

2-1 Speech of Mr Samuel Tammekann

Date: 2026- June 11:00

Speaker: **Samuel Tammekann, Acting Executive Director, European Movement in Finland**

Ilari Rantakari

Our next speaker is Samuel Tammela, who is the acting executive director of the European Movement in Finland; he will also be speaking via videoconference this afternoon.

Samuel Tammekann

Thank you very much and welcome on behalf of the European Movement Finland, the country's national pro-European civil society organisation.

I'm speaking to you via a screen this morning, not because I didn't want to be here or take part in tonight's dinner cruise, but because I'm recovering from elbow surgery. So I decided to head north to my home town, where the countryside has been much quieter than the capital in recent weeks. But I'll be back on your screens later this morning.

I'd like to thank Ilari Rantakari and the team at the European Movement in the Helsinki region for organising this event.

The European Movement Finland was founded with a single aim: to campaign for Finland's accession to the European Union. I am delighted to announce to you, 30 years on, that the campaign was a success, as you can see. But the most striking point is that, in this country, the path to Europe was not paved by governments alone. It was argued for, defended and won by the citizens. And this is the tradition of the entire European Movement family, dating back to the Hague Congress in 1948: citizens take the lead, leaders follow.

I've heard that last night you began your visit ten metres below the bedrock in the Merihaka civil defence shelter, and tomorrow you'll conclude it on the ramparts of Suomenlinna, an 18th-century maritime fortress. Few towns can trace the history of European security through the centuries, drawing on fortresses carved from granite that have stood the test of time.

As your programme will show, you will hear throughout the day that security is not a state monopoly, but rather the work of society as a whole – that is to say, the organisations that make it up and the actions of its citizens.

There is also a third point of reference, even though it is not on the programme. Fifty years ago, in the summer of 1975, the leaders of 35 states signed the Helsinki Final Act just a few kilometres from this hotel. On sovereign equality, the inviolability of borders, and security built through cooperation rather than in opposition to it. The world has come to call this the Spirit of Helsinki.

Many of you may be aware that last January in Davos, Canadian Prime Minister Carney reiterated that the rules-based security order must always be defended, as its values remain intact.

We must also be honest and acknowledge that the principles signed in this city, in Helsinki, are being openly violated. And the powers we used to rely on are no longer so trustworthy. But taking down the sign does not mean abandoning what was written on it. It means something much more difficult: deciding, here in Europe too, what we believe in. And building the strength to defend it ourselves.

When you are on the island of Suomenlinna tomorrow, look out for the King's Gate. Augustin Ehrensvärd left an inscription there that almost everyone in Finland knows. It reads: 'Stand firm here on your own soil and do not rely on foreign aid.' I believe today that it is up to a united Europe to take up this maxim.

Thank you for coming from all corners of our continent. I wish you an excellent annual meeting, lively discussions and some lovely Finnish June weather – two things I can promise. Have a very good morning, and I'll see you again soon. Thank you.