



# ÅLAND *in Brief*



ÅLANDS LAGTING



Ålands  
landskapsregering



*in Brief*

# ÅLAND

is a demilitarised,  
Swedish-speaking region  
with a right of self-government secured through international guarantees

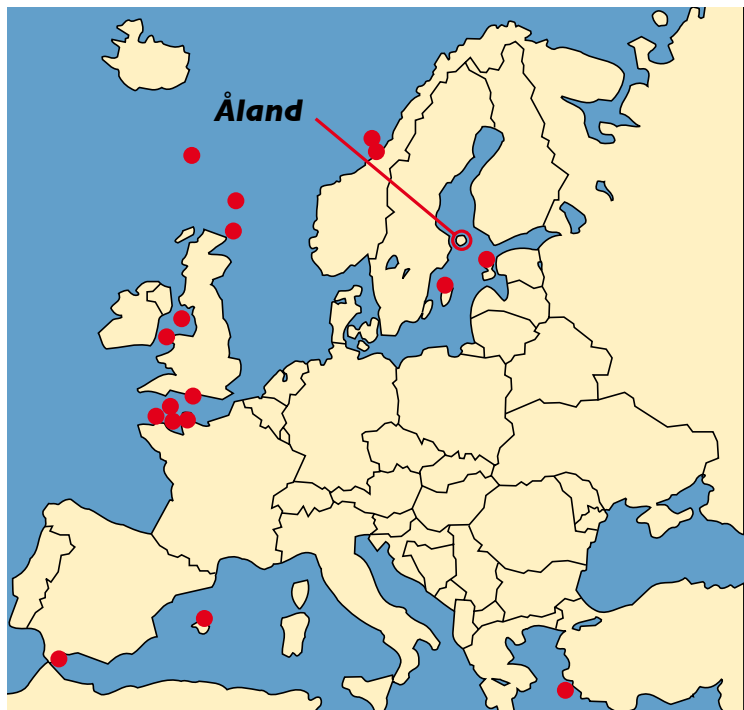


Published by the Åland Parliament and the Åland Government

*Cover photo:  
Kjell Söderlund.*

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● Participating islands in the XIII NatWest Island Games on Åland 2009  
www.natwestislandgames2009.ax

Åland is an autonomous, demilitarised, Swedish-speaking region of Finland. Åland consists of more than 6,700 islands and skerries, of which 6,400 are larger than 3,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

The largest island is the main island of Åland, which makes up 70 per cent of the Islands' total land area and is home to 90 per cent of the population. The longest distance from north to south is 50 km and from east to west 45 km. Despite its relatively small size, there are 912 km of public roads in Åland.

POPULATION

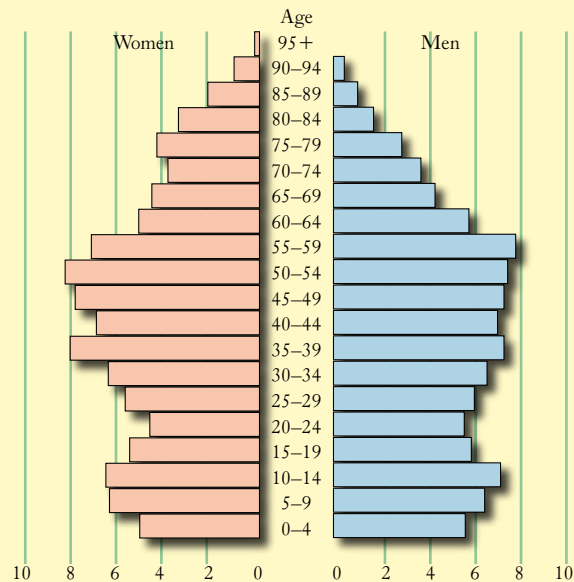
The population of Åland is currently at an all-time high. According to a travel memoir written by F.W. Radloff in the 18th century there were 11,000 people in the Islands at this time, spread across 80 different islands. In 1905 the number had grown to 22,000, living on 150 islands. Over the centuries many islands have been linked to each other or with the main island through bridges and embankments while others have been depopulated. The current population of 27,000 live on only 65 islands. Over 40 per cent live in the only town, Mariehamn.



ÅLAND IN BRIEF

Total area	13.517 km <sup>2</sup>
of which land	1.527 km <sup>2</sup>
main island	1.010 km <sup>2</sup>
Highest point above sea level	129 m
Average daily temperature 2006	July + 17,6°C
	February – 4,3°C
Population 31.12.2007	27.153
of which Mariehamn	10.902
main island excl. Mariehamn	13.949
archipelago	2.302

POPULATION BY AGE,  
December 31, 2006  
Per cent



Source: ÅSUB



## THE PARLIAMENT

### Lagtinget – a Parliament

Åland's autonomy gives it the right to pass laws in areas relating to the internal affairs of the region and to exercise its own budgetary power.

Åland's legislature, its "parliament", is known as lagtinget. The Parliament appoints the regional Åland Government, landskapsregeringen.

Åland's autonomy is regulated by the Act on the Autonomy of Åland passed by the Parliament of Finland. An amendment of the Autonomy Act must follow the same legislative procedure as constitutional amendment and requires the consent of the Parliament of Åland. The division of power between Åland and Finland can thus only be changed on a consensual basis. The current Autonomy Act, the third in line, entered into force on 1 January 1993.

