External expertise input to Work Package 1 –
“Rail Baltica Development Perspectives”

November 2007
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1 Rationale

The scope of the Interreg III B project Rail Baltica
Economic integration of Baltic States and Poland with Western Europe leads to growing trade and traffic. Well furnished and sustainable transportation links therefore are considered pre-requisites to promote economic growth and integration in the region. While cross-sea ferry traffic in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) is growing fast, coast-parallel transport on sea or rail stagnate in contrast to rapidly growing road transport. Passenger railway services from Tallinn to Central/Western Europe ceased. Via Baltica, road and rail, is a priority in the TEN (Trans-European Network), with only road improvements progressing to date. Railway investments concentrate on East-West corridors and neglect the wanted integration within the widened EU. Although some national initiatives have been taken for infrastructure improvement of Rail Baltica, a harmonized trans-national development strategy is missing. The European Commission has suggested that the involved countries should jointly develop such a trans-national strategy in the framework of INTERREG and considers Rail Baltica as a potential top trans-national project within the TEN concept. The technical issues of alternative alignments of Rail Baltica have been analyzed in parallel within the framework of a pre-feasibility study under Cohesion Fund financing. The implications of alternative routes on spatial planning and regional development on the one hand, as well as possible measures to be implemented to promote railway traffic in the BSR on the other, were planned to be analyzed in the framework of this INTERREG IIIB project Rail Baltica. The analysis will be based on a trans-national assessment and development strategy based on mutually supporting policies for spatial planning, infrastructure development and regional development measures.

The scope of the work package 1 (WP 1)
This report “Rail Baltica Development Perspectives” is elaborated as external expertise in the context of the project’s work package 1, which according to the original intention of the authors of the project application had to deal with the definition of a common approach for the integration of spatial planning and regional development issues in infrastructure project planning. It was planned to contribute to the harmonization of the assessment approaches and development strategies in the participating countries. Moreover, conditions for successful railway development were to be clarified and a joint assessment approach for spatial planning and regional development issues and joint concepts to support Rail Baltica defined. Common understanding on integration of regional development and spatial planning aspects in infrastructure development projects should have been reached. The foreseen elaboration and adoption of a common development strategy has been deleted from the list of expected results by the partners at an early stage of project implementation1.

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1 APPLICATION FORM Baltic Sea Region INTERREG III B Neighbourhood Programme; Seventh call for project applications, Spring 2005
INTERREG IIIB project “Rail Baltica” - Partner’s contact list

**Finland**
Ministry of Transport and Communication

**Estonia**
Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications of Estonia
Ministry of Interior

**Latvia**
Foundation “Riga Region Development Agency”
Ministry of Transport and Communication of Republic of Latvia
Ministry of Regional development and Local Government’s
Vidzeme Development Agency
Zemgale Development Agency
Transport Education and Research Centre

**Lithuania**
Ministry of Transport and Communication
Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania
AB “Lithuanian Railways”
Kaunas County Governor’s Administration
Marijampole County Governor’s Administration
Panevėžys County Governor’s Administration
Siauliai County Governor’s Administration

**Poland**
Ministry of Infrastructure
Polish Railway Lines Company

**Germany**
GTZ Twinning Office
Senate Department for Urban Development Berlin
Ministry for Infrastructure and Spatial Planning Brandenburg

According to the procedure agreed by the project partners in the preparation of the project application (i.e. outlined in the Application Form, chapter 6.4.1) and further developed during the project’s inception phase it has been decided to develop a questionnaire for collecting the necessary information for working on work package 1 (WP1). The aim of the chosen approach has been to quickly commence work on the Rail Baltica project and not to spend too much time and effort on its analysis part.

This questionnaire had been designed to be filled in by national experts and/ or public servants in the fields of spatial planning as well as regional development. The approach had been fine-tuned and a respective work schedule had been jointly elaborated and agreed upon in the course of a Partner Meeting in Riga (1. and 2. February 2006)².

The chosen approach had taken into account that the early versions of the questionnaire displayed only a first step into the assessment approach and needs

² The “Questionnaire to the National Experts” and the “Milestone 2 activity plan 2006-02-03” are attached in the annex-section of this report
further elaboration in the course of the project. It was foreseen that the further specification and detailing would be part of the interactions between the work packages 1 and 2, according to the work plan of the project.

In order to provide the necessary information the partners were asked to identify and analyse national specific information and list key national documents, referring to their main stipulations and impacts on spatial and regional development and in particular to the Rail Baltica planning process.

It was planned that the questionnaire would be filled in by as many persons – experts – as possible, as the personal views of representatives of the different planning levels in the partner countries’ hierarchies as well as from different disciplines would have provided valuable information for the analysis of the different planning systems, the relevant legislation and its implementation. Therefore, the Rail Baltica partners were invited to distribute the questionnaire not just among themselves, but also to other institutions, authorities and/or persons involved in spatial and regional development and planning – to everyone who could contribute to fill the analysis with substance. In particular the experts were asked to describe the national and regional goals and the focus of railway development activities, to describe the alignment in the regional plans, to explain how the alignments are fixed/defined in regional development planning etc.

With regards to the specific projects, the focus was on the description of all relevant development projects (“to what extent are the goals of these projects in line with the spatial planning goals defined?”). Additionally, the impacts of all projects on the region and on Rail Baltica were to be assessed. The answers and responses to the questionnaire were planned lead to the perception of planning activities in the field of railway (and thus Rail Baltica) development. Additionally, the assessment of the present and planned development projects would show the different levels of development activities and would have made it possible to define priority actions for the Rail Baltica project, as well as presenting a basis for the activities foreseen under WP3.

On the workshop in Frankfurt/Oder (milestone 2) it has been agreed to stop the “questionnaires-procedure” and to prepare and implement regional workshops in the partner countries PL, LT, LV, and EE³.

