

# ★ EURA The EuRApean

## Member Focus

### Transite Relocation Finland

#### Liz Paavolainen

Proud Holders of the EuRA Quality Seal



#### 'What about a Move to Finland?'

I wonder how many assignees have gone home and proposed this question to their families. Certainly it causes a flurry of world maps and hurried searching of the Internet. For me personally when presented with this question 24 years ago it meant: a Nordic country, very cold winters, darkness but marriage to a great Finnish guy. All these things were correct but I soon discovered there was so much more to Finland. The transition was not easy and took time even with my Finnish family's support but one of the most comforting features of Finland is the

common use of English. This has been a life saver for me and for our clients but it also has meant that the motivation to learn this amazing language has fallen by the way side.



*Liz Paavolainen*

This is not to say that Finland is any more difficult than other locations but it is certainly challenging, especially through the dark days of winter. However, as with all foreign assignments, the support of a good relocation consultant helps to make the move as easy as possible and fun along the way. Our clients from more exotic locations such as the Middle East or Asia are particularly appreciative of help with such diverse weather and cultural differences.

Even though we're always keeping busy, the relocation industry in Finland in general is relatively small, for one reason or another. It seems that not all companies are even familiar with relocation services, so they might not know to look for us when they acquire foreign employees. Also, there seems to be a mentality of DIY (do it yourself) all around the North, meaning that educated adults should be able to fend for themselves even in new surroundings. Luckily the government and other public authorities are now paying more attention to Finland's image and attractiveness abroad. The ministry of foreign affairs even put together a committee with the task of rethinking Finland's brand. That is not to say that the current image is a bad one, only that we could still do more in attracting new business, people and investments to our part of the world. Offering specialized services is part of that, and relocation services for one offer not only valuable information and aid, but also savings in time and other resources for both the transferee, their family and the company, not to mention the individual HR assistant who doesn't have to answer all questions big and small or run after a snow shovel at 8 am on a winter morning.

We at Transite Relocations can proudly say that we have not only been helping our clients with matters big and small but also creating and maintaining positive images of Finland and especially its capital area for the past 11 years. We all know how important first impressions are when you arrive in a new country. If there's someone there to hold your hand while you wade through the jungle of everyday life in a foreign environment, that's a huge bonus and one that we happily provide to all our clients.



Finland and its attractions aside, we have also seen some changes in our everyday working life recently. Last year saw

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us all getting to grips with our new relocation specific database, and thank goodness for the hotline to Belgium. But we all remain convinced that it enhances our service to the customer and assignees and at the same time makes us even more efficient.

Early December brought Sybil and SyCheck to our office which was a little earlier than planned but through her expert guidance we were able to meet the deadline and have everything in order ready for her audit. Although we are a small company the EuRA Quality Seal was exactly the right way forward and forced us to examine and often change habits that had grown with us but weren't always the most effective. This combined with the award of the EuRA Quality Seal brought the year to a satisfying close.

At the start of 2009 we moved to our new office premises in central Helsinki – the luxury of space is still a daily novelty and we wonder how we managed before. Our location on the southern tip of the city some 20 metres from the sea, with the sunset filling our windows every afternoon, promotes a good sense of wellbeing. This summer we could sell tickets for the Madonna concert which will be located just 100 metres away...

Although this is not a serious thought we have given a lot of consideration as to how we can adapt or build on our current services amid these uncertain financial times. Finland is not a major destination point in Europe yet, but we have experienced a steady growth in the relocation industry year on year. But ever wary of the changing global economic climate we remain open to any opportunities that present themselves. For instance, with a qualified English/Finnish language and cultural trainer on our staff we can now offer this service in-house.

With conference time approaching I look forward to exploring Vienna for the first time and renewing old friendships within our industry including the EuRA team who have provided invaluable 'behind the scenes' support.

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Liz Paavolainen  
Transite Relocations  
Henry Fordinkatu 5C  
00150 Helsinki  
Tel 050 551 4806  
info@transite.fi