### IN WHICH AREAS IS THE PARLIAMENT ENTITLED TO PASS LAWS?

The Autonomy Act lists the areas where the Åland Parliament has the right to pass legislation. The most important of these are:

- education, culture and the preservation of ancient monuments
- health and medical care, the environment
- promotion of industry
- internal transports
- local government
- policing
- postal communications
- radio and television

In these areas Åland functions practically like an independent state with its own laws and administration.

### IN WHICH AREAS IS THE STATE THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY?

In those areas where the Åland Parliament does not have law-making powers, Finnish State law applies in the same way as in other parts of the country.

These include:

- foreign affairs
- most areas of civil and criminal law
- the court system
- customs
- State taxation

To ensure that Åland's interests are taken into account also in these areas, Åland has a representative in the Finnish Parliament. Åland's Member of Parliament is elected in the same way as other Finnish MPs.

### HOW IS THE ÅLAND PARLIAMENT ELECTED?

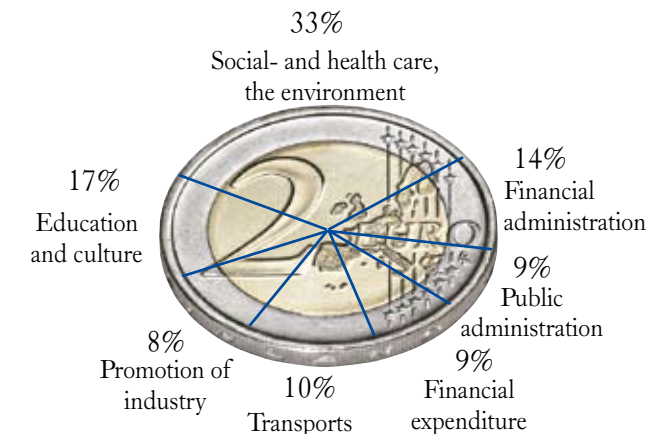
The Parliament has 30 members, who are elected every four years by secret ballot under a system of proportional representation. The voting age is 18, but the right to vote and stand for election is also dependent on possession of right of domicile in Åland (see below).

Åland's political parties are independent from parties outside Åland, but have similar ideological foundations as their counterparts in Finland and other countries.

### ECONOMIC AUTONOMY

Apart from passing laws, the main task of the Parliament is to distribute the budget of Åland. The income consists of Åland's own revenues and a lump sum received from the Finnish Government, which constitutes a form of repayment of a part of the taxes paid by Åland to the Finnish State.

The State collects taxes, duties and fees also in Åland. In return, the Finnish Government places a sum of money at the disposal of the Åland Parliament. The sum is 0.45 per cent of total Government income, excluding Government loans. Åland uses this "lump sum", about €190 million in 2007, to pay for services that would otherwise be provided by State authorities.



### THE ÅLAND BUDGET

If the income and wealth taxes raised in Åland exceed 0.5 per cent of the corresponding tax revenues for Finland as a whole, the excess amount is transferred to Åland in the form of a tax redemption ("carrot"). In 2007 Åland received a tax redemption of €35 million relating to fiscal 2005.

### LEGISLATIVE CONTROL

The laws adopted by the Åland Parliament are referred to the Finnish President, who has a right of veto only in two cases: if the Parliament has exceeded its legislative authority or if the bill would affect Finland's internal or external security.

The President bases his decision on the opinion of a body known as the Åland Delegation and occasionally also on the opinion expressed by the Supreme Court. Half the members of the Åland Delegation are appointed by the Finnish Government and half by the Åland Parliament.





## THE GOVERNMENT

The Åland Government, which may have up to eight members, is headed by the Chairman, lantrådet. The Åland Government is appointed by the parliament according to parliamentary principles after negotiations among the various political factions. The objective is to achieve a government which enjoys the support of as wide a majority as possible, but a minority government is also possible.

### ADMINISTRATION

The Åland Government is assisted by an administration. The administration mainly comprises the regional civil service and has six departments. The Åland Government is responsible for all areas of government in which the Autonomy Act devolves authority to Åland. The regional government and civil service thus handle tasks which in other parts of Finland are handled by the Finnish Government and their ministries, the county administrations and various central government authorities.

## DEMILITARISATION

Åland is demilitarised. This means that there may be no military presence here and that the Islands may not be fortified. Åland is also neutralised, and must therefore be kept outside the theatre of war in case of conflict.

When Åland was incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1809 the Islands' new rulers initiated the construction of a large fortress at Bomarsund on the eastern side of the main island. During the Crimean War French and British troops attacked and seized the fortress, and at the ensuing peace negotiations held in Paris in 1856 Åland was demilitarised through a one-sided commitment from Russia.

When the League of Nations resolved the issue of Åland's constitutional affiliation in 1921 a decision was also taken to draw up an international convention. The convention, which confirmed the demilitarisation of 1856 and also neutralised Åland, was signed by ten states. Russia is not a party to the 1921 convention, but the 1940 Moscow Treaty on the Åland Islands and the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty contain provisions on the demilitarisation of Åland. Neutralisation is not mentioned, however.

Those who have right of domicile and moved to Åland before the age 12 are exempt from military service. A person with the right of domicile may in place of conscription for military service serve in a corresponding manner in the pilotage or lighthouse services or in other civil administration. Until such service has been organised, the residents of Åland shall be exempt from conscription for military service.



