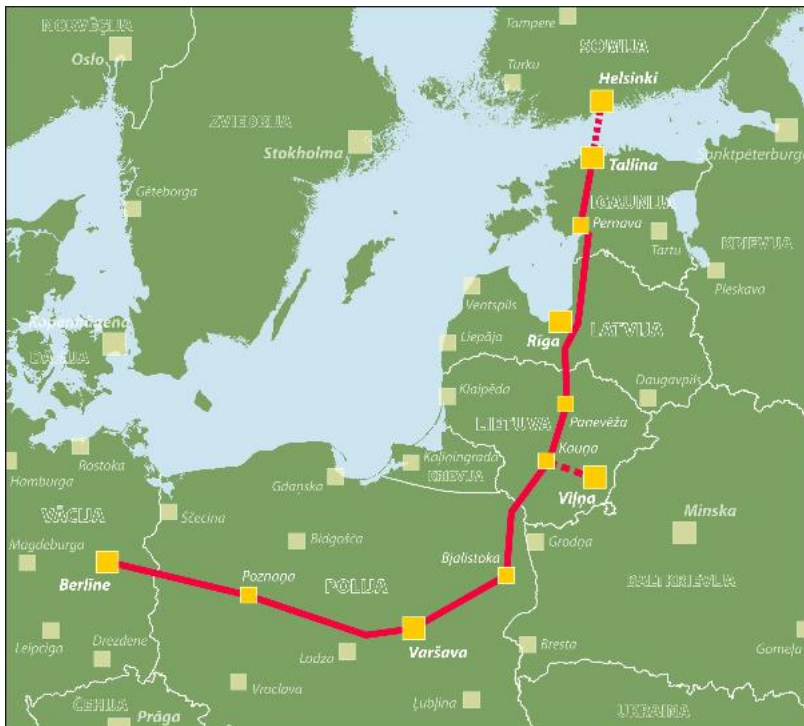


Rail Baltica & Helsinki-Tallinn Railway Tunnel

Rail Baltica

Rail Baltica is a project to link Finland, the Baltic States and Poland with a standard gauge rail line, providing passenger and freight service between the countries and improving rail connections between Central and Northern Europe by 1435 mm high-speed railway. The project has been approved by European Council as European transport priority project already in 2004, and it is estimated to be finished in the Baltic countries in 2024. The total length of the Rail Baltica is planned to be 728 km and the maximum speed of the passenger transportation service is expected to reach 240 km/h.

Stations in the Baltic countries include Tallinn, Pärnu, Riga Central, Riga Airport, Panevėžys, Kaunas and Vilnius, which will be included after 2020. Currently, the section from Helsinki to Tallinn is planned to operate by existing commercial ferries (Tallink Silja Line, Viking Line and Eckerö Line). In the future, a proposed Helsinki-Tallinn Railway Tunnel could provide a rail link to Helsinki, Finland as well, however, the Railway Tunnel's destiny remains unsure.



Source: Baltic-course.com

Total costs of the project amount to €4.5 billion and the support from the EU estimated to reach up to 85%. The main source of funding is Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

Project's expected procurement sectors:

- Technical design works
- Construction works
- Rent of the construction machinery and equipment
- Transportation and logistics services
- Supply rails, railway line coating, materials

- Design and supply of train traffic management and control system (ERTMS)
- Design and supply of railway electrification
- Design and supply of railway ICT systems

(Source: Export Finland 2017)

Finland's part in Rail Baltica

From the Finnish perspective, the Rail Baltica project is highly important for the Finnish industry and exports as well, and is the largest and most significant transport sector project within the EU. The Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä has met with Prime Minister of Latvia Māris Kučinskis on May 12, 2017 to discuss the progression of the project. Prime Minister Sipilä states that Finland wishes that the rail connection will be built as soon as possible, at a reasonable cost, and with the best available resources. Rail Baltica project is vital for the implementation of the possible Helsinki-Tallinn Railway Tunnel project.

Helsinki-Tallinn Railway Tunnel

Helsinki-Tallinn railway tunnel is a new undersea tunnel proposed to be built across the Gulf of Finland, between the capitals of Finland and Estonia; Helsinki and Tallinn. More than eight million people a year traverse the Gulf of Finland, which at the moment, is served mainly by ferries and fast passenger boats. The passenger traffic on the route is projected to increase at a rapid pace, reaching 30 million by 2030. Therefore, the new tunnel will provide reliable and rapid transportation between the two capital cities, offering a vital connection between Scandinavia and Central Europe. It will reduce the journey time from 2 hours to 30 minutes.

Progress of the project

Uudenmaanliitto (Uusimaa Regional Council) estimates that the construction work of the new tunnel will begin soon after 2025, and it would become operational between 2030 and 2035. The tunnel will be 92 km long, which makes it the world's longest undersea railway tunnel.

The governments of Finland and Estonia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the project in January 2016, and the project is now being led by Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council in collaboration with the cities of Helsinki and Tallinn, Harju County, Finnish Transport Agency (FTA) and the Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. The city of Helsinki will assess the impact of the project, while the FTA will analyse the technical and economic requirements of the tunnel's construction.

Financing

The estimated cost of the project is approximately € 9-13 billion. EU granted € 3,1 million for the feasibility studies of the Helsinki-Tallinn tunnel project and FinEst Smart Mobility project in June 2016. The project is expected to receive funding from the European Union (EU), private investors, and the governments of Finland and Estonia.

Contractors

In February 2017, a consortium of Ramboll Finland, Sito, Strafica, Urban Research and Pöyry Finland was selected to determine the financial viability and impact of the tunnel project. The feasibility report is scheduled to be completed in the second half of 2017.

Open Competition for External Expert Services

RB Rail AS is the central coordinator for the Rail Baltica project, and announced on May 26, 2017 an open competition “Expert Services” for which proposals should be submitted by June 29, 2017.

For more information: <http://railbaltica.org/open-competition-for-external-expert-services-for-rail-baltica/>

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