³ See Minutes of the project workshop “Infrastructure and regional development in border regions” on 08.06.2006 in Frankfurt (Oder), and Invitation to the workshops on WP1 and WP3 of 8. and 9. January 2007 in Siauliai.
Extract from the minutes (work package 1) of the Workshop “Infrastructure and regional development in border regions” 08.06.2006 Frankfurt (Oder):

The exercise of gathering relevant information by using a questionnaire as outlined in the project application will be stopped.
In order to finalise the analytical phase working group meetings should be organised in order to present and prepare all relevant information of Rail Baltica planning as well as spatial planning and related regional development issues. This direct dialogue about the relevant issues has been offered as an alternative to the unsuccessful questionnaire-approach.
Organisation of meeting(s) with support of Lead Partner to gather experts from all the participating countries in order to gather the still missing information.

The German experts responded to this new direction and prepared and offered to conduct regional workshops in each involved country in order to gather information on the national strategies and approaches along Rail Baltica. Unfortunately, there were only a few responses to this proposal: the Lithuanian partners agreed to conduct such a regional workshop in January 2007, all others rejected the offer or did not respond to it at all.

Due to the very limited response to the German proposal for activities under WP 1 the German partners elaborated a proposal for further activities under WP 1, reflecting the lack of first hand data and direct involvement of project partners. This had been circulated in written form and been agreed upon by the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
Finally, taking into account the limited remaining resources in terms of time and financial funds, but also lack of commitment of the majority of the project partners, the PSC on its meeting of 22nd May, 2007 agreed to support the elaboration of a report with an action plan on regional development perspectives. This report will mainly be based on available and additional data and information from German and Lithuanian partners as well as from additional case studies in other work packages. Other Rail Baltica project partners are invited to contribute with additional information in order to improve the quality of the report.

The elaboration of two case-studies on passenger traffic along Rail Baltica will be integrated into the work to be carried out under WP 1. These case studies are aiming at providing additional input and recommendations for options and opportunities for short- and medium-term improvements of the passenger rail transport along the Rail Baltica corridor through the implementation of organisational, communicative measures as well as improved tariff policy.
2 Visions of rail transport between Berlin and Helsinki

The “Rail Baltica” idea emerged from the joint Interreg II C/ Phare CBC spatial planning project “Via Baltica Spatial Development Zone (VBSD-Zone)” implemented between 1999 and 2000. 22 partners from 6 countries – Finland, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland – were involved. The general objective of the VBSD-Zone project was to create a common vision and strategy for this Zone, to build close, permanent and active relationships between the regions in the surrounding of Via Baltica road (E67) and to elaborate a common view and solid basis for the further co-operation in the field of the spatial planning and development.

However, the original idea is even older, since the VBSD-Zone project was an actual continuation of VASAB pilot project “Tampere-Helsinki-Tallinn-Riga Spatial Development Zone” (THTR) and is extension of its area from Riga-Kaunas-Belostock to Berlin. THTR project was started in 1996 to implement the Stockholm Declaration approved by VASAB Ministers (see below) by combining the development of a European Transport Network with sustainable regional development. It was an attempt to transfer the spatial planning knowledge from the national level (THTR) to the regional and local planning and administrative bodies (VBSD-Zone).

The following aims were defined as the core of the VBSD-Zone project:

- promotion of environmentally sound economic development and spatially balanced development of the Zone both at national and at regional levels,
- perception of the opportunities offered by rail and water transport network as an alternative to road transport;
- understanding of the spatial development prospects for the VBSDZ-Zone within BSR and European context.

The VBSDZ project partners have signed the Memorandum I on political will for future co-operation between regions and regions within the Zone and Memorandum II declaring a common vision. It foresees that VBSDZ will be socially and economically active territory and main development axis in the Eastern part of the Baltic Sea Region that links Northern Europe, the Baltic States and Central and Western Europe. The Zone will act as a trust and integration area accumulating and harmonising political, social, environmental, economical and cultural influences from N-S and E-W directions. In the VBSDZ project framework the Phare-partners from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland have initiated 20 follow-up project proposals, including “Feasibility study on Perspective Railway line “Rail Baltic” with the idea of intercity train “Car comes with me” Helsinki – Berlin as one of the three of top-priority projects. The politicians and regional authorities of VBSD-Zone have already confirmed their support to this project in the Memorandum II sign in Riga (Latvia), March 16, 2000. The project partners agree that the railway line “Rail Baltic” will improve passenger and freight mobility, promote sustainable and balanced development of regions along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea and will serve as the important link for cross- BSR and cross-Europe integration.

Parallel to this three Baltic States Ministers of Transport in November 2001 signed an agreement underlining the intention to refurbish this important railway link. Rail
Baltic project was also highlighted in the “Wismar Declaration on trans-national spatial planning and development policies for the Baltic Sea Region to 2010” at the 5th Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development in the Baltic Sea Region, 20-21 September 2001 (see below).4

The Trans-European Networks (TEN in EU jargon) were created by the European Union by Articles 154-156 of the Maastricht Treaty (1992), with the stated goals of the creation of an internal market and the reinforcement of economic and social cohesion. The driving force was the increasing awareness that an EU internal market, with freedom of movement for goods, persons and services, needed to properly link the various regions and national networks making up that market by modern and efficient infrastructure. The construction of Trans-European Networks was also seen as an important element for economic growth and the creation of employment.

The Treaty on European Union first provided a legal basis for the TENs. Under the terms of Chapter XV of the Treaty (Articles 154, 155 and 156), the European Union must aim to promote the development of Trans-European Networks as a key element for the creation of the Internal Market and the reinforcement of Economic and Social Cohesion. This development includes the interconnection and interoperability of national networks as well as access to such networks.

