

IHT podcast S3E4 – THIS TRANSCRIPTION IS MADE WITH AI

Jonathan Murphy: Welcome to the International House Turku podcast, your guide to living, working and studying in Turku. We are your hosts, Jonathan Murphy.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: And Rosa Pambukhchyan. Hi.

Jonathan Murphy: Hi. So this week we have a special guest joining us in the studio. We will be speaking to Vesa Palander, Business and Economic Development Director at the City of Turku, or Elinvoima in Finnish, and we'll talk about the work the city is doing to retain international talents.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: I think this is going to be a fascinating discussion, so let's just get started.

Jonathan Murphy: Let's go.

(Musiikkia)

Jonathan Murphy: So welcome back to the International House Turku podcast. Rosa, good to see you. How are you doing today?

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Good to see you too. I'm doing well, though today was slightly rainy, but I try not to allow the weather to affect my mood. How about yourself?

Jonathan Murphy: Uh, yeah, the same. I also got caught in the rain this morning and I'd already packed away the umbrellas, it was quite sunny last week, but, um, in spring in Finland, you never know what the weather is going to be like.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yeah, talking about the weather, so what do you think? How does it affect the internationals wanting to stay in Turku?

Jonathan Murphy: That's a very smooth transition to today's topic there. Um, I don't know, I think in some ways Finland is maybe easier to sell if it has a nice snow and or or the sun indeed. This kind of like slushy, grey winter... of course, as a as a British person, it makes me feel very at home here with this terrible weather, so it really depends on the on the target group, but um, you're quite right that maybe today we can just jump into today's topic about, um, how the city retains internationals.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yes, because if we think internationals come here and I think at that we are pretty good, like overall Finland marketing because again, we were apparently one of the the happiest, not one of, the happiest country, so we're good at that, but when we think then the other perspective, when people are already here, then what is done to retain these people? So that's one essential question and something that we get asked quite a lot.

Jonathan Murphy: Yeah, absolutely, and again, because much of our our kind of target group in a way, our clients in International House Turku are international students, and of course they come here for for two to four years and they finish their degrees and they move their family here and they start learning Finnish and they do their internships, and of course they are mobile professionals, so in a way they don't have to stay here, but many of them do want to and the question we constantly get asked at our events is, you know, what what does Turku have to offer me? Does the city want me to stay, for example? I mean, we know that Finland has been in a difficult economic place recently and there are lots of headlines about high unemployment rates and, um, you know, the the question is what is the city doing about this? I think that's what a lot of people would like to know.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yes, and again, we are discussing a lot of topics in our podcast, not necessarily offering solutions to everything, but then at least we are trying to tackle them, but obviously the city as an organization does have a strategy and we're aware about this issue and I guess today we're going to do an exception particularly and not jump into our own experiences because actually we're here, we stayed here, isn't it?

Jonathan Murphy: Yeah, I do believe, yeah, yeah, we are examples that that the city can retain international talents, for various reasons, but yes, perhaps rather than than than going into our own thoughts, we decided to go to the top this week. We decided to bring in a real expert, um, from the from the city to, again, address this topic and welcome a very special guest into the studio.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yes, so welcome again, Vesa, to the to our studio, and please briefly introduce yourself in the role of the Director of Business and Economic Development.

Vesa Palander: Hey, thanks for having me, really, really nice to be here. Not really sure about that "top expert" definition, but I'll I'll definitely do my best. Thank you.

Vesa Palander: So, um, my role is basically, um, to make sure Turku becomes the most attractive alternative to Helsinki capital region in Finland. And, um, this obviously involves a lot of things. It's the business attraction, it's the it's the workforce development, but maybe increasingly it's it's very much about the attraction of international talent as well as the retention of them and making them part of our city's growth story.

Vesa Palander: Because as you might have, um, seen already, I mean, we are growing really fast, so 2.1 percent, 2 percent population growth every year, and that population growth is coming up to 70 percent from international migration.

