such investment is narrow. In this workshop, we want to look at what we mean by investment and how we can have effective collaboration to encourage greater engagement. We will also explore the concept of a wellbeing economy and how it can support and promote greater investment. Additionally, we will discuss what we need to do together to establish a strong evidence base to support greater social investment.



## SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

We encourage all participants to share their favourite moments of our AGM using the official hashtag for this year on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

Please keep an eye on our social media channels during the AGM and we invite you to encourage your Communications Officers to reach out to us on social media to help us spread our European diaconal identity.

### Tag us on our social media channels!

- Facebook: @eurodiaconia.brussels
- Twitter: @Eurodiaconia
- Instagram: eurodiaconia
- LinkedIn: Eurodiaconia

### Use the official Hashtags!

#Eurodiaconia2023  
#SocialJustice  
#AGM2023  
#diaconia

### Share our official visuals!



For any further inquiries or to share your pictures and videos of the event please contact: [donata.cagnato@eurodiaconia.org](mailto:donata.cagnato@eurodiaconia.org)

Share your  
Experience &  
**CONNECT**



## VENUE

Our workshops and activities are in the same location of our accommodation.

### Scandic Helsinki Hub

**Annankatu 18, Helsinki 00120 Finland**



Welcome to  
**HELSINKI**



## DIRECTIONS FROM HELSINKI AIRPORT

Getting to **Helsinki city center from Helsinki Airport** is easy with the I or P trains, which run every 10 minutes on weekdays and every 15 minutes on Sundays.

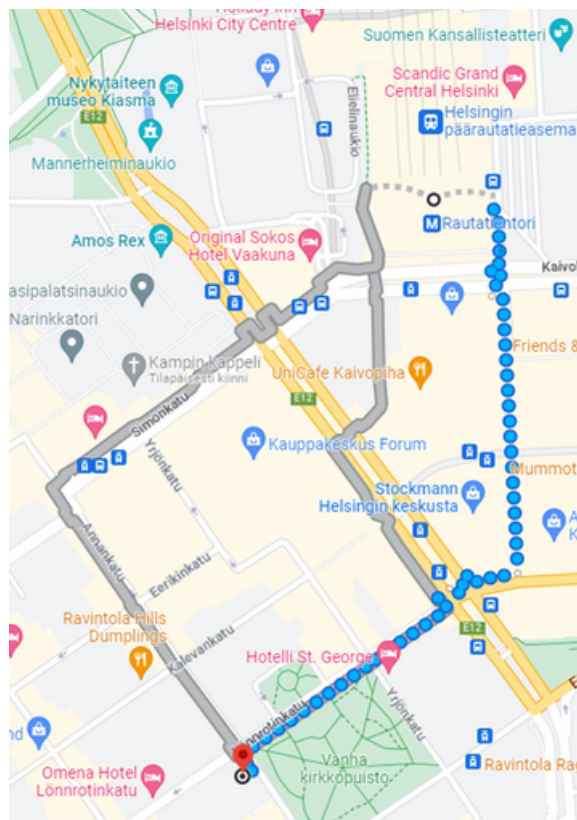
The **I trains** make stops at Helsinki, Tikkurila, Airport, Myyrmäki, and Helsinki, and take about 27 minutes to reach the city center.

The **P trains** make stops at Helsinki, Myyrmäki, Airport, Tikkurila, and Helsinki, and take about 32 minutes.

To catch the train, head to the Airport Train Station located directly under the airport terminal, which is accessible by lift or escalator from the arrival and departure halls. Don't forget to purchase an ABC-zone ticket for 4.10 € from the ticket machine before boarding the train.

Once you arrive at Helsinki City Center, which is the final stop also known as **"Helsingin Päärautatieasema,"** it's only a short **11-minute walk to the Scandic Hub Hotel (Annankatu 18).**

If you prefer not to walk, local taxis are available at the railway station.



For more information on getting around Helsinki, visit <https://www.hsl.fi/en/travelling/visitors/airport-train>.