According with these objectives, the European Commission developed guidelines covering the objectives, priorities, identification of projects of common interest and broad lines of measures for the three sectors concerned (Transports, Energy and Telecommunications). The European Parliament and the Council approved these guidelines after consultation with the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

A large number of projects of common interest have benefited from financial support of the European Union budget through the TEN-budget line as well as the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund. The European Investment Bank has also greatly contributed to the financing of these projects through loans.

Three classes of network were defined by the treaty:

- Trans-European transport networks (TEN-T)
- Trans-European Energy Network (TEN-E or TEN-Energy)
- Trans-European telecommunications network (eTEN)

4 Dzintra UPMACE, and Andulis ZIDKOVS: Key note on ‘Baltic rail’, date unknown
In 2001 the European Commission initiated a revision of the TEN-T guidelines. As a result, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the Decision number 884/2004/EC amending the Community guidelines for the development of the TEN-T. Particular attention was drawn to the development of trans-national infrastructure projects, especially in the sections of the pan-European corridors in the new Member States. The railway corridor Warsaw - Kaunas - Riga – Tallinn (Rail Baltica) was identified as priority project number 27.

In addition to the various TENs, there are ten Pan-European transport corridors, which are paths between major urban centres and ports (see next page: map of the corridors).

The ten were defined at the second Pan-European transport Conference in Crete, March 1994, as routes in Central and Eastern Europe that required major investment over the next ten to fifteen years. Additions were made at the third conference in Helsinki in 1997. Therefore, these corridors are sometimes referred to as the "Crete corridors" or "Helsinki corridors", regardless of their geographical locations. A tenth corridor was proposed after the end of hostilities between the states of the former Yugoslavia.

These development corridors – see next page – are distinct from the Trans-European transport networks, which include all major established routes in the European Union, although there are proposals to combine the two systems.
The corridors relevant in the given context are:

**Corridor I (North-South):**

**Helsinki - Tallinn - Riga - Kaunas and Klaipėda - Warsaw** and Gdański;

*Branch A (Via/Rail Hanseatica) - St. Petersburg to Riga to Kaliningrad to Gdański to Lübeck*

Via Baltica (E 67) - Helsinki to Warsaw.

**Corridor II (East-West):**

**Berlin - Poznań - Warsaw** - Brest - Minsk - Smolensk - Moscow - Nizhny Novgorod
Spatial positioning of Corridor I (solid line: road, dotted line: rail)\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{5} Source: Pan-Eurostar (2005)
The Northern Dimension

The Northern Dimension concept, initiated by Finland in 1997, concerns the EU external and cross-border co-operation in the geographical area of the Baltic Sea region including Kaliningrad, the Arctic Sea region and Northwest Russia. The main aim of the initiative is to promote the specific issues concerning the region and to strengthen cooperation with the EU and between the countries concerned.

The initiative focuses on five priority sectors:

1. economy and infrastructure,
2. social issues (including education, training and public health),
3. environment, nuclear safety and natural resources,
4. justice and home affairs and
5. cross-border co-operation.

There is no specific legal agreement on the Northern Dimension, nor does the initiative have a separate budget. The Northern Dimension is a joint undertaking of the EC, the Member States and the partner countries of the region. The European Commission has recently produced a revised Action Plan⁶ and is responsible for programming of activities and for proposing follow-up action.

Concerning the transport sector, the revised Action Plan puts the priority on the development of a multi-modal transport system to improve connections within the region and with the neighbouring countries, the creation of an environmentally-friendly integrated transport and communications market, the promotion of an efficient use of existing infrastructure, and the further realisation of the Pan-European transport network (see above) in partner countries. A further priority will be to improve safety levels in all modes of transport, in particular for maritime safety⁷.

The Baltic Assembly

The Baltic Assembly (BA) is an international organisation, which was established on 8 November 1991, in Tallinn with the aim of promoting cooperation between the parliaments of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania.

According to its Statutes, the Baltic Assembly is a consultative and coordinating body set up to discuss joint projects and issues of common interest. The Baltic Assembly is an organisation established for coordinating the Baltic countries’ cooperation on the parliamentary level, discussing issues and projects of mutual interest, addressing common problems, and expressing a common position concerning international, economic, political and cultural issues. Member states of the Baltic Assembly use trilateral cooperation as a force multiplier in international affairs.


In the given context it is worthwhile mentioning that the Baltic Assembly has forwarded the following recommendation on Rail Baltica to the European Commission in the year 2005:

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**RECOMMENDATION to the European Commission**

**Regarding the Rail Baltica Project**

The Baltic Assembly, considering the issue of implementation of the Rail Baltica project, taking into consideration the accession of the Baltic States to the European Union and the significance of the Rail Baltica project for regional integration into the European Economic Area, welcoming the decision of the European Commission to carry out feasibility study financed from the Cohesion Fund, urges the European Commission to carry out the mentioned study as early as possible, to agree on the railway route and the versions of technical solutions in all countries involved, the European Coordinator to promote the process in accordance with Article 17a of the Decision 884/2004/EC amending guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T).

Tallinn, 26 November 2005

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**VASAB 2010**

VASAB 2010 was founded in August 1992 at the Conference at Ministerial level in Karlskrona (Sweden), which decided to work out a document "Vision and Strategies for the Baltic Sea Region 2010" and set up a Group of Focal Points from all interested countries and regions to monitor the work on the Final Report. It has become an outline of spatial development perspective for the Baltic Sea Region and a useful basis for further strengthening and harmonisation of national and regional spatial planning policies, as well as a handy compendium of very practical guidelines for further common works on projects development.