Vesa Palander: So, um, the *elinvoima*, the the business development or economic vitality, whatever you call it, so we are we are here to ensure that everybody gets integrated into this growth story, makes it even better, we we cooperate, the city enables different kind of, um, development to take place, and that that these are the aspects that make my make my own job very interesting on daily basis.

Vesa Palander: And typically, instead instead, even when it's rainy, it's still an *elinvoimainen päivä*.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Well said. That's really nice one, and it was actually interesting to know that you said that we are competing with Helsinki, not even Tampere, because we usually bring that up as our competitor, but we have a very important and special role in this.

Jonathan Murphy: Well, yeah, and certainly many of our clients, of course, and even myself, you know, when I moved here, I guess I kind of thought in my head that eventually I'd find myself in the capital region. We started in Turku because my wife's work was here, but I didn't know anything about the city at all, I'd never even heard of the place before my wife was offered the job, and I kind of thought, "well, we'll do Turku for a year," but then kind of gravitate towards the capital region because that's where, for example, the jobs are, or maybe the kind of different opportunities, but, um, for different reasons Turku does have the potential to keep people, in a way, so...

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yes, I do believe, like it's a special place in a way, like how it's situated, its history and whatnot, but other than that, obviously we know that the city being pretty or having formed some relationships, having some friends and whatnot might not be enough. So there is particularly that vitality and that business factor basically.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: But us being the workers of the city and, um, you, Vesa, also like leading this role, so what particular or more specific initiatives has Turku, the city, taken to retain and make or help people in their choice to stay in Turku?

Vesa Palander: Yeah, I think let's let's get one sort of reality check first in place. Um, as I said already, our our population growth depends almost entirely on the international migration, and at the same time the the Finnish speaking, the Swedish speaking working age population is shrinking, and um, on national level we need roughly 44,000 net immigrants per year, um, just to stabilize the workforce.

Vesa Palander: So the retention is not something that's that's only nice to have, it's basically about economic survival. And and there is obviously a lot of political debate about the topic, but I mean if you look at the numbers, the research, I mean that's where we are.

Vesa Palander: And Turku is no different. I mean, we growing fastest, so you could actually even say that I mean we need the immigration even more than than some other areas. Not that we really competing with the Helsinki or Tampere, I mean people make their own choices, we are lucky to have a lot of people who've been voting with their feet and have come here.

Vesa Palander: So now it's very much about obviously, like you said, Rosa, the the retention. And I think, um, if I think about it, it's basically three pillars. The the employment is

obviously the the anchor, I mean that's the that's the one I mean we need to really, really take care of and do better.

Vesa Palander: And um, when you get your first job in Turku, regardless of of your country of origin or or even if you coming from Finland, that's basically determining where you put your put down your roots. So we need to do everything it takes, um, to get people employed. And that's obviously one of the key factors in the whole city strategy at the moment.

Vesa Palander: And the economic situation in Finland, in Turku, could be better, um, but but I mean we are now actually introducing some decisive actions to to really improve that situation. So that's the that's the anchor, employment.

Vesa Palander: Then of course the the integration, this *kotoutuminen* in Finnish, making Turku feel like home, I mean that's then maybe even more complicated because it has so multifaceted face. So and it's something different for for different people.

Vesa Palander: And um, we are obviously offering multilingual services, we we getting better in the use of AI and then providing the the services in a way that they reach people with with different backgrounds and different levels of digital skills, for example. And and obviously International House Turku is is one of the key services we have in this area.

Vesa Palander: But that's also something we can do better. We are not really doing too much for employers, for example. How do we make make sure that it's as easy and and smooth as possible to employ, for example, international talent?