Welcome to  
**HELSINKI**

## ROUTE INSTRUCTIONS

TUESDAY, 25 APRIL:

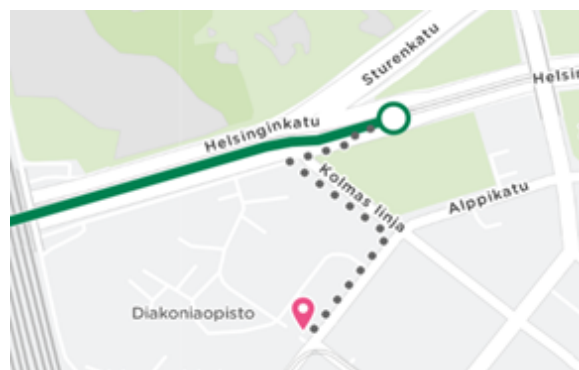
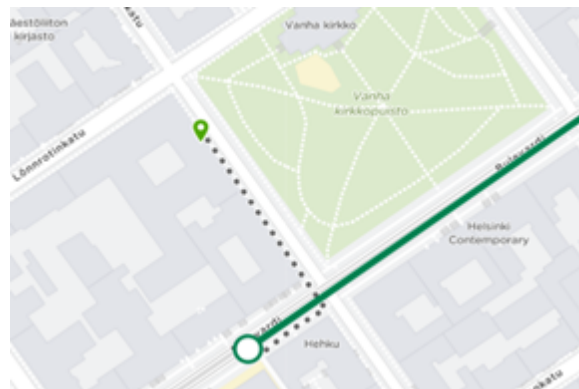
### OPENING SERVICE AND EVENING RECEPTION

18.30 HRS

#### From hotel (address: Annankatu 18) to Deaconess Foundation

Destination address: Alppikatu 2

- At 17.50 hrs walk 150 meters from hotel (Annankatu street) to tram stop (Bulevardi street).
- Take tram # 1 from tram stop called "Fredrikinkatu" heading to "Vallila via Lasipalatsi"
- Tram trip takes 19 minutes
- Get off at stop called "Linnanmäki (etelä/south)" at around 18.15 hrs
- here will be somebody to meet you at the tram stop with Eurodiaconia sign
- 200 m walk to Deaconess Foundation, arrival at 18.20 hrs



Same route back to the hotel from Deaconess Foundation at around 20.30 hrs.

Tram # 1 goes every 12-14 minutes.

Welcome to  
**HELSINKI**



## ROUTE INSTRUCTIONS

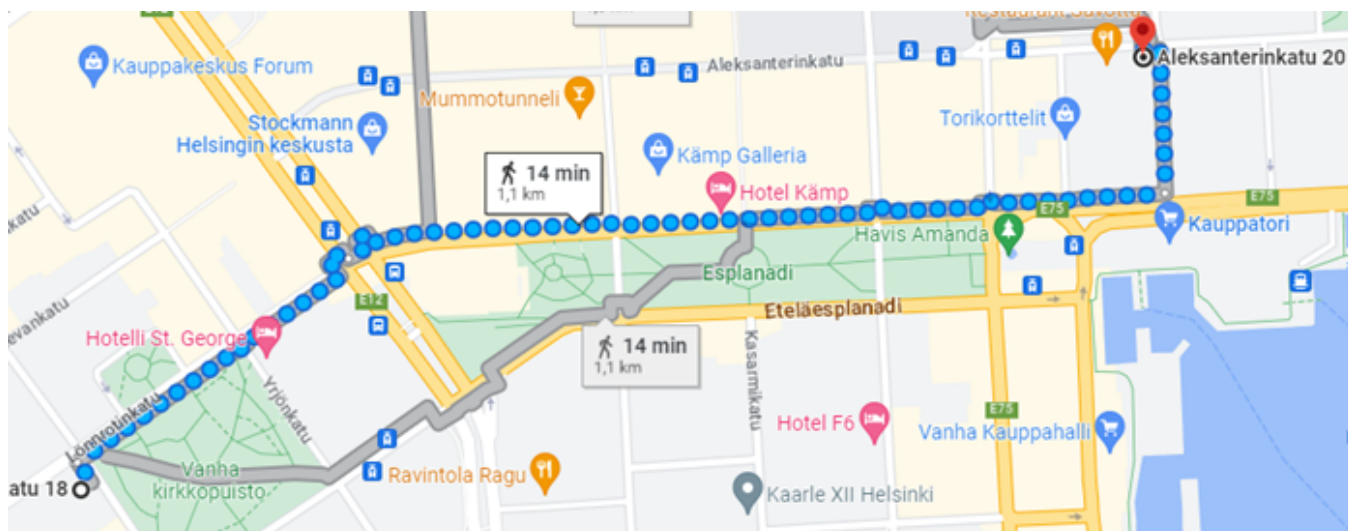
WEDNESDAY, 26 APRIL:

### HELSINKI CITY RECEPTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE EURODIACONIA AGM 18.00 HRS

#### From hotel to Helsinki Old Court House, Empire Room

Destination address: Aleksanterinkatu 20

Walking instructions (1,1 km):



Welcome to  
**HELSINKI**

## ROUTE INSTRUCTIONS

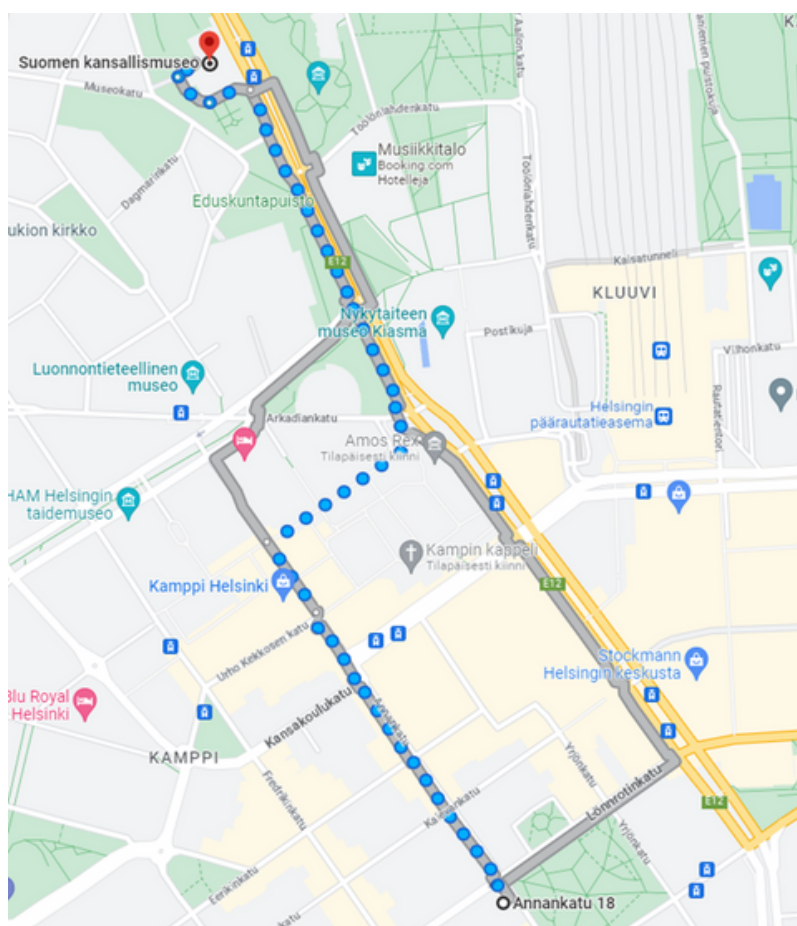
THURSDAY, 27 APRIL:

### DINNER AT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF FINLAND 19.00 HRS

#### **From hotel to National Museum of Finland (Suomen Kansallismuseo)**

Destination address: Mannerheimintie 34

Walking instructions 1,4 km (20 minutes):