In it's resolution the document also outlined an implementation programme, stressing the role of co-ordination between national and cross-baltic spatial planning, bilateral and multilateral partnerships in projects promotion, intensified exchange of experience, and transfer of know how and spatial research in areas of common interest promotion.

The Conference appointed a Committee on Spatial Development in the BSR (CSD/BSR) with a common interim Secretariat in Sweden to support the CSD in 1995. The CSD was given the mandate to co-ordinate the common actions. The Fourth Ministerial Conference convened in Stockholm - Saltsjobadan in October 1996 under German chairmanship. The Conference gave a very practical framework for all the Vision and Strategies implementation process in the document "From Vision to Action" and it’s "Stockholm Declaration on Sustainable Spatial Development Policy in the BSR". It also adopted "Common Recommendations for Spatial Planning of the Coastal Zone in the BSR".

The fifth Ministerial Conference in Wismar (Germany) in September 2001 summed up that part of implementation and set up new goals in VASAB 2010 PLUS Spatial Development Action Programme, calling the CSD/BSR to give more attention to co-operation in the field of spatial development policy at national level.

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8 Most information on VASAB 2010 and the related strategy and policy papers can be found on the website [www.vasab.org/](http://www.vasab.org/)
The outcome of the "VASAB 2010 Plus Spatial Development Action Programme" of 2001 is still acknowledged as a common platform to guide the co-operation on spatial planning and development for the coming years. As described in the “VASAB 2010 PLUS Report”, VASAB should concentrate its work since 2001 on six key themes:

1. Co-operation of urban regions on key issues of sustainable development
2. Strategic development zones important for trans-national integration within the BSR
3. Trans-national transport links important for cross-BSR and cross-Europe integration
4. Diversification and strengthening of rural areas
5. Development of trans-national green networks, incl. cultural landscapes
6. Integrated development of coastal zones and islands.

The Sixth Ministerial Conference (Gdansk, 19 September 2005) considered the three first themes as the most important ones requiring special attention and efforts in the years to come. In the context of this report the Key Themes 2 “Strategic development zones important for trans-national integration within the BSR” and 3 “Trans-national transport links important for cross-BSR and cross-Europe integration” is of particular relevance:

**Extracts from the VASAB 2010 Plus Spatial Development Action Programme and VASAB 2010 PLUS Report - Key themes 2 and 3**

**Key theme 2: Strategic development zones important for trans-national integration within the BSR**

The main objective addressed by this theme is to promote spatial cohesion. The concept of strategic development zones for trans-national integration extends the urban systems approach to regional development at a wider geographical scale. The concerted development of such regions (extending beyond national borders) is expected to reduce spatial disparities.

Strategic development zones are characterised by the superposition of some (or all) of the following characteristics:

- Closeness to borders;
- High trans-border disparities in economic and social indicators
- High development potentials to be activated by transnational cooperation;
- Relatively low cross-border exchange intensity (trade, business contacts, private travelling);
- Deficient infrastructure and regulations for border crossing.

They represent in general areas with significant economic growth potentials not adequately used.

They require instead a strong, trans-nationally concerted, involvement of national levels. The concept of strategic development zones arises from a VASAB tradition to engage in regional corridor projects. Transport corridors are seen as one of the instruments for regional development.

**Examples for strategic development zones for transnational integration**


**Key theme 3: Transnational transport links important for cross-BSR and cross-Europe integration**
The starting point for this proposed theme is the perceived insufficiency of long-distance transport links in parts of the BSR, particularly regarding Baltic States and coastal areas of Germany - Poland – Kaliningrad – Lithuania - Latvia - Estonia.

Most BSR countries have developed systems to decide on future transport infrastructure investments. Spatial aspects are considered only insofar as spatial structures are reflected in demand forecasts. No regional development impacts from infrastructure improvements are taken into consideration. The same is true for existing trans-national transport infrastructure development concepts (e.g. TINA) which concentrate on linking major urban centres together.

Therefore, infrastructure planning tends to perpetuate existing spatial disparities and insufficient use of regional development potentials.

Examples for transport links which may be promoted

Within the Via Baltica project, one of the projects initiated by VASAB, an initiative was taken to promote Via Baltica Rail. This is in line with action proposed here, putting it into a systematic context.

Based on those themes, all actors are invited to initiate common trans-national spatial planning and development actions and projects. This will also contribute to the implementation of Europe- and Baltic-Sea-wide initiatives and programmes for spatial development.

Based on the key themes, emphasis should be placed on projects in need of trans-national co-operation:

- Fostering cross-sectoral cooperation and pilot actions for all strategic development zones and axes which significantly support integration in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Evaluating and complementing activities on pan-Baltic intermodal transport systems and pan-European Transport Networks from spatial planning and development point of view, taking into account balanced regional structures and environmental impacts;

In 2003 the CSD has started the preparation of the Policy Document on “BSR spatial integration” covering both: co-operation (e.g. accessibility, urban networking, trans-national and cross-border co-operation) and flows (goods, information, capital, people).

The policy document also addresses an implementation side i.e. a BSR policy enhancing spatial integration (focusing on new EU instruments of territorial cohesion) and role of spatial planning in implementation of such policy. The document is a natural follow up of VASAB 2010 Plus Spatial Development Action Programme focusing on the implementation of its key theme 2 and 3 (see above).
Chapter 1 Spatial policies in the light of development

The BSR has become an effective market area with growing potential. This development has considerable spatial effects in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) and, consequently, for the integration of the BSR within the enlarged EU territory as well as with neighbouring states. This is reflected in the current discussions in the EU institutions and the member states about the need for the cross-sectoral integration of policies with a spatial impact, taking into account the principles of sustainable development.

