



To the countries concerned

Our ref *16.05.18* No *14-10/3986-1*

**Information regarding the adoption
of Rail Baltica county plans in
Estonia**

Dear colleagues,

The Government of the Republic of Estonia initiated in 2012 the preparation of county plans in Harju, Rapla and Pärnu county with the purpose to plan the Rail Baltica railway route. Thereupon the county governors initiated strategic environmental assessment (SEA) that was carried out as a whole.

The Minister of Public Administration adopted on the 13th of February 2018 with directive number 1.1-4/40 Pärnu county plan, on the 13th of February 2018 with directive number 1.1-4/41 Harju county plan and on the 14th of February 2018 with directive number 1.1-4/43 Rapla county plan for the Rail Baltica railway location in Estonia.

The aim of the county plans is to design a connection between the Baltic States and European railway network with the interoperability of 1435 mm railway gauge. Establishment of Rail Baltica railway ensures a more sustainable mobility of people and goods by reducing air pollution emitted by transport. County plans confirm the best alignment of the fully electrified Rail Baltica route in Estonia, starting from Muuga port area through Rapla and Pärnu towns to Estonian-Latvian borderline. The route was previously confirmed with Latvia and Lithuania.

During the planning phase different route alternatives were analyzed. The final route was chosen so that it would be technically relevant and economically feasible with minimum possible disturbances to human living and natural environments.

The total length of planned Rail Baltica route in Estonia is 213 km. The planning corridor is 350 m wide in rural areas. This makes it possible to make minor alignment improvements during the technical design phase. The planning corridor includes the areas that are needed to build the railway and its protection zone (together 66 m). In densely populated and narrow areas the planning corridor is 150 m wide.

The railway is designed for trains with maximum speed 240 km/h. The maximum speed of freight trains is 120 km/h. International passenger terminals are planned in Tallinn and Pärnu. County plans allow to enhance local railway traffic in the future.

Rail Baltica county plans consist of explanatory texts and technical drawings that were prepared as a result of the planning exercise. The results of SEA have been taken into account upon preparing the county plans and have been integrated into the plans.

The planning procedure considered and balanced both national and municipal level needs of spatial development. SEA was initiated in all three counties in parallel processes of county planning. The objective of SEA for the Rail Baltica county plans was to estimate and assess the environmental impacts that the construction of a high-speed rail is expected to cause, describe and assess alternatives, highlight positive impacts, including the advantages of the assessed alternatives, and plan measures aimed at avoiding and mitigating possible negative impacts to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into the county plans. In the course of the work, all significant environmental aspects related to the planning of the railway and consequences due to the occurrence of possible impacts were surveyed. The Ministry of the Environment of Estonia, acting as the supervisor of the SEA, approved the SEA report on the 9th of August 2017.

The construction of the railway is acceptable if the occurring environmental impacts are lessened using the mitigating measures described in the SEA report throughout the entire designing, building and operating period. It is necessary to follow appropriate environmental management measures which include monitoring and follow-up procedures to assess and adjust the efficiency of the measures and take into account the need for experts with required qualification to be part of the project team.

The whole railway corridor as adopted in Harju, Rapla and Pärnu county plans is available here: <http://railbaltic.info/et/materjalid/maakonnaplaneeringud/category/53-trassikulgemise-yldkaart>

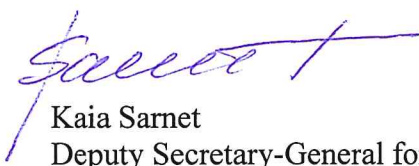
More detailed and county specific information of the county plans (adopted county plans together with the approved SEA report) can be found here:

- Harju county plan – <https://www.maavalitsus.ee/127> ;
- Rapla county plan – <http://www.maavalitsus.ee/120> ;
- Pärnu county plan – <https://www.maavalitsus.ee/147> ;

The following steps of the Rail Baltica project in Estonia will include specific designing, applying of building permits and authorizations of use. The Rail Baltica railway is planned to be in use by 2027.

For additional information please contact: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Transport Development and Investments Department, Suur-Ameerika 1, Tallinn 10122, e-mail: triin.orav@mkm.ee.

Yours sincerely,



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