Vesa Palander: And that's very much about mindset as well, especially in the in the SME sector. I mean, even like practical fear of hiring somebody who doesn't speak Finnish or Swedish well enough. Then when they go and hire the first, for example, English speaking one, then they realize that actually that wasn't really that difficult after all, and surprisingly it's been improving the English level of everybody at the workplace. But I mean that's that's like I said, multifaceted area, this this whole integration.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: So we were talking about the importance of having a job in here and about some concrete things that the city can do to keep this people employed and maybe even thrive in Turku.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: And I know, for example, we have one initiative already that the city did, for example, the international voucher, that we actually had an episode about, of the internationals who are about to graduate or have recently graduated and they have a chance of getting a support of 3 to 5 thousand euros from the if they get these places from the employer. And we also have the youth voucher. So we do have these kind of things that are particularly aimed at helping people to get their first step of employment.

Jonathan Murphy: Yeah, and I think the the voucher in particular, again, and anyone listening can go back two episodes ago to hear our interview with Sari, and again I think it's a very nice concrete step because, again, like you said we have the strategy, but you know in in

terms of actual individual people what can we how can we tangibly sort of help them? So the voucher is a very a very clear way in which, okay, the city is supporting the employability of those, um, of that target group.

Jonathan Murphy: But, um, I was wondering, or maybe our clients are maybe wondering, is is that it? Is there just the voucher, or are there anything else you can in the pipeline, coming projects you can tease us about, maybe?

Vesa Palander: Uh, there is obviously always something something cooking. And I mean, just to get back to those vouchers, I mean, that's already the combination of those two is already something no other city in Finland is offering. So I mean, that that combination is super good.

Vesa Palander: But I mean, I think the problem from employer's perspective is that these support mechanisms are not really widely known. So I mean, we need to do absolutely better in the in the communications and marketing. So I mean, thanks for discussing these items on this podcast as well.

Vesa Palander: But I mean, that's something I mean where the city will be taking initiative and I just actually briefed yesterday and will be briefing another agency today about this this particular topic, that how do we how do we spread the word about all these all these support items we have in place.

Vesa Palander: Um, then, um, we call it the New Beginnings, project name. I mean, that's something, um, which is very much about walking the talk. Maybe showing some example initiative what the city can really do about the youth employment, unemployment.

Vesa Palander: So, um, so hopefully we can tell tell more about that particular program in a in a future, couple of few few weeks. Um, and that's probably gonna be a kind of like a pilot type of thing and and very much integrating all the different aspects here. Um, trying to get the employers really to the same boat with the city and the and the talent, both both the Finnish, Swedish speaking ones and definitely the international one. And then use that pilot to maybe maybe maybe form a more permanent way of working.

Vesa Palander: Because like we discussed already, I mean, the the first job is the is really the important one. And what the city has realized, I mean, although we are growing population wise, we still losing 1,000 young talents every year to other cities. And that retention, I mean keeping those people, *pitovoima* in Finnish, I mean that's the thing we need to be improving. So we definitely coming up with new ideas and new projects in this area.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Okay. Yeah, that's really nice to hear, particularly what you mentioned, that we do have obviously pilots, but if these can have a continuation, if you get you would get a place and then it would be the step into getting a more permanent or a longer one that could kind of solve a lot of issues that we have at the moment in the longer term rather than

just one time trial. So looking forward to that and stay tuned so that you can find out more about this exciting initiative that we have.

Jonathan Murphy: Yeah, and we will certainly be covering it here on the podcast. And again I just wanted to mention as well that I totally agree with what you were saying about this kind of first job in Finland and this kind of first opening the doors. And on previous episodes we've talked about our own career journey quite a lot, but again I think for both of us internships and some short-term placements in Finnish companies were really the door that opened up the possibility of us building our careers here.