A more coherent spatial approach is required in order to achieve synergy between different spatial impacts of sector policies in time for the introduction of the new Cohesion Policy in the Baltic Sea Region Socio-economic integration as a result of the single market should be supported by spatial planning and development policies which can help to solve the partly contradictory impacts of sector policies.

… Rail and maritime transport must still be promoted in order to respond to the challenge of becoming a real competitive alternative to road transport. …

Chapter 2 Achievements and future challenges

The development in the Baltic Sea Region emphasises the need to focus future work on networking among cities, environmentally friendly transport modes and trans-national development zones in order to connect potentials and thereby increase spatial integration of the BSR.

Chapter 2.2 Spatial accessibility

Access to and from central regions as well as from peripheral ones is at the heart of cohesion policy. Better integration of transport planning with spatial planning and regional policies is also necessary in order to implement the concept of a polycentric settlement structure in the BSR. Long distances, sparse population and harsh climate conditions in the North, and urban clustering -even congestion- in the South of the Region are examples of the mosaic-type spatial structure of the BSR. The Region has to develop its networks, both in transport as well as in information, taking into account the very different types of spatial and geographical conditions in a cost-efficient way.

The Nordic countries and Germany have for a long time been allocating national resources for internal and external accessibility. However, connections in both passenger and freight transport are unevenly distributed. Missing links and the poor condition of infrastructure in the eastern part of the Region severely hamper the spatial integration of the BSR.

Chapter 2.3 Trans-national Development Zones

In the BSR a concept has been further developed, which promotes the integration of the Region in larger territories, which cover parts of several countries and extend beyond the typical cross-border areas. This concept was implemented under the name of trans-national development zones, and its implementation has had a considerable impact on the geography of cooperation within the Region. It is characterised by the integration of all spatial development issues from city networking to accessibility in a larger sub-area of the BSR. The concept is process-oriented, based on political networking, and comprises the elaboration of spatial development perspectives, the definition of key development themes and the generation of concrete pilot projects.

Existing economic differences between the different countries could be considered as an important factor for the further extension of trans-national development zones, whereby both parties can gain mutual benefits from cooperation. In the long term, increased interaction is likely to even out the differences, which might in turn lead to the emergence of other forms of cooperation.

The trans-national development zones could be further developed as a tool for the elaboration of innovation strategies in a spatial context. Equally important is that trans-national co-operation, which uses the development zone concept, will contribute to a high quality environment in the BSR.

On 1 July 2007 Latvia has taken over the VASAB chairmanship. The Latvian Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government on the occasion of
commencing its tasks as chair underlines that the Latvian chairmanship is to be seen as an opportunity to attest Latvian experience in spatial planning and in ability to unite VASAB members in achieving common tasks, and to ensure the importance of spatial planning not only in Latvia, but also in the Baltic Sea Region. Minister recognizes importance of knowledge based economy, attraction of investments and growth of export potential for the Region and for Latvia, in particular. It could be successfully achieved by using spatial planning tools, promoting polycentric development and alarming on missing transport links, e.g. Rail Baltica.
3 Current status of Rail Baltica planning in the different Project Partner Countries

General remark:

All relevant information concerning Rail Baltica planning (as well as spatial planning and related regional development issues), which has been collected from the project partners in the course of the work on the project – either in the frame of the “questionnaire-exercise” or during the workshops in Kaunas and Siauliai (only the Lithuanian partners had agreed to host working group meetings in order to exchange relevant data and information for the analysis) – has been summarised. Other, more general sources of information, like the COWI-report etc., has been used by the experts as well.

It is obvious that the quality and substance of this chapter of the report strongly depends on availability of data and information provided by the project partners. By the time of finalisation of the report at the end of the project implementation period only very limited support in data collection and provision of information has been delivered.

Presently, the Baltic States make little use of rail transport for north-south bound international passenger and freight transport. The existing north-south network is of poor quality. The level of service and the speed is low and there are barriers for interoperability with the rest of the EU due to differences in standards, especially different gauges\(^9\).

Despite the fact that the European Commission included the Baltic Rail in the list of priority projects for funding, discussions are actually taking place only about allocating funds for the development of minor elements of railroad facilities between Poland and Lithuania. The existing railway line of Helsinki corridor Nr.1 is included in the TINA map (see section 1), but from the year 1999 there was no railway connection between Tallinn (Estonia) and Shestokai (Poland) any more. The failures of the rail were – and still are – low technical speed, non-optimal tracking, time consuming border crossing procedures, low quality passenger wagons and low quality services for the travellers.

There is a common understanding in the three Baltic countries about the need to re-establish railway connection on Helsinki corridor Nr.1. After signing a cooperation agreement between three Ministers of Transport of the Baltic States, in Latvia further action was taken by establishing an advisory board, that include not only officials from different governmental organisations but also representatives from the partner regions and NGOs. Also representatives from Lithuania and Estonia as well as from Germany and the VASAB secretariat confirmed that the project, which shall be labelled as “International co-operation project Rail Baltica”, is strongly supported as a priority based on national transport sector and spatial development concepts. Project’s idea corresponds not only to Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region but also to the new European transport policy – new White paper “European

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\(^9\) European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy/ COWI-Consortium: Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways - Main conclusions and recommendations, January 2007
Transport policy for 2010: Time to decide, where transport user's needs are placed at the heart of the strategy.

Representatives of the Rail Baltica partner countries regularly agree that there is the urgent need to build the railway line and to serve three main purposes:

1. promotion of this railway link, as it is not adequately included in existing investment programmes;
2. support this promotion by demonstrating the technical and economical feasibility of rehabilitation investments;
3. to indicate complementary regional development measures.

Several agreements have been made between the project countries over recent years. One of the early initiatives took place during 1992-1994 when the vision and strategy for the Baltic Sea Region was elaborated by the countries in the region. In its most explicit way this was reflected in the joint political document – Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010 where the idea of the Rail Baltica first appeared as one of the most important elements for spatial development in the Baltic Sea Region (see sections 1 and 2 of this report).