*Summit talks in the Council of the League of Nations, Geneva 1921.*

## ÅLAND'S AUTONOMY – THE BACKGROUND

### HOW CAN SUCH A SMALL PEOPLE HAVE SUCH A WIDE AUTONOMY?

As far back as we know the people of Åland have spoken Swedish and had a culture that is similar to that in Sweden. Åland was also a part of the Swedish kingdom, enjoying periods of relative independence, up until the war of 1808-09, when Sweden was forced to relinquish Finland and Åland to Russia. As a result, Åland became part of the Grand Duchy of Finland.

When the Russian Empire began to fall apart in 1917 representatives of Åland's municipalities held a secret meeting at the Åland Folk High

School, where they decided to seek reunification with their Swedish motherland. A delegation presented this request, which was backed by a mass petition signed by an overwhelming majority of the local adult population, to the Swedish King and Government.

In December 1917 Finland declared itself an independent republic, referring to the same principle of popular self-determination as had been invoked by the Ålanders in support of their claim for reunification with Sweden. Yet Finland was not prepared to meet the Ålanders' demands, and instead offered a form of internal self-government. The Finnish Parliament adopted a law regulating the proposed autonomy, but the Ålandic representatives rejected the initiative.

Due to the international character of what had now become known as the Åland Islands Question, the issue was referred to the newly formed



League of Nations. In June 1921 the League's Council presented a compromise decision which offered something to each of the three parties to the conflict, Finland, Sweden and Åland. Finland was granted sovereignty over Åland, but was placed under an obligation to guarantee to the population of the Islands their Swedish culture, language, local customs and the system of self-government that Finland had offered Åland in 1920. The decision was supplemented with an agreement between Finland and Sweden on how the guarantees were to be realised. The League also decided that a treaty governing Åland's demilitarisation and neutralisation should be drawn up to ensure that the Islands would never become a military threat to Sweden.

In 1922, after the 1920 Autonomy Act had been supplemented with a number of provisions relating to voting rights and the acquisition of land, the first elections to the Åland Parliament were held. The landsting, as it was known at the time, convened for its first session on 9 June, and this day is now celebrated in commemoration of Åland's autonomy. The Autonomy Act has since been completely revised on two occasions, in 1951 and 1993.

*After the Finnish Prime Minister, Rafael Erich, had presented the Autonomy Act, the Ålandic envoys marched out of the room. The Ålandic representatives had demanded that Åland be allowed to decide which country they were to belong to in a regional plebiscite, and therefore refused to accept an autonomy that they had not sought. The painting, which hangs in the building of the Åland Government, was painted by Tage Wilén.*

*Åland has had its own flag since 1954.*



## RIGHT OF DOMICILE

Right of domicile in Åland is a requirement for the right to:

- vote and stand for election in elections to the Parliament
- own and or be in possession of real property in Åland
- conduct a business in Åland

The limitation in the right to own or be in possession of real property was introduced to ensure that the land would remain in the hands of the local population. It does not prevent people from settling in the Åland Islands.

Right of domicile is acquired at birth if it is possessed by either parent. Immigrants who have lived in Åland for five years and have an adequate knowledge of Swedish may apply for the status, provided they are Finnish citizens. The Åland Government can, occasionally, grant exemptions from

the requirement of right of domicile for those wishing to acquire real property or conduct a business in Åland.

Those who have lived outside Åland for more than five years lose their right of domicile.

### LANGUAGE RULES

Under the Autonomy Act Swedish is the only official language in Åland. This means, among other things, that Swedish is the language used by regional, municipal and State authorities in Åland. Publications and documents sent by Finnish Government agencies to Åland must also be in Swedish.

The language of tuition in publicly funded schools is also Swedish.

## ÅLAND IN THE WORLD

### NORDIC COOPERATION

Since 1970, Åland has had its own representation in the Nordic Council. The Parliament of Åland appoints two representatives to the Council, who together with the representatives appointed by the Åland Government, form Ålandic delegation to the Nordic Council.

The Åland Government also participates in the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

### ÅLAND IN THE EU

Foreign affairs is not transferred to Åland under the Autonomy Act, but remains under the control of the Finnish Government. Even so, Åland has a degree of influence on international treaties that contain provisions relating to areas where Åland is the competent authority. The Autonomy Act states that an international treaty of this kind entered into by Finland requires the consent of the Parliament of Åland to become valid also in Åland.



Thus, when Finland became a member of the European Union in 1995, Åland's accession was dependent on the consent of the Parliament. After the population had expressed its opinion in two separate referendums and it had been decided that Åland's relationship to the EU would be regulated in a special protocol, the Parliament of Åland expressed its consent. The protocol, which is part of Finland's treaty of accession, states that Åland shall be regarded as a third territory with respect to indirect taxation. It also contains certain special provisions relating to the purchase of real property and the right to conduct a business in Åland, and confirms Åland's special status under international law.

### ÅLAND AS A MODEL

Politicians, academics and journalists around the world often study Åland as an example of a successful solution to a minority conflict. The division of power between Åland and Finland, and the principle that any amendment to that division requires the consent of both parties, as well as the right of domicile, the restrictions on land purchases and Åland's power to influence international treaties are some of the aspects of Åland's autonomy that have attracted the interest of outside observers. Åland is considered a unique case for several reasons: its autonomy has existed for a long time, the solution was arrived at without force of arms, and Åland is both self-governing and demilitarised.



## NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Autonomy Act devolves responsibility to Åland's governing bodies for many of the tasks that are administered by national authorities in the rest of Finland. The judiciary, tax collection, customs, surveying and the coast guard, however, are the responsibility of the State. The tasks performed by the County Administration, which is the general Finnish Government agency, are more limited in Åland, but also comprise a number of specialised tasks that are specific to the region. The Finnish Government's representative in Åland is the Governor, who is appointed by the Finnish President in consultation with the Speaker of the Parliament of Åland. His duties involve chairing the Åland Delegation and opening and closing the sessions of the Parliament on behalf of the President.



## THE MUNICIPALITIES

Åland is divided into 16 municipalities. As local government is a regional concern, the rules relating to municipality self-government are contained in an Ålandic law, i.e. one passed by the Parliament. The municipalities' decision-making power is exercised by the local council, which is elected by public ballot for a term of four years. To be able to vote and be a candidate in municipal elections it is necessary to be of age, and to possess the right of domicile, or to have been a permanent resident in Åland during the year prior to election day.

Åland's largest municipality is its only town, Mariehamn, which is home to over 40 per cent of the Islands' population. Mariehamn was founded in 1861 and is the centre of political and economic activity in Åland. Out of the other municipalities on the main island, Jomala, Mariehamn's neighbour, is the largest, with about 3,700 inhabitants. The smallest municipality in Åland, and all of Finland, is Sottunga in the archipelago, which has a population of 120.



*In 2002 "Rödhamn", a new production by the Finnish National Opera, came to Åland as part of the celebrations for the 80th anniversary of Åland's autonomy. The opera is set in Åland and is based on real events. Lars Huldén wrote the libretto and Lars Karlsson, a local musician, composed the music. The guest performance was staged by the Finnish National Opera in cooperation with the Åland Government and Katrina cultural society.*

## CULTURE

Åland's cultural life is centred on a large number of societies, whereas responsibility for public cultural initiatives is shared by the regional and local authorities. About 50 societies receive funding from the returns generated by Ålands penningautomatförening (PAF), a local gaming company.

Theatre in Åland has its roots in the youth movements which arose at the end of the 19th century. Today, major productions generally take the form of a collaboration between professional artists and amateurs. The Nordic Institute in Åland, which operates under the aegis of the Nordic Council of Ministers, has played a vital role in the development of Åland's cultural life, notably by staging several ambitious theatre productions with Nordic stage artists.

Åland also has a lively musical scene. There are several choirs and ensembles, and the Åland Institute of Music, which has about 300 students, plays a key role in local musical life.

The Ålandic archipelago has provided inspiration for many writers, both now and in the past. Sally Salminen, Anni Blomqvist and, more recently, Ulla-Lena Lundberg are three local talents who have attracted a large readership.

The Ålandic landscape has also been a source of inspiration for many painters. In addition to the main Åland Art Museum, there is the smaller

Önningeby Museum, which displays works by artists from the so-called Önningeby Colony. The colony was led by Victor Westerholm and was active around the turn of the century up to the outbreak of the First World War.

Åland's strong maritime traditions are documented in the Åland Maritime Museum, which has important collections from the sailing ship era. The Islands' long ship-building tradition has also been preserved. Local shipwrights still build wooden vessels after old models. The Åland Museum gives a picture of Åland's history from ancient times to the present. It is supplemented by a number of smaller collections in the countryside.



## SPORT

Åland has about 60 sports societies, whose activities are largely funded from local gaming revenues. The societies are very active and cover a wide range of winter and summer sports. Youth activities are well developed, and the various societies also devote a lot of energy to drug prevention. Åland does not perform as a separate nation in international competitions, but many local sportsmen have represented Finland either individually or in the national team. Many Ålanders have also achieved considerable international success, notably in athletics, football, indoor bandy, sailing, weight-lifting and shooting.

## THE ECONOMY

Åland is a small society with an open economy that is dependent on trade with neighbouring regions. The Islands' location midway between two expanding economic centres, southern Finland and the Stockholm region, is a major advantage, but also makes Åland sensitive to economic fluctuations in its two neighbouring markets. Åland has a large number of businesses and a long entrepreneurial tradition. There are currently about 2,100 businesses, of which about 600 are agricultural enterprises. About 20 companies, mainly shipping firms, banks and insurance companies, have more than 50 employees. More than 90 per cent have less than 10 employees, and many are one-man businesses.

Åland's economy is dominated by the service sector, particularly the maritime industry, which accounts for 40 per cent of local GDP. The capital-intensive shipping industry helps to raise Åland's GDP per capita, but income levels in Åland are not higher than the average for Finland. As Åland's shipping companies offer more workplaces than the local labour market is able to provide, the crews also include many people living in other parts of Finland and Sweden.

Underpinning the strong growth of tourism in Åland are the frequent ferry services. In the last few years the number of arrivals has been around 2.2 million. Most return the same day, but about 530,000 guest nights are registered each year. Åland's hotels and guesthouses have about 2,600 beds, and there are more than 2,000 holiday cottages. In the summer, many visitors arrive in their own sailing or motorboats, and stay in one of Åland's 20 or so guest harbours.

The industrial sector in Åland is small in comparison with those of neighbouring regions, but still plays an important role from an export perspective. As local industries process local farm produce and fish, their indirect employment effect is also significant. Åland also has an interesting high-tech plastics industry with worldwide exports, as well as metals, engineering, carpentry, printing and electronics businesses.