Jonathan Murphy: Because we had our experience from our home countries and we came here and it was that kind of moment where you have three or four months kind of as an intern or or kind of a part-time worker in a company and then from that you get the insight into how things work here, you also get your reference in Finland and from there things kind of snowball when well, it's realized that actually we do have something to contribute here to the Finnish working life.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yeah, absolutely, that's that's something that makes it more tangible, real, something you can put in your CV, like again it's the two-way thing that both the employer gets to know the international and the international gets to know to the Finnish working life. Because a lot of times we do have the professional background, we do have the skills, but maybe we're just lacking that practical, some small, like very Finnish working culture things that then you can get introduced to.

Jonathan Murphy: Yeah, and again, this is like what we've kind of always been saying to our clients. And again, often it's more difficult in a way if a newcomer has a long working history in their home country and they're actually used to working at maybe a quite high level and then of course you come to Finland and you look at something, you can't find a job, and you look at something like the voucher and it's like, well, this is like three months in a company as a kind of, you know, not quite an intern, but you know, some kind of junior position.

Jonathan Murphy: And it's kind of helping people to recognize the potential for that, that it starts with the three months or the six months, but actually if you demonstrate your skills then you have a good chance of of better chance of finding something than if you are just applying for senior management roles without any kind of background in in working here. The long way round for many of us, and I certainly went the long way round when I came here.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: But this sounds very exciting and I'm as an international I'm very happy to hear that the city has this kind of initiatives and we're realizing and actually taking action, not only pointing out to the private sector and saying that "hey, hire international," but there are actually means to kind of like leverage to help and support.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: But again we know that the city cannot be like a standalone organization starting some initiatives or like you said, like walking the talk. But how about the our collaboration with the private sector? What are we actually doing, Vesa, to engage the private sector and also to keep this collaboration going?

(Puhelin soi)

Vesa Palander: A sign of a busy man. Sorry about that one. I thought I was on silent but...

Rosa Pambukhchyan: That's the private sector calling.

Jonathan Murphy: Exactly, yeah, it never stops.

Vesa Palander: That was actually the government calling, oh, even even more important then. If Mr. Orpo was on the line, we can stop the recording now, it's okay.

Vesa Palander: No, no, no, I meant the different kind of government actually, but I mean you get the point.

Vesa Palander: But hey, I mean that private sector issue, that's that's really in the core and that's that's where the rubber meets the road. Because as we discussed already shortly, I mean, the biggest barrier to international retention is really really the employer. A lot of a lot of Finnish companies are too hesitant to hire the international talent.

Vesa Palander: And um, I've been thinking about the role of the city from multiple different perspectives, pretty much during the the two year tenure I've had so far here at City of Turku. And um, I mean we obviously do offer the financial incentives and and making it almost risk free for the the private sector to hire international talent.

Vesa Palander: Um, but that's not enough. I mean we mentioned the the marketing and maybe we need to to come up with other type of services for the employers as well. Maybe talk more about like a employer partnership model. How do we really, I mean, build the packages that make it as smooth as possible to to integrate that newcomer into my company?

Vesa Palander: Because I do know, I mean, basically as an entrepreneur, it's not really all always about the money alone, it's about the resources I have to invest in integrating that newcomer into my company. And that's often a much much much bigger task than than finding the money, and especially when the incentives are there it's actually about something else.

Vesa Palander: So we can do better in that area. And um, develop training programs, certifications, and get this employer partnership model up and running. And um, and similarly the sort of like integration pacts or packages.

Vesa Palander: So thinking about the the services we offer holistically, not for the individual only, but but making sure actually everybody in that that ecosystem of employment, I mean, gets the services.

Vesa Palander: And and this takes maybe a little bit different kind of approach from the city perspective. We need to really understand what what the customers really need. And I mean obviously it's good to focus on the individuals, but I mean we often lack the understanding of employers.

Vesa Palander: And I mean they are after all the decision makers, so I mean we need to be influencing them and develop this partnership model. And then maybe the last thing is the the mindset. Which takes obviously way longer to fix, if you can even even fix it.

