

# Youngsters On The Air — YOTA 2014

**If you've been wondering where all the young hams are,  
this year the answer is Finland!**

## Ward Silver, N0AX

The Youngsters On The Air (YOTA) event is held every year in different European Union (EU) countries under EU and International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) sponsorship.

The aim of YOTA ([www.ham-yota.eu](http://www.ham-yota.eu)) is to bring young people — under the age of 25 — together in the spirit of cultural exchange. The YOTA event fosters collaborative learning in all segments of Amateur Radio, science, and electronics.

The events of 2014 were the third year for YOTA, and 15 EU countries were represented by 75 young attendees who traveled to Virrat, Finland from July 15 – 20.

No doubt everyone had an unforgettable week, learned a lot, and made many new friends! You may have worked them on the air as OH2YOTA. This was a temporary two-tower station assembled and installed on-site by the YOTA organizers,

who were led by Vili, OH5GE. YOTA attendees took part in several Amateur Radio activities, such as making contacts, testing their Amateur Radio Direction Finding (ARDF) skills, and building and testing electronic kits. Besides ham radio, they worked hard on improving their language skills and discussing issues related to cultural awareness, which is an important part of Amateur Radio's ability to foster international goodwill.

Everyone arrived in Finland on July 15. YOTA 2014 got

under way the next

day with presentations, energizing games, and team-building exercises. Lisa, PA2LS; Tommy, ON3TD, and Mattias, SE0M, gave a presentation describing the YOTA event in December 2013, which included awards as well as changes to the YOTA website. Johan, SM5F, gave a presentation about the CQ

WPX award activities at SH3Y (2012) and SK3W (2013) in Sweden, where a young team of YOTA operators smashed the existing Swedish records. Jari, OH6BG, discussed the online version of VOACAP ([www.voacap.com/prediction.html](http://www.voacap.com/prediction.html)), a tool for predicting propagation that is helpful in planning operations. Concluding the day with an international evening, the teams presented the best food and drink from their respective countries for all to sample.

In the following days, the LZ team, with the help of some OH hams, gave a short introduction on ARDF ([www.ardf-r1.org](http://www.ardf-r1.org)) and the use of 80 meter ARDF

handheld direction finders.

Meanwhile other groups built a "Slim-Jim" antenna and Morse code sounder. Some teams participated in a SOTA ([www.sota.org.uk](http://www.sota.org.uk)) activation as OG3X/p from OH/JS-016, while others traveled to Åland Island to operate as OG0A. Everyone enjoyed the experience of a traditional Finnish sauna, as well!

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Seventy-five attendees from all over Europe gathered in Virrat, Finland from July 15 – 20 to take part in competitions, games, exercises, electronics training, and to enjoy each other's company during Youngsters On The Air (YOTA). [Lisa Leenders, PA2LS, photo]





This photo shows the Bronze medalists (seated, from left) Keijo, ES1XQ; Tauri, ES5HTA, and Keven, ES6AXS. Team Lithuania captain Simonas, LY2EN (foreground), and Linas, LY5AT (background), are leaning in to get a better view of the action. Contesting thrives in Estonia, and I'm sure we will find these operators represented in future results. The new nation of Estonia is largely in the hands of young people, and so is its Amateur Radio. [Martti Laine, OH2BH, photo]

YOTA has its own Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/groups/youngstersontheair](http://www.facebook.com/groups/youngstersontheair)) with hundreds of members. Some of YOTA 2014's attendees have published photo albums of the various events, such as European Radiosport Team Championship (ERTC) gold medalist, Sarka Vavrova, OK2SVA ([chery.zonerama.com/Profile/22194/43817](http://chery.zonerama.com/Profile/22194/43817)), and silver medalist Gabry Iuliani, IT9RGY.

#### European Radiosport Team Championship

YOTA 2014 concluded on July 19 with the European Radiosport Team Championship (ERTC) — a 6-hour contest held on the virtual Amateur Radio simulator, *HamSphere*. ([www.hamsphere.com](http://www.hamsphere.com)) During ERTC, 15 three-person youth teams were seated in one room with their computers. They competed in an environment similar to online gaming, a format familiar to most of the YOTA attendees. Once again, the latest technology was utilized in Amateur Radio for the benefit of Amateur Radio's future and by Amateur Radio operators themselves.

ERTC 2014 included contacts between hundreds of young people and licensed radio amateurs from 44 participating countries in the spirit of international Amateur Radio. Murphy visited in virtual reality too, as a thunderstorm switched off electricity in the area; power was restored only

5 minutes prior to the start of the contest!

Miguel, EC1DJ, a member of the Spanish team, made a short movie ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3Wp8gp2oSQ&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3Wp8gp2oSQ&feature=youtu.be)) of the teams as they competed. He explains the online nature of ERTC: "HamSphere is a software simulation of the amateur bands, which gives the opportunity for young people interested in the world of Amateur Radio to experience — very realistically — competitions taking place on the air, without a need to pass exams. The only requirement is to have a computer, an Internet connection, and a headset with microphone." This type of online event certainly opens doors for Amateur Radio!

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ERTC 2014 was a mammoth job for the young organizers who worked with limited resources under the guidance of Mari, OH2FPK; Kati, OH2FKX, and Lisa, PA2LS. ERTC 2014 was also honored to have Professor Rumen Gechev, LZ1MS, as patron of this first-ever World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC) simulation over the Internet. Rumen himself finished 4<sup>th</sup> in 1990 at the first WRTC held in Seattle, Washington. Complete results can be found on the YOTA website ([www.ham-yota.eu/news](http://www.ham-yota.eu/news)), but here are the medal winners (with their ages in parentheses):

Gold: Czech Republic — Sarka Vavrova, OK2SVA (21); Jindrich Kostal, OK1NOR

#### December 2014 is YOTA Month

During the entire month of December, stations in several countries will be on the air seeking contacts using "YOTA" as their call sign suffix. YOTA is growing fast, and every week more youngsters are asking to participate. By making YOTA popular we can all help to get youngsters active in ham radio. YOTA stations will be trying to make lots of contacts, so take this opportunity to connect young operators in their teens and 20s with their peers on the air. YOTA month is not limited to European countries only — this will be the first worldwide YOTA event. Watch the YOTA website ([ham-yota.org](http://ham-yota.org)) for information about YOTA awards and QSL information. — Thanks to Tommy, ON2TD, and Lisa, PA2LS, for this information.

(24), and Jan "Honza" Dohnalek, OK1JD (20).

Silver: Italy — Nicola Tonci, IZ6TSA (20); Gabry Iuliani, IT9RGY (26), and Orazio Intagliata, IT9DBF (25).

Bronze: Estonia — Keijo Kapp, ES1XQ (17); Tauri Helimets, ES5HTA (18), and Keven Meck, ES6AXS (18).

#### YOTA and the Future

Following his return to Scotland, the UK's *TX Factor* program did an audio interview ([www.txfilms.co.uk/txfactor/adam\\_yota.mp3](http://www.txfilms.co.uk/txfactor/adam_yota.mp3)) with Adam Hutchinson, MM0KFX, one of the five UK team members. Adam had an interesting response to the question of whether ham radio is becoming an old person's hobby — "Is it?" Adam likes having a mix of young and experienced people in Amateur Radio. He thinks YOTA and similar events will attract more interest among young people of all types and interests, especially those who are technically minded and interested in competing. These young people will take the hobby into the future. Perhaps a future YOTA will be held in North America.

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