Despite their relatively modest returns, the primary industries, agriculture and fishing, play a vital role as providers of raw produce for the food industry in the archipelago and other sparsely populated areas. Small units



combined with a favourable climate has encouraged local producers to specialise in crops like onions, Chinese cabbage, sugar beets, potatoes and apples.

Since the economic slump in the mid 1990s Åland's employment situation has been very good. One reason for this is the Islands' geographical location. The proximity to Stockholm and Helsinki has enabled many young people, in particular, to work and study even in times of economic weakness at home. Unemployment has long been low, with open unemployment currently at 2.2 per cent. A long-term need for staff in health and medical care as well as education is a problem that Åland shares with the rest of the Nordic region. Because of the large number of tourists who visit Åland in the summers the service sector is dependent on seasonal workers from outside Åland during high season.

In modern times shipping has been the dominating industry in Åland, and it has greatly contributed to the Islands' current wealth. The changes faced by the Ålandic shipping industry pose a clear threat to Åland's labour market and economy.



## EDUCATION

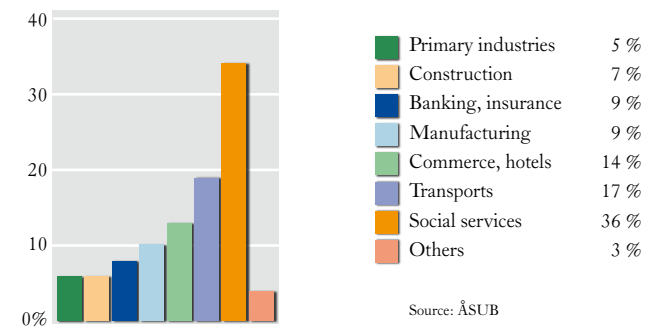
Åland has complete autonomy in the area of education. The language of tuition in all schools is Swedish.

The nine-year school, which is run by the municipality authorities, provides a broad general education. English is obligatory, while Finnish, French and German are optional. Åland's schools are relatively small. The tiny secondary schools in the archipelago, which enable children to study in their home parish until the end of their statutory period of schooling, have proved a successful local initiative.

Åland provides college/upper secondary-level education in shipping, commerce, tourism, medical care, domestic economy, technology and farming, all of which are important to the local economy. An exam from Ålands lyceum, a school offering three-year theoretical courses, prepares students for university studies.

Most local youths who go on to pursue university-level studies leave Åland for a while to attend a university in Sweden or Finland. Today Åland also has its own college of higher education. The Åland Polytechnic offers a wide range of courses leading to vocational degrees.

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY





## COMMUNICATIONS AND IT

Because of Åland's geographical location, the local economy, and the people who live here, are very dependent on good communications. In winter-time 20 ferries depart from Åland to Sweden and the Finnish mainland every day, but in summer the number rises to almost the double. As of spring 2004 there will also be a service to Estonia. Although ferries are the dominating form of transport to Åland, there are also flights between Mariehamn and the Swedish and Finnish mainlands. Locally, the archipelago is served by publicly owned regional ferries which depart several times a day.

Åland has always been at the forefront of developments in information technology, and now has a broadband network that is accessible to almost the entire population. The mobile telephone network covers the main island as well as the archipelago.



