

# **EDXC2002 Conference**

## **Pori – Finland 15. – 18. August 2002**

Report by Anker Petersen

One of the best Conferences ever of the European DX Council (EDXC) was held mid August at the modern Spa Hotel Yyteri which is located on one of the most beautiful sand beaches of Finland. The sun was shining all the time and it was up to 30°C – double as warm as in Florence (15°C) and while Central Europe was drowning in rain!

The Finnish DX Association (FDXA) which today still counts some 800 DX-ers had thoroughly organized this the 36<sup>th</sup> EDXC Conference. It gathered about 100 Finnish DX-ers and broadcasters and 30 from 13 other countries including Australia, U.S.A., Turkey, Portugal, Ireland, Russia and Lithuania. Eleven of the participants are members of the DSWCI! The organizing committee lead by former EDXC Secretary General Risto Vähäkainu really did a marvellous job, so the Conference became a big success in all aspects !

On the agenda were no less than 36 items and in addition there was a two days visit to Tallinn, Estonia for over 20 of the participants. It will be too much to report on every item, so here are just some highlights. Many photos can be seen on these websites: <http://www.dxing.info/articles/edxc2002.dx> and [www.dswci.org](http://www.dswci.org)

The first Conference session was on Friday evening where Andrew Janitschek gave an introduction to Radio Free Asia which has been broadcasting since 1996 in nine major Asian languages. About one percent of the population is estimated to listen to the broadcasts even if Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese are jammed.

It was followed by a contest in identifying MW and FM-stations. The "World's best" became Mika Mäkeläinen and no. 2 Jukka Soini, both Finland. No. 3 was Dmitry Mezin, Kazan, Russia.

At 2000 we received a greeting of the city of Pori provided by EU coordinator Kristian Vainio, and after that the FDXA gave a special buffet and special drinks.

The official opening was on Saturday at 0930 with speeches by Luigi Cobisi (EDXC Secretary General), Juha Ignatius (FDXA President) and Risto Vähäkainu. Luigi Cobisi said that today the EDXC still represents some 5000 European DX-ers living in 17 countries. The EDXC Conferences are THE meeting place for DX-ers in Europe where important, personal contacts are made.

Then followed the morning session, first with a presentation of the private Scandinavian Weekend Radio by Trevor Twyman and Esa Saunamäki. SWR is authorized once a year by the Finnish PTT to broadcast. It has ten members and 5-10 supporting members who pay 50% of the expenses themselves. The rest is paid by commercials, sale of merchandise, and by the town of Virrat. Their biggest expense is the music copyright fees. The two transmitters which Esa and his friends have built now use 50 watts on 49 mb and 100 watts on 25 mb. They and the studio are located out in the forest 15 km from Virrat where nobody lives, so a UFO-detector has been put up.... As we are in Finland, the first building that was built at the station was the sauna ! Now they consider to put a microphone in the sauna... Other plans are better antennas, a second studio and more transmitter power as up to 2.5 kW ERP is allowed. SWR has been heard all over Europe and in North America. SWR had special broadcasts on that day which could be heard at Yyteri.

German DX-er Harald Gabler then told about a future German project called the DX Channel which shall provide up-to-date service to DX-ers. Read more later on [www.dxchannel.com](http://www.dxchannel.com)

Jukka Kotovirta and other Finnish FM DX experts who are amongst the most experienced in the world then gave us a very interesting FM-DX Show about this part of our hobby with its special equipment. Propagation options were described, but the summer 2002 had been poor in Finland.

From 1300 to 1400 YLE Radio Finland had a special broadcast in English live from the Hotel with the participants as audience. It was confirmed that the external broadcasts in English, German and French probably will cease later this year. Torre Ekblom was interviewed about his successful proposal in 1957 to broadcast a "DX-Corner" in English from the "Finnish Rundradio". The live programme ended with a panel discussion on the future of shortwave broadcasting in general. The conclusion was that in the industrialised world Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM), Satellite and Internet broadcasting will soon take over and there will only be a minor need for SW broadcasts to expatriots and travelling people. In the rest of the world the need for shortwave broadcasts will continue to exist, because the ordinary man cannot afford expensive equipment.

Directly after that we drove by bus to the nearby Pori short wave transmitter site in the forest near the sea at Preiviiki where Chief engineer Esko Huuhka showed around. This new site was inaugurated in 1987 in order to replace the old one from World War II in Pori which now has been surrounded by the city with its 77000 inhabitants. Here are six transmitters: For SW 3 modern ones from Brown Boveri with 500 kW , 1 with 250 kW and the old 100 kW for 6120 kHz. Furthermore a modern 600 kW MW transmitter for 963 kHz which by the way caused a lot of disturbances when DX-ing at Yyteri. The MW antenna is 135 meters high and there are SW antennas for all directions. The signals are received from the studios in Helsinki via microwave and the fully automated transmitter is even controlled from a computer in Helsinki and unmanned outside normal working hours!