Welcome to  
**HELSINKI**

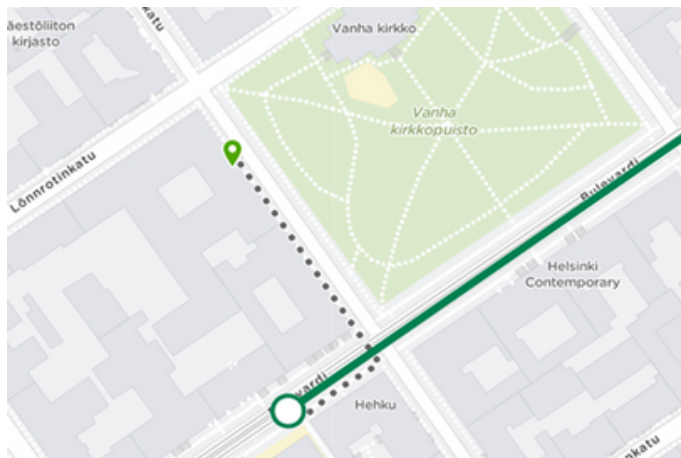


## ROUTE INSTRUCTIONS

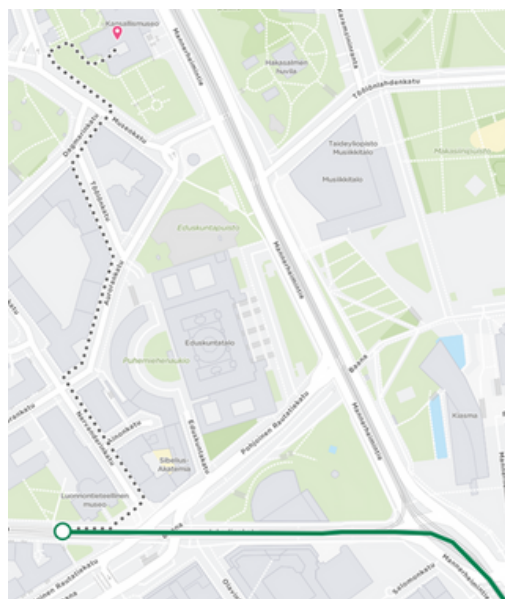
THURSDAY, 27 APRIL

Public transportation to dinner venue:

- At 18:00 hrs walk 150 meters from hotel (Annankatu street) to tram stop (Bulevardi street).
- Take tram # 1 from tram stop called "Fredrikinkatu" heading to "Vallila via Lasipalatsi"
- Tram trip takes 8 minutes



- Get off at stop called "Luonnontieteellinen museo/Museum of Natural history" at around 18.15 hrs
- There will be somebody to meet you at the tram stop with Eurodiaconia sign
- 600 m walk to dinner venue National Museum of Finland



Welcome to  
**HELSINKI**

## SPEAKERS' PROFILES:



### ESA SAARINEN

PHILOSOPHER, WRITER, COMPANY COACH, MEDIA FIGURE, ACCLAIMED SPEAKER, PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL AND PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF AALTO UNIVERSITY

**Esa Saarinen** is a philosopher, a writer, company coach, media figure, acclaimed speaker, public intellectual and Professor emeritus of Aalto University. After defending his Ph.D on philosophical logic in 1977 , Saarinen became known as the “Punk Doctor” that stood out by his colourful, non-cynical contributions. Gaining reputation for his lectures at the university in the 1980’s and for his company lectures in the 1990’s, Saarinen has become the most recognised academically credited public speaker in the country. In YouTube the philosopher's “Philosophy and Systems Thinking” course (in Finnish) has been viewed more than 2 million times.



### RISTO SAARINEN

PROFESSOR OF ECUMENICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

**Risto Saarinen** is Professor of Ecumenics at the University of Helsinki since 2001. He has published extensively on systematic theology, ecumenism and Lutheranism. Recently, Saarinen has been working on the theology of hope and reconciliation.

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GET TO KNOW  
OUR  
SPEAKERS





## KRISTIINA KOKKO

PARTY SECRETARY OF KOKOOMUS (THE NATIONAL COALITION PARTY)

**Kristiina Kokko** is the party secretary of Kokoomus (the National Coalition Party) in Finland since 2019. Previously she has worked as a special adviser to four different ministers and at Akava – the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland. Despite a lengthy career in politics, Kokko is by profession a priest. She studied theology at the University of Helsinki. Kokko lives in Helsinki and has three children.



