



# The Monday Podcast



## Visiting Finland: an interview with Dr. Raija Seppälä (26.03.2007)

Good morning and welcome to the Monday Podcast from AllThingsGerman.net and Pension-Sprachschule.de

Good morning!

With us this morning is Raija Seppälä, the regional director for German, Austria and Switzerland of the Finnish Tourist Board. Good morning.

*Good morning!*

So Raija, tell me a little bit about your job. How long have you been working there at the Finnish Tourism Board?

*Oh, it's been a very long time. I started actually in 1983 already, so it is close to 25 years, and so it's a long time, but it has been very different jobs and different tasks that I have done.*

They moved you around quite a bit too, I mean working for the tourist board, I could imagine.

*Yes, that has been the most interesting thing in my job, I think.*

So, where have they placed you in your career?

*Well, I started, of course, in Helsinki, where I had courses. And then I wanted to come to Germany, because I was here as a student in Saarbrücken, and I liked it a lot. So I put some pressure, already then, in Helsinki, so I was able to move to Hamburg. Then we closed the office in Hamburg and I moved to Frankfurt. Then I stayed quite a long time in Frankfurt, in Germany, and got married here.*

Ah, that's where you met your husband?

*Yes, then I took my husband along, and my little baby then, and move to New York for 3 years. After that I was relocated to Stockholm, and then I was asked again to come back to Germany.*

Now, what made you get a job at the tourism board? Was it because of your love of travelling, or like... do you remember why you started?

*Absolutely, I can remember it was one of my Masters thesis [which] was (not) about to (get) [be] ready. I studied at the university in Tampere, and I had a thesis which was about tourism and advertising. So I started at the advertising agency, but it was too much, the work – I couldn't work on my Masters thesis, so I saw this job at the tourist board, I was not much older than 24 at that time, so I thought "Maybe this helps me get my Masters thesis finished."*



# The Monday Podcast



So, that's what made you come here. And tell me, how do you promote tourism to Finland, what do you have to do? I mean, do you attend fairs, do you deal with airlines, or how does that work?

*During my work career at the Finnish Tourist Board, of course, this has changed a lot. Now we have many more channels to use for promoting Finland. It depends, of course, on the market you are on. It's different to see Finland in Sweden than it is in Russia, or in Germany.*

*Germany is a huge market, where we would like to approach consumers, of course, to encourage them to buy a trip to Finland, but it's very expensive, so we are using a lot of multipliers, such as travel agencies, tour operators... of course we are supporting them a lot, we are trying to push with them their Finland products, we have a... quite an extensive Finland academy on-line, where we have, at the moment, 6500 travel agents who are signed up for that - and some couple of thousand have already finished their studies – so they are Finland experts.*

*So, and all kinds of co-operation that we can imagine. And [a] third tool is, of course, to work with [the] media as much as we can. We do a lot of press trips, contacts with [the] media, try to have as many journalists a year in Finland to get them right about Finland, to have TV crews, and so on.*

So you try to attract visitors and tourists, but you also try to attract businesses to move to Finland, is that part of your job too?

*At least, not yet. You know, there is some re-organisation coming up, so you never know what's... how it ends up, but at the moment we are just trying to get Germans, or Swiss, or Austrians to come to Finland.*

OK, and earlier you mentioned the media and the changes that have taken place, I guess 20 years ago your work was very different. Nowadays you use the internet, and, so, I mean was it much more paperwork in the old days?

*Absolutely! Well, I'm old enough to remember how the telex was earlier.*

**The Monday Podcast is a co-operation between [www.allthingsgerman.net](http://www.allthingsgerman.net) and [www.pension-sprachschule.de](http://www.pension-sprachschule.de).**

**To purchase the full transcript, please visit [www.themondaypodcast.com/store](http://www.themondaypodcast.com/store)**