Later, after a number of activities in the 90'ies, the transport ministers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed a cooperation agreement committing to the Rail Baltica project in September 2001 in the Estonian city of Pärnu.

Most importantly and most recently, on 15 September 2003 the Rail Baltica Coordination Group (which consists of authorised officials from the relevant national authorities of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) agreed on the key aspects to be included when preparing feasibility studies in all the countries concerned and on a time plan for future actions.

Thus, although Rail Baltica can be considered an EU transport priority – as outlined in the previous sections – it is still waiting to become reality. The following chapters will show – as far this is possible – on the basis of the documents submitted by the project partners (and other information, where feasible) – the current status of planning Rail Baltica.

The start is made by presenting the Trans-European rail network outline plans as well as the existing rail border crossings – as essential parts of an international railway system – between the Rail Baltica partner countries in order to make visible to differences between Rail Baltica vision and reality.

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10 Dzintra UPMACE, and Andulis ZIDKOVS: Key note on 'Baltic rail', date unknown
11 COWI / European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy: Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways, Draft interim report, July 2006
Trans-European rail network outline plans and existing ferry lines

Source: European Communities (1996); European Commission (1998); TINA Secretariat (1999), IRPUD (2000). Note: This map does not include all planned rail investments, but only those within the TEN/ TINA and Helsinki Corridors
Germany – Lithuania

Sassnitz Fahrhafen DB - Klaipeda LG: Although there is no land border between Germany and Lithuania the two countries are connected by a 1520mm-gauge train ferry. This was established by the USSR so that military traffic could be operated to and from the former DDR without needing to pass through Poland (though much was routed that way). The ferry has been retained in order to avoid border delays and paperwork caused by transit through Poland. Bogies are changed at Sassnitz, where DB has a small number of 1520mm-gauge locomotives for shunting wagons on and off the ferries.

Germany – Poland

(Pasewalk -) Grambow DB - Szczecin PKP: [D] DB works to Szczecin Główny.

(Angermünde -) Tantow DB - Szczecin PKP: [D] DB works to Szczecin Główny.

(Wriezen -) Neurüdnitz DB - Siekierki PKP (- Godków): Line closed.

Küstrin-Kietz DB - Kostrzyń PKP: [D] DB works to Kostrzyń. Operation of the Berlin – Kostrzyń passenger service was contracted to NEB from the 2006/2007 timetable.

(Frankfurt (Oder) -) Frankfurt Oderbrücke DB - Kunowice PKP (- Rzepin): [E*] DB has the responsibility for the cross-border EuroCity services, and they are currently hauled to Rzepin by hired ČD dual-system electric locomotives or DB Diesel locomotives. Local passenger trains from Poland are hauled by diesel locomotives as PKP do not have any dual voltage electric locomotives. Other passenger trains are hauled by PKP diesel locomotives between Frankfurt (Oder) and Rzepin. PKP works freight to and from Frankfurt Oderbrücke where DB and PKP electric locomotives are changed.

Guben DB - Gubin PKP (- Zielona Góra): [ED] Passenger services were withdrawn on 6 October 2002. Freight traffic remains.

Guben DB - Gubinek PKP: Line closed.

Forst (Lausitz) DB - Zasieki PKP (- Tuplice): [D] PKP works all services to Forst. From an unknown date in 2005, the pair of IC passenger services have been worked onwards to/from Cottbus by one of two PKP SU46 diesel locomotives fitted with the required DB equipment.

(Weisswasser -) Bad Muskau DB - Leknica PKP (- Tuplice): Line closed.

Horka DB - Wegliniec PKP: [D] Freight only at present, but it is believed that when the proposed electrification works are completed, a passenger service could be introduced.

Görlitz DB - Zgorzelec PKP (- Wroclaw): [D] Through trains to and from Wroclaw are worked by PKP to Görlitz; supplemented from 2005 by DB diesel multiple units working a very limited service to Zgorzelec.

(Görlitz -) Hagenwerder DB - Krzewina Zgorzelecka PKP (- Zittau): [D] carries DB Corridor Trains.

(Zittau -) Hirschfelde DB - Krzewina Zgorzelecka PKP (- Görlitz): [D] carries DB Corridor Trains.
Lithuania – Poland

(Šeštokai-) Mockava LG - Trakiszki PKP (- Suwałki): [D] PKP works to Šeštokai on standard gauge tracks, which are interlaced with Broad gauge [1520mm] from Mockava. There are gauge changers at both Mockava and Šeštokai but these are only used by freight as the alternate nights pair of overnight through passenger trains were withdrawn after 27/28 May 2005 [apparently due to the bad condition of the sleeping cars], with a replacement road service. The daytime pair between Warszawa, Suwalki and Šeštokai (with connections from/to Vilnius) were reduced to summer only in 2005, but just before this was due to end, it was rerieved to run FSSuO, and from the 2006 timetable is reinstated to daily.

Latvia – Lithuania

All rail routes between this pair of countries are 1520mm gauge.

(Daugavpils-) Kurcums LDZ - Turmantas LG (- Šventonieki - Vilnius): [E] This route carries one train pair between St Peterburg and Vilnius on alternate days.

(Daugavpils-) Egļaine LDZ - Šapelnieki LG (- Pāvilnē): [D] No passenger service.

(Riga - Jelgava -) Meitene LDZ - Šarkiai LG (- Šiauliai - Vilnius): [D] The overnight Riga - Vilnius overnight service ceased from 16 January 2004, so there is no winter service (at least) over this route.


(Priekule-) Vainode LDZ - Lušė LG (- Mažeikiai): [D] Line closed.