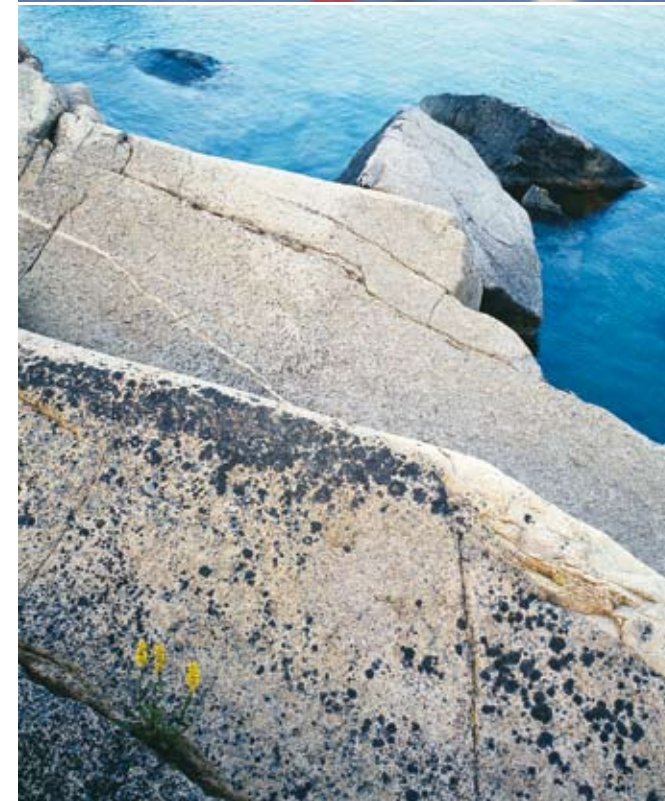
*Newspaper office*

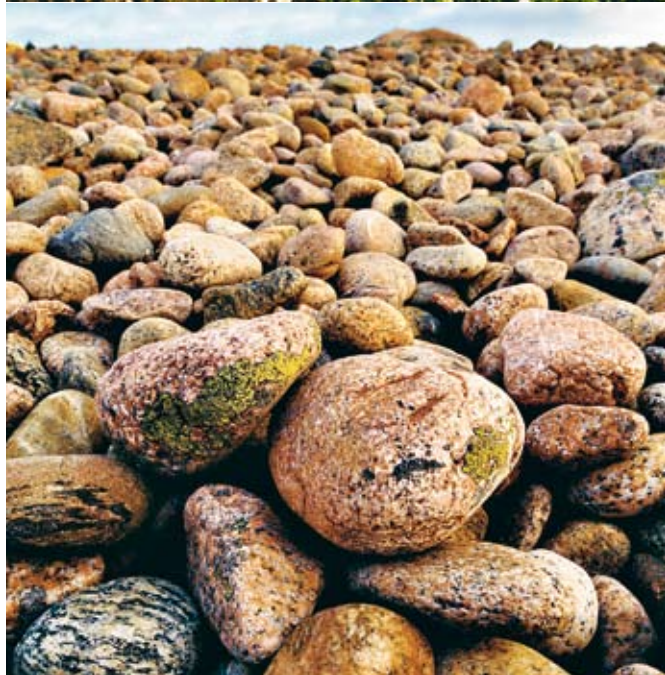
## MEDIA

Åland is a media-intensive society, with about 60 active journalists. There are two local newspapers, Tidningen Åland, which was founded in 1891, and Nya Åland, founded in 1981. Both newspapers are published six times a week.

The publicly owned Ålands Radio och TV Ab produces Ålands Radio and distributes Swedish and Finnish public-service radio and television. There are also two commercial radio channels.

The majority of Ålandic households have access to satellite channels via cable, yet surveys show that a majority prefer locally produced radio programmes and Swedish television.





## NATURE AND WILDLIFE

The Ålandic landscape was forged many millennia ago by powerful natural forces, which are still at work today, into a distinctive archipelagic landscape consisting of thousands of islands, holmes and skerries. The rapid changes in the landscape – from land to water, and from fields and meadows to dense, dark woods – as well as the large number of different habitats and the striking wealth of species give Åland its special character. The mosaic-like skärgård, or archipelago, and its inspiring waterways, unusual land formations and rich bird life is perhaps the natural experience that most visitors associate with Åland, as well as the red rock, rapakivi granite, which gives the Ålandic landscape its distinctive hue.

In terms of plant geography Åland lies within the Nordic “oak zone”, which is characterised by a relatively high share of broad-leaf trees such



as oak, ash, elm, maple and lime as well as more southerly species of flowering plants. The mild sea climate and chalky soil also help to create a rich flora. Åland has many species of orchids and is widely known for its wooded meadows, which are richer in species than anywhere else in the country.

Nature conservation is relatively well developed in Åland, which has its own nature conservation laws, including special provisions relating to the protection of wild plant and animal species. About 50 plants, including most orchids, are protected, and so, of course, are most mammals and birds, except for those game species which may be killed during their respective shooting seasons. Under an Åland Government resolution, all amphibians and reptiles, except the common adder, as well as some endan-

gered butterfly species, are protected. The so-called “every man’s right”, or public right of access to privately owned land, is more limited than in other parts of the Nordic region.

There are about 40 nature reserves in Åland, which are intended to preserve different types of nature for future generations. The wooded meadows of Ramsholmen and Nåtö just outside Mariehamn are two well-known examples.

# HISTORICAL MILESTONES

## ABOUT 8000 B.C.

The highest parts of Åland emerge from the sea.

## 5000 B.C.

The first human beings, hunters and fishermen, come from the east. They belong to the Comb Ceramic culture. Seasonal settlement.

## 3300 B.C.

New immigrants come from the west, belonging to the Pitted Ware culture. First signs of primitive agriculture and cattle raising. Permanent habitations.

## 1500-400 B.C.

The Bronze Age. Cairn graves on hills, typical of the period. Ship settings in the Main Island.

## 400 B.C. - 500 A.D.

A deterioration in climate affects living conditions. Åland is sparsely populated. At the end of the period population increases again through immigration, mainly from the west.

## 500-800 A.D.

Population increases rapidly. Settlement spreads over the Main Island.

## 10TH CENTURY

Dense settlement in the Main Island. Large numbers of farmstead cemeteries and house foundations exist from this period. Extensive trade connections with neighbouring countries. First traces of Christianity emerge.

## 13TH CENTURY

Several churches originate from this period. Åland is subject to the Swedish Crown. Place-names from Åland are documented for the first time in a 700-year-old description of a sailing route from Blekinge in Sweden via Åland to Reval (now Tallinn) in Estonia.

## 14TH CENTURY

1309  
Åland comes under Åbo (Turku) tax collection district and belongs to the diocese of Åbo (Turku).

1388      Kastelholm Castle is mentioned for the first time.

## 15TH CENTURY

Åland constitutes an administrative region with Kastelholm as its centre.