## MARJAANA SEPPÄNEN

PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL WORK AND DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

**Marjaana Seppänen** is Professor of Social Work and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki. Her background is in social sciences (especially social work), and she has extensively studied and published on questions connected to ageing, well-being, gerontological social work, and the living conditions of older adults. Prof. Seppänen is part of several international research networks in gerontology and social work.

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GET TO KNOW  
OUR  
SPEAKERS





## OLLI HOLMSTRÖM

CEO OF DEACONESS FOUNDATION AND  
CHAIRPERSON OF EURODIACONIA

**Olli Holmström** is the CEO of Deaconess Foundation since 2012 and is currently a chairperson at Eurodiaconia. Olli holds master's in theology from the University of Helsinki and started his career as a pastor in Church Parish in Helsinki. Throughout the years he has worked for various organisations including Diakonia College of Finland and Nokia and he has been active in various board positions like the Board of Finnish Association of Private Care Providers. Olli is interested in developing people leadership topics and organisation culture.



## SULDAAN SAID AHMED

FORMER MEMBER OF THE FINNISH  
PARLIAMENT IN THE LEFT ALLIANCE  
PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND A  
HELSINKI CITY COUNCILOR

**Suldaan Said Ahmed** is a former Member of the Finnish Parliament in the Left Alliance Parliamentary group and a Helsinki City Councilor. In Parliament, he has been a member of the legal committee. In 2022, Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto appointed Said Ahmed as a special representative of peace mediation in the Horn of Africa region. He has visited the Horn of Africa in the role of special representative several times to promote dialogue and peace in the region. He is currently collaborating with Deaconess Foundation.

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GET TO KNOW  
OUR  
SPEAKERS



## ALFREDO ABAD HERAS

PRESIDENT OF THE PERMANENT  
COMMISSION OF THE SPANISH  
REFORMED CHURCH

**Alfredo Abad Heras** is a Spanish Protestant pastor with a Master's degree in Theology. He has served in various leadership positions in international and national organizations related to the Spanish Protestant Church, including as Coordinator of International Relationships and President of the National Council Spanish Protestant Church. He was also General Secretary of CEAR and President of CEPPL. Additionally, he served as Vice President and Patron of the Fundación Federico Fliedner and is currently the President of the Permanent Commission of the Spanish Reformed Church.



## HEATHER ROY

SECRETARY GENERAL OF  
EURODIACONIA

**Heather Roy** has been the Secretary General of Eurodiaconia since 2008. She brings a wealth of experience to the role, having worked in international NGOs since 1998. Originally from Scotland, she has dedicated her career to advocating for social justice and supporting marginalized communities across Europe.

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**PIOTR SADOWSKI**SECRETARY-GENERAL OF  
VOLONTEUROPE

**Piotr Sadowski** has been the President of Social Platform since 2019 and has been the Secretary-General of Volonteurope since 2008. He was involved in the advocacy and implementation of the 2011 European Year of Volunteering and is now a representative to the Standing Committee of the Council of Europe INGO Conference. He is working to ensure the application and regulations of the European Charter of Social Rights and safeguarding social rights throughout Europe.

**PAULIINA PARHIALA**PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF DIAKONIA AND  
DEVELOPMENT AT SUOMEN  
LÄHETYSSEURA (FELM)

**Pauliina Parhiala** is a seasoned professional with a Master's degree in Philosophy and Theology who currently serves as the Program Director of Diakonia and Development at Suomen Lähetyseura (Felm). With an extensive background in diakonia and international development cooperation, Parhiala has held various management positions throughout her career. In her current role, she is responsible for leading and developing Felm's diakonia work and development cooperation, defining guidelines and priorities, and providing comprehensive guidance to the organization.

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## SYLVIA GALE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE BONNER  
CENTER FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT  
THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND IN  
RICHMOND

Dr. Sylvia Gale is Executive Director of the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement at the University of Richmond in Richmond, Virginia, and a 22-23 Fulbright Finland Mid-Career Professional Development Grantee, hosted by the Deaconess Foundation, Helsinki, and Tampere University of Applied Sciences.

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and social justice  
through action



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