(Priekule-) Kaleti LDZ - Skuodas LG (- Klaipėda): [D] No passenger service.

Estonia – Latvia

All rail routes between this pair of countries are 1520mm gauge.

(Tallinn - Tartu -) Valga ER - Valka/Lugaži LDŽ (- Riga): [D] No cross-border passenger services.

(Tallinn - Pärnu -) Mosaküla ER - Ipiki LDŽ (- Riga): [D] No passenger services.

Source: www.railnet.de

The message which can be taken from the map and from the list of border crossing is that despite the elaborated plans for international railway development and investment in the BSR and in particular within the Rail Baltica corridor the current status of cross-border rail transport is desolate.

The current passenger transport flows have the following characteristics:

- Particularly in Latvia and Estonia, the market share of the rail mode is at a remarkably low level
- International rail passenger transport flows along the Rail Baltica corridor are negligible and road transport is predominant
- The only section of Rail Baltica with a substantial passenger rail flow is the line between Warsaw and Białystok (which is no international section of the Rail Baltic![])
The Rail Baltica project has been discussed for many years in all project countries. However, as can be taken from the outlined information in the previous sections as well as from the introductory remarks of this chapter, very little information is available about the options discussed. In fact, it is only the line from Kaunas to the Lithuanian/Polish border, which has been analysed in detail.

Map 1 (attached to this report) shows the alternative alignments of Rail Baltica as discussed during the WP1 and WP3 expert workshops, in particular on the workshop in Siauliai, Lithuania in January 2007.

The work on the study “Research of methodology for evaluation of route alternatives of Rail Baltica railway assessing spatial planning, regional development and social and economic aspects”, which is aiming at developing a methodology that assesses spatial planning, regional development and social and economic aspects to be used for evaluation of various rail-route alternatives of Rail Baltica railway, has only started at the end of August 2007.

Since the detailed discussion of and the process of (trying to) reach an agreement among the project partners on a preferred alignment is subject to the work under WP 2 the map has been regarded as a reference document only – like the summarised outline of the alternative alignments of Rail Baltica as developed in the framework of the pre-feasibility study (see the following graph).
Source: COWI interim report, June 2006
It has been foreseen in the original design of the Rail Baltica Interreg-project that the project partners provide the experts with first hand information (and translated versions of their national and regional planning documents) either by filling in the questionnaires specifically designed for this purpose, or in the frame of workshops offered to be held within the partner countries. However, there was very little response of the partners in doing so. Therefore, in addition to the limited information and data provided by the project partners on the current status of Rail Baltica planning in the different project partner countries, other, public sources of information had to be used – very often providing relatively outdated, incomplete and/or “second-hand” data. Also the access to relevant data differed from country to country – it has to be taken into account that another way of collecting data apart from the questionnaire- and workshop-approaches has not been agreed by the project partners as there were no resources available in terms of time and budget. Also translation cost could not be covered.

Having said the above it is important to hint to the fact that the national planning and policy context of the Rail Baltica project partner countries is described in section 3 of the “COWI-Report” – the draft interim report in the frame of the elaboration of the study “Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways - Main conclusions and recommendations” prepared by the COWI- Consortium for the Directorate-General Regional Policy of the European Commission, submitted in January 2007. The study outlines in detail both the issues which are relevant for all project countries (section 3.1) as well as the country-specific issues (sections 3.2 - 3.5). For the reasons outlined in the previous section, in the frame of this report a general reference is made to the study of the COWI-consortium providing an overview of the national planning and policy context within which the implementation of Rail Baltica will take place. The most relevant facts in the given context are summarized where deemed necessary. Moreover, the material submitted by the project partners (either by filling in the questionnaire or sending planning documents in English), the results of the expert discussions, partner meetings and workshops have been analysed and integrated into the following sections. In addition, as described above, other public and accessible sources of information were used.

Relevant internet-link: http://vasab.leontief.net/introduction.htm

The Committee on Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea region (CSD/BSR) is presenting on the indicated web site a Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems in the Baltic Sea region, offering information about spatial planning systems in 11 Baltic Sea countries, providing on-line access to the national planning policy documents, laws and regulations.
3.1 Germany

Germany is covered in the context of the various case studies of WP 1 and WP 3 and will not be subject of consideration in the framework of this report.

Three case studies have been assigned to planning offices by the German partners:

1. “Studies of the border-zone and cross-border infrastructure planning in the area of the German-Polish border in the sphere of the traffic/transport corridor Rail Baltica”, prepared by Ernst Basler & Partner, Potsdam (Germany)

2. “Cross-border goods traffic – Results, potentials and problems in the Frankfurt/ Oder (Germany) and Slubice (Poland) region”, prepared by ipg mbH, Potsdam (Germany)

3. “Freight Villages in Brandenburg and Berlin – Traffic and logistical starting point of the railway connection to the Baltic States, potentials and requirements”, prepared by ipg mbH, Potsdam (Germany)

Two case studies have been prepared in the context of WP 1 and should be regarded as part of this report on WP 1, since this report constitutes the project’s “umbrella” for these studies. Their specific function in this context is outlined in section 4.

1. Touristische Mobilitätsbroschüre "Mit der Bahn entlang der Rail Baltica - Zentral-, Ostpolen und Litauen ohne PKW entdecken" – Touristic Mobility Guide „With trains along the Rail Baltica routes – Discovering Central and Eastern Poland and Lithuania without car”

2. Untersuchung über kurzfristige Verbesserungsmöglichkeiten im Eisenbahnpersonenverkehr entlang des Rail Baltica-Korridors durch organisatorische, kommunikative und tarifliche Maßnahmen (Städtetarif im deutsch-polnischen Grenzraum) - Expert's assessment for short-term improvement in the rail (long-distance) passenger traffic in the Rail Baltica passage through the implementation of organisational, communicative and tariff measures (Joint tariff in the German-Polish border area).
These case studies as well as those elaborated under WP 3 are available at the offices of the responsible German project partners and of the Lead Partner:

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3.2 Poland

Existing rail infrastructure

The Polish railways network presently consists of around 19,599 km of track, of which the vast majority is electrified using a 3kV DC overhead line system.