The station at Preiviiki at present uses all its capacity for Radio Finland, but when the external broadcasts are reduced, the French TDF may buy more than the 49% of the shares it owns today, and then leasing of airtime to other broadcasters is likely.

During the afternoon session Swedish Magnus Wiberg from TERACOM gave us the status of DRM. International technical standards have been developed. The first tests spread too much on the frequency spectrum, but it is now under control within 9 kHz bandwidth. Sony, Bosch, Sangean, AOR and others are expected to have their first DRM receivers on the market in 2003.

It was followed by an AM DX Show about Finnish MW Dxing by active members of the Dxclusive, chaired by Hannu Niilekselä. When solar activity was at its lowest around 1997, the following impressive number of MW stations were heard in Finland, most in Lapland: 420 stations in Europe outside Iberia and the British Isles, 63 in Africa, 469 in Asia, 35 in the Pacific, 1059 in North America, 148 in Central America and the Caribbean, and 413 stations in South America ! All stations were identified. When geomagnetic storms occur, DX-ing in Lapland is impossible, but in Southern Finland North American stations may still come through.

Two rather new DX-Portals on the internet were introduced: [www.dxing.info](http://www.dxing.info) by Mika Mäkeläinen, and the EDXC Portal [www.multimania.com](http://www.multimania.com) by Paolo Morandotti.

Then Jarmo Salmi & Simo Soininen talked about collecting radio related items like stamps, pins, T-shirts, old radiobooks etc.

At 2000 the traditional EDXC Banquet dinner was served at the hotel restaurant, followed by presentation of FDXA awards and prizes, a lottery and an enjoyable DX auction.

On Sunday morning Finnish Mika Palo gave a very interesting talk about the Ethiopian Shortwave History and particularly the former Radio Voice of the Gospel – station ETLF. He has been working in Addis Ababa during the past years where he even has reestablished the old tape archive from RVOG. It was on the air 1963-1977 and financed by the Lutheran World Federation with headquarters in the U.S.A. Its aims were to spread the Lutheran belief and to assist in preventing the expansion of Islam and Marxism. It was personally supported by the late Emperor Haile Selassie. Over 90% of the population in Ethiopia were illiterates, so radio was THE media at that time!

The two former RVOG 100 kW transmitters in Gedja 40 km from the capital are nowadays used by Radio Ethiopia External Service, but they only produce about 60 kW according to the Chief Engineer. There are no funds to maintain its antenna park, so they will only last until the towers fall during a storm !

Then followed the traditional Broadcasters' panel chaired by Mika Mäkeläinen who also represented Radio Finland. Other stations were: Deutsche Welle (Waldemar Krämer and Valentina Jolkver), Radio Vlaanderen Int. (Frans Vossen who the same evening fell in Tallinn and seriously injured his knee, but now is recovering after an operation in Brussels), Voice of Turkey (Osman Erkan and Engin Asena), Radio Free Asia (A.J.) and IBB (VOA, RFE/RL) (Arto Mujunen).

During the whole conference a special DX Shack was build in a nearby hut. Many participants made DX-ing there and mostly on MW comparative receiver and antenna testing was done by Martti Karimies, Vesa-Jussi Rinkinen and Tarmo Kontro. The results were now presented:

#### Receivers

1. Best category with highest sensitivity and lowest noise (but also most expensive: 6-7000 Euro!): The professional ITT CR91 and Telefunken E1800.
2. Second category: JRC 525 & 535 and ICOM R9000.
3. Third category: AOR AR7030 and AR7030+ (the latter was a little bit better due to its higher dynamic properties). Both AOR's had more internal background noise than the JRC's. The Palstar R30 is close to the AOR in sensitivity.

#### Antennas

A 450 meters Beverage in 3-4 meters height was compared to a 40 meters long and 10 metres high KAZ antenna made of 2.5 mm insulated wire. Both antennas pointed towards the very strong Pori MW transmitter on 963 kHz which was heard with S9 + 50 dB ! The surprising result was that the KAZ antenna gave clearly better results than the long Beverage on weak MW-stations, particularly above 1000 kHz and also on SW up to 6 MHz! The KAZ was much better able to avoid spurious signals from the Pori transmitter, had a low noise floor and high sensitivity. A drawing of the KAZ antenna can be found on our website [www.dswci.org](http://www.dswci.org) . It was invented by Neil Kazaross, thus the name.

After that Risto Vähäkainu gave us a Music Quiz which was won by Alan Pennington, UK.

The final point on the long agenda was the EDXC Club Meeting chaired by Luigi Cobisi. He told us that the EDXC now has 16 member clubs after the Rhein-Main Radio Club recently joined. The interest for the EDXC is again increasing in Germany which probably will hold the EDXC Conference next summer in the Frankfurt area. Other possible future venues are suggested by Ireland, Malta and Turkey ! An updated EDXC List of Radio Countries will be published on the EDXC Portal.

On Monday some of us visited the Estonian Radio and TV Houses and the TV Tower in Tallinn.