Vesa Palander: But the same report by Etila I was referring to already, it also indicated that the first foreign-born employee increases the company's exports and and broadens its product range as well. So like really practical competitive advantage type of thing you can be gaining by by hiring international talent.

Vesa Palander: And I've been selling myself as an entrepreneur to maybe more than 150 countries. And I mean what it makes you realize is that you always need the local talent when you do business in Estonia, Sweden, UK, Thailand, whatever.

Vesa Palander: So I mean, we need to be educating our employers, I mean obviously most of them understand it already, but I mean provide success stories and and do the marketing that hey, I mean these are the best possible cases we can show to you. This guy here employed an international talent and look at him, I mean there he is. So lot of different activities, but I mean definitely very much about working together.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yeah, absolutely, and I think you mentioned really well that a lot of times maybe we're not mentioning enough or bringing out this success stories in a way that we tends to focus or maybe it's the the recent way the media works, you know, like focusing on the negative and how it's not working rather than also like balancing it with that actually it could also work and it is working. So that could be one step, tangible step more towards that mindset change that we're aiming.

Jonathan Murphy: Yeah, definitely, and I think it's interesting you talk about like selling and again maybe this is your entrepreneurial background. I feel often, you know, with public sector in particular, and I've worked at public sector in in different countries, you know, there's maybe the primary argument is more of like a moral argument somehow. Like, well of course you should hire because it's a good thing to hire, but but maybe we do need to be more concrete in like you said in terms of of revenue or in terms of of data to convince companies maybe to take that first step.

Jonathan Murphy: Because you're right and I mean one of the things that we've also been thinking about is again we talk about contacting companies, but of course where does that

information go within the company? Like if we do a training for example and through our project this like *Boria* projects with *Elinvoimakeskus* we do offer trainings for employers about how to hire and the mitigating some of the barriers of hiring international talents, but who attends that training? Is it the CEO, is it the HR, is it payroll, is it someone who actually doesn't have any power for hiring as well?

Jonathan Murphy: So maybe it's not just contacting the companies but breaking down who in those companies are actually doing...

Vesa Palander: Yeah, and it's very much about understanding the needs. Because I mean, making employment happen is very easy in theory, obviously. I mean you need to recognize the talent we have in place, the supply side, and then obviously similarly, I mean what are the needs of the companies.

Vesa Palander: And that's an area of improvement for for the employment services. We need to be much more data driven and understand actually how this sort of matchmaking happens. But you're really right, I mean the if we contacting as a city employers on general level, could be wrong people, could be about wrong topics as well, or maybe there was somebody who actually called them up the previous day.

Vesa Palander: So I mean, we need to know better what we doing. And I mean, it has to be based on the data, on on real knowledge and understanding on the on the needs of the employers. And then tailor make making basically tailoring the approaches, the the offers, the the integration packages, whatever. And I mean, that's definitely overall an area of improvement for the whole city.

Jonathan Murphy: Looking ahead then to the next let's say 12 to 18 months, what would be your top priorities to strengthen our international attractiveness and retention?

Vesa Palander: Oh, thanks, that's a really really easy question. Uh, yeah, just in like two sentences or less, that would be perfect. No, no, no, I'll give you my top five, just in case.

Vesa Palander: So I think the first one is this sort of Talent Turku program. I mean creating it, launching it. There are a lot of branded talent attraction programs by by cities. Tampere has one, if we now have to mention Tampere once in the podcast as well. Copenhagen is doing a lot of invest-in activities but they kind of like tailored into the the form of this talent attraction program. I think it's called Capacity Copenhagen, or Copenhagen Capacity. So Talent Turku program launch, that's one.

Vesa Palander: Um, then this employment first integration model. I mean the the programs, the pilots and then the continuation for those. That's definitely one of the things we need to be doing or scaling up basically. And shifting from the sort of like language first to to work first type of approach. Because you can always learn Finnish on the job as well.