1. Dresspin from the 10th century, originating probably from England or Ireland. Found in Syllöda, Saltvik.

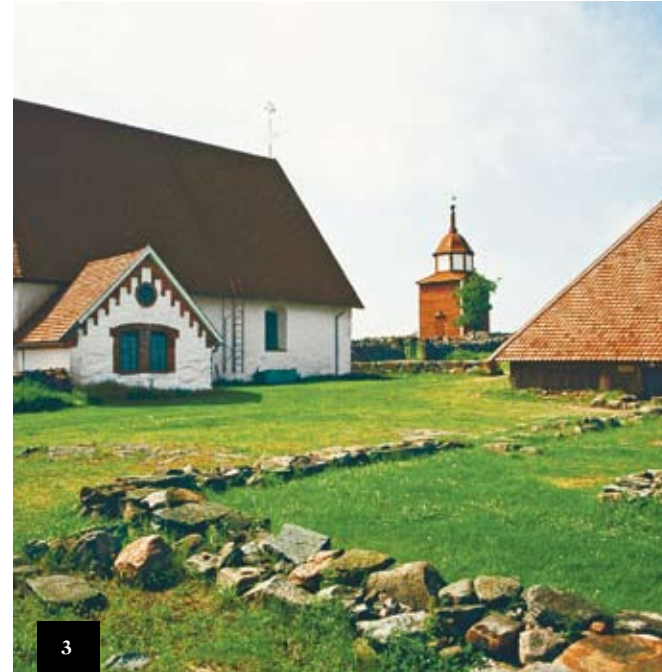
2. Arabic silver coin, minted 899 AD. Found in Näfsby, Hammarland



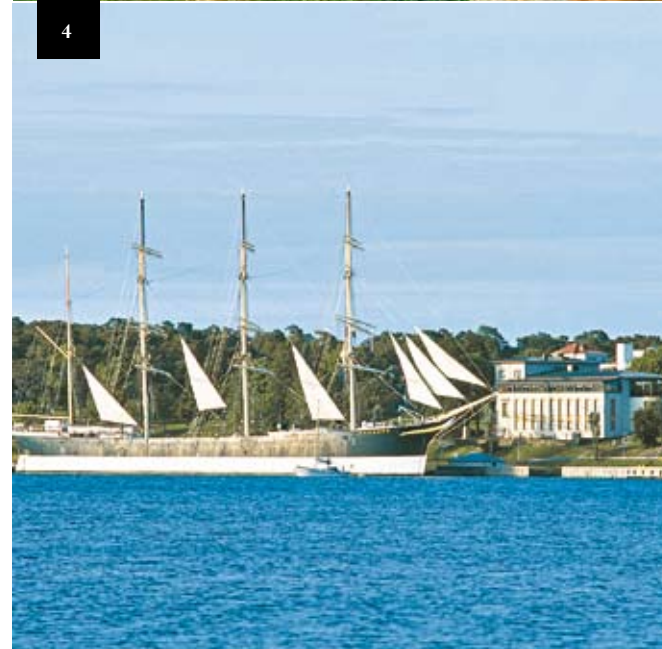
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2



3



4

1442      King Christopher's national law code is ratified. Ålanders are permitted to trade only with Åbo (Turku) and Stockholm.  
1472      The Franciscan monastery of Kökar is mentioned for the first time.

## 16TH CENTURY

1507      A Danish naval force under Sören Norrby ravages Kastelholm.  
1521-23    Fighting in Åland between Swedes and Danes during Gustavus Wasa's war of liberation.  
1556      Duke John of Sweden receives Åland and Åboland in fief.  
1571      Eric XIV of Sweden and Karin Månsdotter are held prisoners in Kastelholm Castle.

## 17TH CENTURY

1634      Åland chieftom becomes part of the newly-formed County of Åbo (Turku) and Björneborg (Pori) with the Province of Åland.  
1638      Regular mail services are organized between Sweden and Finland across Åland. Farmers have the duty of maintaining the post rota system.  
1639      A school, "Ålands pedagogi", is established in Saltvik.

## 18TH CENTURY

1714      Åland is devastated by the Russians during the Great Wrath. The majority of the population flees to Sweden.  
1718      Peace negotiations between Russians and Swedes at Lövä, Vårdö.  
1721-23    The inhabitants return to Åland  
1742-43    Russian troops occupy Åland again during the Lesser Wrath.  
1765      Farmers are granted the right to sell their goods where they wish.  
1795      F.W. Radloff publishes a detailed account of Åland.  
1796      An optical telegraph system is established between the Swedish coast and Signildskär.

## 19TH CENTURY

1808      The Russians invade Åland. Their main force is stationed in Kumlinge. A peasant uprising puts the Russian forces out of action.

3. Kökar monastery is mentioned in literature for the first time in 1472, but the Franciscan monks arrived in Kökar already in the 14th century.

4. Museum ship Pommern, built in Glasgow in 1903, is the only sailing ship in the world still in original condition. The four-masted barque has become a symbol for the sail seafaring in Åland.

1809 Åland is conquered by the Russians. Sweden loses Finland and Åland at the Peace of Fredrikshamn.

1828 The Eckerö Post and Customs House, designed by C.L. Engel, is completed.

1829 Work begins on Bomarsund Fortress with the township of Skarpan.

1835 A navigation college is founded in Godby.

1854 Bomarsund Fortress is captured by British and French naval forces during the Crimean War

1856 At the peace negotiations after the Crimean War the Åland Islands are declared a demilitarized zone. Freedom of trade is introduced, resulting in a vigorous development of peasant seafaring.

1861 The town of Mariehamn is founded on land belonging to Övernäs village in Jomala.

1886 The Öningeby colony, an artists' colony round Victor Westerholm is formed.

1895 The Åland Folk High School begins its activities in Jomala but is relocated to Finström in 1898.

**20TH CENTURY**

1915 Russian troops are moved to Åland. Coastal batteries and field fortifications are built, despite the demilitarized status of Åland.

