

JOINT DECLARATION
BETWEEN
THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND
THE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA
THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF LITHUANIA
THE MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF POLAND
ON THE ENHANCED COOPERATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
RAIL BALTIC/RAIL BALTICA PROJECT

The Minister of Transport of the Republic of Finland,
the Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure of the Republic of Estonia,
the Minister of Transport of the Republic of Latvia,
the Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania,
the Minister of Infrastructure and Development of the Republic of Poland
met on 22nd June in Riga and adopted the following Joint Declaration.

Recalling that the Republic of Finland, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, and the Republic of Poland are the partner countries involved in the implementation of the Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica project;

Recalling that the Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica Project (further - the Project) is one of the most strategic missing links to the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) as well as a vital element of the North-Sea Baltic Corridor which has an important impact in providing for the free movement of people and goods within and across borders, reducing CO₂ emissions, fostering regional socio-economic development, creating additional employment and generating GDP growth;

Recalling their common strategic objective to build or modernize the effective rail connection the Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica railway line on the route from Tallinn through Pärnu - Riga - Panevezys - Kaunas - Warsaw, as foreseen in the TEN-T and CEF Regulations, where it is included in the pre-identified project list of the European Union TEN-T Core Network;

Referring to the requirements of the Regulation (EU) No. 1315/2013 and acknowledging the need for a continuity of the line to connect the Baltic States and its capitals to the Single European Market following harmonised standards with regards to interoperability and speed to attract customers while respecting the economic and environmental effectiveness;

Stressing that the length and performance of the line are of critical importance to its commercialisation;

Recalling and welcoming that the Joint Venture RB Rail AS (hereafter: the Joint Venture) has been set up in October 2014, and that first joint applications for CEF funding by the Baltic States and the Joint Venture were submitted, justifying that the Joint Venture acts as coordination, implementation and

facilitation body for the Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica project in the Baltic States;

Recalling that the shareholders of the Joint Venture have agreed on the connection of Vilnius-Kaunas as part of the railway's route in order to interconnect all the capitals of the partner countries and to deploy joint efforts to make the Vilnius-Kaunas section equally eligible for European Union co-funding as the North-South connection from Tallinn via Pärnu - Riga - Panevezys - Kaunas to Warsaw; whereby the parties to the Joint Venture understand that such parts of the Railway will be phased so that the entire Project would not be delayed or stopped;

Recalling that the Joint Declaration of the Prime Ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania of December 5th 2014 reiterated the importance of implementing the Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica as a continuous line, crossing their territories as fast conventional double track 1435 mm gauge electrified railway line with the maximum design speed of 240km/h on the route from Tallinn through Pärnu-Riga-Panevezys-Kaunas to the Lithuanian-Polish border as proposed by the AECOM study with a connection of Vilnius-Kaunas as part of the Route.

Recalling and welcoming the ongoing process of adopting an intergovernmental agreement between the three Baltic States to stipulate the responsibilities of the participating states with regard to the Joint Venture and the development of the Project;

Welcoming the ongoing discussions between the Latvian and Lithuanian authorities with a view to establishing the border crossing point;

The Ministers, supported by the European Commissioner:

1. Reiterate their common will to complete the Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica infrastructure, which is essential for the connection of the Baltic States to their neighbours and the rest of the EU's internal market, as foreseen in the TEN-T and CEF Regulations and to jointly plan the sequencing of studies and works.
2. Agree to continuously empower the Joint Venture to conduct the activities in relation to the design, construction and marketing (including branding) of the Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica project in the three Baltic States as defined in the Joint Venture's Shareholder Agreement until the completion of the line foreseen in 2025.
3. Welcome that Finland and Poland agreed to join the Joint Venture as observers as well as the Rail Baltic Task Force set up to favour cooperation for the smooth realisation of the project.
4. Welcome the participation of the European Coordinator as an observer in the Rail Baltic Task Force and agree to exchange information on the progress of the relevant projects on their territory within this framework.
5. Emphasize that Project partners will strive to ensure the continuity and coherence of the works and studies accomplished on all major sections of the line in order to ensure that the requirements of the TEN-T and CEF Regulations as well as the Shareholder Agreement of the Joint Venture are fulfilled and full potential of the corridor operations are reached. For these activities support by the European Coordinator and Commission will be sought.
6. Agree that the Joint Venture together with the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian parties will jointly submit additional applications under the next calls for proposals for funding under the Connecting Europe Facility for the Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica new fast conventional double track European gauge electrified railway line with the maximum design speed of 240 km/h with the aim to start these construction works as of the year

2018 on all major sections of the Project as defined in the Joint Venture's Shareholder Agreement and in line with the TEN-T and CEF Regulations. The Joint Venture will also coordinate reaching agreement between the experts of the shareholder countries on the technical parameters of the Rail Baltic/Rail Baltica railway in the framework of the Technical Standards of Interoperability to be applied in a harmonised way across all the sections crossing their territories. The Joint Venture will also prepare and coordinate a common implementation plan of the common global project in the three Baltic States, taking into account the objective of the better connection with the section in Poland.

7. Agree that within this framework, the Lithuanian and Latvian authorities will jointly determine, according to the applicable spatial planning procedures, the border crossing point for the new Rail Baltic line as soon as possible in order not to delay implementation of the Project.
8. Agree that the Polish and the Lithuanian authorities will cooperate in planning and implementation of the cross-border section from Białystok to Kaunas, as foreseen in Regulation (EU) No. 1315/2013. For the planning and development of the above-mentioned cross-border section, the Polish and Lithuanian authorities will exchange all data and results of the ongoing and completed feasibility studies in order to coordinate the step-wise approach to conduct the appropriate investments on the railway section between Białystok and Kaunas. They will also inform the European Commission and the other signatories of this Declaration. The common aim is the coordination of the development of the railway line between Tallinn, Riga, Kaunas and Warsaw with a benefit for the coordinated proposals to be submitted under the next calls for projects of the Connecting Europe Facility upon completion of the analysis of the ongoing feasibility study, the first of these calls being foreseen to close in early 2016.
9. Welcome the progress achieved on reconstruction and upgrading of the existing 1520mm gauge lines and construction of the 1435mm gauge railway section in Lithuania, which shall be finished by the end of 2015, opening up the possibility to build up the traffic on the North-South axis.
10. The partners, conscious of the added value of cooperation in communication activities to facilitate a positive perception of the project and its benefits, agree to strive for the organisation of joint events to communicate on the progress of the project. The shareholders of the Joint Venture also agree on the initiated setup of a common website.

Signed in Riga, on June 22nd 2015

Ms A. **Berner**



Minister

Mr K. **Michal**



Minister

Mr A. **Matīss**



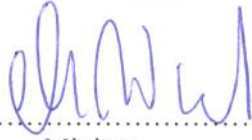
Minister

Mr R. **Sinkevičius**



Minister

Ms M. **Wasiak**



Minister

Ms V. **Bulc**



European Commissioner