Vesa Palander: Um, I did mention this data element so from like internal development perspective we need to be having this sort of data driven AI powered matchmaking

capabilities. Lot of piloting ongoing, not exactly super straightforward thing to do. Lot of data privacy and sort of issues there and and cooperation with the Finnish government. But that's definitely one thing we need to have in place as soon as possible. Because the technology will be making the the demand supply side of things visible. I mean what are the skills and what are the skills needed by the employers.

Vesa Palander: Then, um, we have obviously very high unemployment at the moment. So we need to be reducing the structural unemployment. And and the unemployment is basically nearly 16 percent, and with the foreign born individuals it's even even close to 30. So that's definitely something we need to be cutting as soon as possible by 20-30 percent.

Vesa Palander: Despite of this high unemployment, we then have actually shortage of workforce in certain areas like maritime, industrial workforce. There are some forecast indicating that the the health sector, the technology areas, I mean, will be will be lacking workforce in 2028 already. So we need to be basically fighting unemployment at the same time as attracting talent. And and that's maybe the way it's gonna be as well, I mean going further. So so this is something I mean we need to really, really focus on.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Right. Those sound very important and actually my next question was going to be that if you could somehow launch a policy or initiative starting tomorrow, what would that be? But because you mentioned this technology and everything and how urgent all of that sound, let's leave tomorrow, it feels like we have to act today.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: So if you had the chance to already today make a change, what would that one thing be?

Vesa Palander: That would be definitely the first job guarantee type of program. That we do whatever in our power, together with the the education institutions, employers, the whole city, to make sure that we have the retention policies, the practices in place, both for, I mean, domestic students for example, or young people, but especially the international talent. So first job guarantee would be definitely the thing I would love to see yesterday.

Jonathan Murphy: As we expected, this has been a really interesting discussion I think and, um, hopefully we've made things a little clearer for listeners about what the city is doing, especially for newcomers who are maybe not quite so aware of of really what Turku has to offer yet.

Jonathan Murphy: Um, but the maybe the last thing we can briefly discuss is how does someone listening kind of get involved with these changes? Because this sounds like an exciting time. We have the strategies and we have the voucher and we have everything else, but is there a way in which either a job seeker or even an employer, and you know we do have some employers that I believe listen to this podcast, what would be the primary way they can actually get involved on board with, um, this journey as we kind of move towards a more sort of international future let's say?

Vesa Palander: I think for the employers, like you said already, I mean we have everything in place. Um, when we do the marketing better, I mean I would love to see the employers becoming more active and I mean seeking the ways of utilizing the vouchers or or any other support we are we are providing as a city.

Vesa Palander: Um, I would say for the international residents, International House Turku is a good place to start. I mean, um, understanding also from their side, I mean the different mechanism and the subsidies and the vouchers whatever we have and then build on those.

Vesa Palander: I would also say considering entrepreneurship is always a good call. I mean, lot of lot of startup ecosystem support in place by Business Turku, by the by the city side as well. And, um, so there is a lot of information, I mean you need to to find it, you can you can definitely do it easily on the on the net as well, but International House Turku is a good starting point, um, as well as then Turku Startup Startup Hub.

Vesa Palander: For all the residents in Turku, because I mean this obviously something we need to be doing together, I mean building an open and welcoming city. So language definitely shouldn't be a barrier. I mean that's stated in the city strategy as well. But every workplace that hires an international someone international or every neighbor that's that's basically welcoming a new family in the neighborhood, I mean that's the retention we need to be seeing happening on daily basis at the very grassroots level.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yeah, very good points because we are all together in this boat called Turku, so we cannot just like pull pull it towards us and it's a very good point in a way of like staying curious because definitely the information is out there, there are a lot of things, whether in the private, whether in the startup hub or overall.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: But we probably need to find that information and act together. And like you mentioned also if somebody is hesitant, then we do have the International House advisory services for the internationals as well as even for the employers we do have the city services, so like the information is there just like knock on the door more bravely.