1917 The Russian Revolution. The desire of the Ålanders for reunion with Sweden is announced publicly for the first time at a meeting at the Folk High School on 20 August. Finland proclaims its independence on 6 December.

1918 The Civil War affects Åland. Fighting in the region of Godby between the Red Guard and the Nystad Corps. Swedish troops of about 600 men land and commence negotiations to prevent further clashes. A German naval squadron intervenes, after which all military units leave Åland. A non-legalized "Parliament" is constituted.

1919 A deputation of three Åland representatives submits the cause of Åland at the peace conference in Paris.

1920 The Parliament of Finland adopts an autonomy act for Åland. The non-legalized Åland Parliament attends upon the Swedish Government and declares that Åland still adheres to the concept of reunion. The Åland leaders Julius Sundblom

and Carl Björkman are prosecuted for high treason and are imprisoned. On the initiative of England the Åland Islands question is referred to the Council of the League of Nations.

1921 The Åland Islands question is settled in the Council of the League of Nations. Finland is awarded sovereignty over the Åland Islands. Åland receives autonomy and guarantees for the preservation of its language, culture and local customs. Ten States sign a convention on the demilitarization and neutralization of Åland.

1922 Application of the Autonomy Act from 1920 begins. A Legislative Assembly, Landsting, is elected, with Julius Sundblom as Speaker. The Landsting assembles for the first time on 9 June, now Åland's Autonomy Day.

1934 The Åland Administration of Antiquities is established. Opening of The Åland Museum.

1935 The Åland Nautical Club is founded, assigned to set up a Maritime Museum for Åland.

1938 The Ålanders protest vigorously against plans of Sweden and Finland to fortify Åland according to the Stockholm Plan. Those plans are shelved because of opposition from the Soviet Union.

1939-44 Åland is mainly spared from military operations. During two separate periods fortifications are built in several places in Åland but are demolished directly after the end of the war.

1951 A revised Autonomy Act is adopted.

1952 The four-masted barque Pommern is donated to the City of Mariehamn by descendants of Gustaf Eriksson, the shipowner who built the world's largest sailing fleet between the First and Second World War.

1954 Åland receives its own flag.

1970 Åland becomes a member of the Nordic Council.

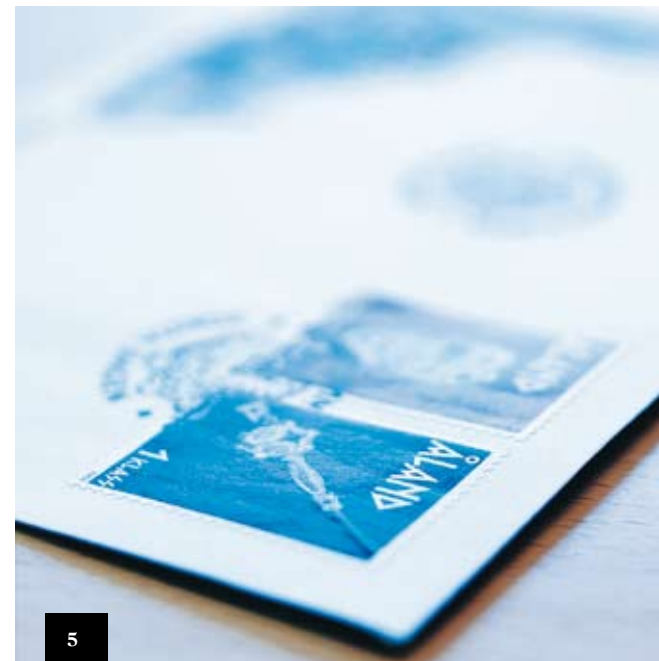
1978 The Autonomy Building, domicile of The Åland Parliament and Government, is inaugurated.

1984 The first Åland postage stamps are issued.

1988 Appointment of the Government is effected on a parliamentary basis for the first time.

1993 A new Autonomy Act, the third, comes into effect. Åland's own postal administration commences operations.

1995 Together with Finland, Åland joins the EU.



5

6



1996 Ålands Radio & TV Ab is formed.

**21ST CENTURY**

2002 Mark is replaced by Euro as the currency in Åland.

2004 The Autonomy Act is revised.

2005 Air Åland started its air traffic to Helsinki and Stockholm

2007 During the spring the population figure reached 27,000

5. Åland postage stamps have become popular collector's items around the world.  
6. The Åland flag was hoisted for the first time on April 3, 1954. The Autonomy Building was inaugurated in 1978.

Published by: Ålands landskapsregering and the Ålands lagting 2004. Updated 2008.

Editorial group: Susanne Eriksson, Linnéa Johansson, Jan-Ole Lönnblad, Britt Inger Wahe and Gunnar Westerholm.

Photographs: Kjell Söderlund, Augusto Mendes, Ålands Museum

Graphic design: CGiForm, C.G Sjöberg

Translated by: Matias Fagerlund

Printed at Mariehamns Tryckeri 2008

Ålands landskapsregering  
Pb 1060  
AX-22111 MARIEHAMN  
Tél: +358-(0)18-25 000  
info@regeringen.ax  
www.regeringen.ax

Read more about Åland on [www.aland.ax](http://www.aland.ax)