

## FINNISH PORT OPERATORS ASSOCIATION TURNS 120 – ITS IMPORTANCE CONTINUES TO GROW IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Logistically, Finland has always been, in practice, an island. Ports and port operations have been vital to the people living on an island. Ship loading and unloading, stevedoring, and what is now referred to as port operations have always been essential.

On 28 May 2026, the Finnish Port Operators Association (Satamaoperaattorit ry) celebrates its 120th anniversary. *“Today, the importance of port operations and the need for an industry association are only increasing,”* says Juha Mutru, Managing Director of the Finnish Port Operators Association. *“Comprehensive safety and security of supply are themes around which we are now focusing our work.”*

The first companies in the sector were established in the late 19th century, and the association representing the industry, *The Stevedores Federation of Finland*, was founded in 1906 at the initiative of A.E. Erickson, owner of a stevedoring company in Turku.

The association’s original purpose included maintaining stevedoring prices at an appropriate level, even across the Baltic Sea region. A tough and enduring negotiating counterpart was Kuljetustyöntekijäin Liitto ry (The Transport Workers’ Union), founded in 1905 — the predecessor of today’s Finnish Transport Workers’ Union AKT — with which collective labour agreements are still negotiated today.

In the 1920s, the association’s name was changed to Lastauttajain Liitto (The Association of Stevedores). In the 1950s, its responsibilities expanded to improving occupational safety and working conditions for personnel, leading to the establishment of Satamien Sosiaaliyhdistys ry (The Ports Social Association), now known as Satamien Kehittämisyhdistys ry (The Ports Development Association).

With the arrival of the new millennium, the industry evolved and the association’s name changed accordingly. *“The current name, Finnish Port Operators Association, accurately reflects the activities of our member companies. It is not only about loading and unloading cargo, but also about organising port operations, developing systems, and ensuring smooth customer service,”* emphasises Ari-Pekka Saari, Chairman of the Finnish Port Operators Association. *“In summary, our work is broad-based service business in which maintaining personnel wellbeing and expertise is of utmost importance.”*

### Further information

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The Finnish Port Operators Association has 40 member companies serving nearly all commercial seaports in Finland. The companies employ approximately 3,000 people, the majority of whom work in stevedoring operations. The association is a member of the European umbrella organisation FEPORT (The Federation of European Private Port Companies and Terminals).