Jonathan Murphy: Yeah, absolutely. And we've discussed in previous episodes about how International House Turku, especially for newcomers or even for kind of students who are emerging from that bubble of student life into the kind of general wider city, you know, we've tried to be this kind of lighthouse that International House is always a place you can go and there will be someone there who can kind of point you in the right direction or introduce you to other services or other stakeholders kind of in this talent network.

Jonathan Murphy: So, again to anyone listening, please do contact us with any questions that you do have and we'd be happy to help.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yes. And very again, like insightful and interesting episode and again one more time I thought that it's a very interesting time and place, slightly challenging employment wise but again very interesting because there is a space to co-create. So one

more time I got confirmed that Turku was the place for me to stay. So I'm happy that I am here. But again thank you so much, Vesa, for joining us today. Thank you for your time and for your insight.

Vesa Palander: Thanks for having me.

Jonathan Murphy: Thank you very much. Great to see you. And maybe again, we'll catch up again in next year and we can see how things are going.

Vesa Palander: Sure, absolutely.

(Musiikkia)

Jonathan Murphy: Wow, what an episode, Rosa. A great discussion there I think and, um, hopefully we've made things a little clearer for listeners about what the city is doing.

Jonathan Murphy: But I always look to you with your teaching background at this point of the episode. Um, if you could sum up briefly some of the things that we've learned today, what have we learned?

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yes, so basically if we sum up like widely and generally the the way towards which the city is doing concrete actions towards the employment, one of the main important key factors of helping the international stay stay here and generally overall for all the residents of Turku. Obviously the integration being a two-way street, having everybody involved and the anti-segregation because unfortunately we're in the situation that we are, it's an issue but we are working towards it.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: And of course we're also working not only alone but we are collaborating with the private sector as well, isn't it?

Jonathan Murphy: Absolutely, and I think it was great to hear this message, um, you know, it's really like it touches everyone, everyone who is in the city from individual residents to companies to the universities to the the city itself. That we all have our role to play and ideally we would all be pulling in the same direction in order to, yeah, to make Turku a better place to live, work and study for internationals and and everyone else, all residents here.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yeah, because also if we think we started with the weather and maybe if we end with the weather at least we're moving to a, you know, brighter, sunnier direction towards spring.

Jonathan Murphy: An excellent metaphor. Sadly the studio doesn't have any windows, so I don't know actually how sunny it is but let's assume that it's a very sunny outside. But certainly, you know, if if this episode has brought any thoughts to your mind we would love to hear your voice. You can send us feedback about the issues that we've discussed in this podcast of course by contacting us via email: talent.advisor@turku.fi.

Jonathan Murphy: Or you can contact us via our social media channels: International House Turku Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. We've talked a lot about the International House services, um, you can go to our website to find out more about that. And as well the city website has a lot of information about many of the strategic initiatives that we've talked about today, like the voucher for example and the eligibility criteria, so please do check that out if you haven't already seen it.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yes. And again a reminder moving towards the Turku 800 celebrations, also reminder that the call for applications for initiatives is open. So also to our international listeners, if you have something in mind, if you want to help make Turku the great 800 year old city that it is, um, now is time to act.

Jonathan Murphy: Very much so. I nearly thought you were going to say "Make Turku Great Again" there.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: I tried not to step on toes.

Jonathan Murphy: I understand totally, but absolutely please do get involved, please come to our events again, you can see on the International House channels which events we have coming up. We have *Biisisperjantai* this season, we have other workshops as well and we would love to see you there and to hear your voice, um, about these issues.

Jonathan Murphy: But thank you again to Vesa for coming on. And thank you, Rosa.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Thank you, Jonathan.

Jonathan Murphy: And thank you, Marco, there.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: Yes.

Jonathan Murphy: And, well, see you next time.

Rosa Pambukhchyan: See you.

(Musiikkia)