Although the network is generally electrified and well maintained the vast majority of the track was laid by the Communist authorities from the year 1946 onwards or was in a significant number of cases laid before the second world war by an assortment of different rail companies, including, among many the Deutsche Reichsbahn and the Russian Imperial State Railways. The average age of Poland's railway network is now so high that many sections of track are limited to speeds of 100km/h or less and although 'high-speed lines' do exist they rarely exceed an average speed limit of 160km/h; the exception to this rule being the Central Rail line which runs from Warsaw to Katowice and allows speeds of up to around 220km/h, soon to be upgraded to 260km/h.

The Polish government in the past presented plans to build a dedicated high speed line based upon the French TGV model and possibly even to use French built TGV style trains by 2014 which beginning in Warsaw will follow a route taking it on to Poznan via Lodz with a fork allowing trains to divert south-westerly to Wroclaw. This line will (like the French TGV lines) allow speeds of up to 320km/h, although it remains to be seen as to whether all of this will become a reality.

The railway network is comparable to EU on a quantity basis and a high percentage of the transport goods is transported by rail (33.1% in 2001). Intensive modernisation works on main transit routes are however needed. Polish railway infrastructure is particularly degraded in the field of regional and local traffic service, however in this field, the market demand is low. Considering this, the main problem is the fact that railways are not adapted to cope with the large number of people travelling between larger agglomerations.

The prioritised measures to be supported by the EU are modernisation of the TINA railway network and modernisation of passenger lines between and within agglomerations.

The key plans, which are setting the main objectives of transport development in Poland, all state that the railway lines located within the Pan-European Transport Corridors should be modernised by 2013. These lines are enumerated and the list which also includes the Polish part of Rail Baltica (Corridor I).

Possible alignments

The official alignment of the Polish part of Rail Baltica is: Warsaw Wschodnia – Białystok – Sokółka – Suwałki – Trakiszki – Polish/Lithuanian border.

12 Source: wikipedia


3.3 Lithuania

Existing rail infrastructure

The Lithuanian railway network is 1904.7 km long, of which 565.7 km is equipped with a double track. The Lithuanian railway infrastructure is in need of modernisation and development. The existing density of the network of railways allows transportation of double the amount of cargo per year than the current volume. However, such flows in cargo are not achieved due to the unsatisfactory condition of the railway infrastructure and the outdated fleet of rolling-stock.

Rail transport in Lithuania is operated by state own company Lithuanian Railways (Lithuanian: Lietuvos Geležinkeliai). Currently the main railroad network in Lithuania is broad gauge (1520 mm). There are also few standard gauge lines and 158.8 km of 750 mm narrow gauge railway lines remaining, although only 68.4 km of them (serving five stations) are regularly used, employing 12 locomotives. They are included in the Registry of Immovable Cultural Heritage Sites of Lithuania.

The first railroad in Lithuania was built in 1861. It was a part of Saint-Petersburg-Warsaw railroad, and the line lasted from Kaunas to Virbalis.

The Lithuanian Government and the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania as well as the JSC “Lietuvos Geležinkeliai” express strong interests in the construction of Rail Baltica. All initiatives regarding the Rail Baltica planning and construction were initiated by Lithuanian side.

The idea of modernisation of the north-south rail connection in Lithuania began in the early nineties and the development plans for Rail Baltica are today an integrated part of the transport development plans in Lithuania. In principle, the whole alignment of Rail Baltica is specified in the “Master plan of the Territory of Lithuania” including the section north of Kaunas.

However, in the experts’ discussions in the frame of this Interreg-project the Lithuanian project partners stressed their point of view, that there are clear priorities for the development of Rail Baltica:

1. part south of Kaunas (see below)
2. connection with the West - East railway lines from Klaipeda to Vilnius and further East

These priorities are reflected in the fact that the possible alignments for Rail Baltica in Lithuania are not so well defined north of Kaunas as they are south of Kaunas.

In the “Master plan of the Territory of Lithuania” the alignment from Kaunas to the Latvian border runs along the existing railway line. The alignment, width and other parameters of the Rail Baltica line from the Latvian border to Kaunas (north) is not identified yet. In fact, no detailed studies of possible alignments north of Kaunas exist, so virtually no details are available. The only existing document regarding a border crossing is an agreement between the Lithuanian and the Latvian Ministries.

13 Source: wikipedia
of Transport, where an existing point (North of Joniskis) is foreseen as the Rail Baltica border crossing point.

Despite this, three other options are also currently discussed. Thus, the four possible alignments are:

1. I Variant: Via Radviliski/western by-pass of Kaunas (yellow line)
2. II Variant: Via Radviliski/eastern by-pass of Kaunas (blue line/yellow line to the Latvian/Lithuanian border)
3. III Variant: Via Panevezys (green line).
4. The existing line in Corridor I (Latvian border - Joniskis - Siauliai – Radviliskis Guziunai - Kaunas): Both upgrading of the existing line and the construction of the European gauge standard line besides the existing line are discussed\textsuperscript{14}.

The four alignment options are outlined in the figure below, but they are also reflected in map 1, which has been jointly elaborated on the project workshop in Siauliai.

\textsuperscript{14} COWI / European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy: Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways, Draft interim report, July 2006
Since the discussion of the possible alignment options is subject to the work within WP 2 of this Interreg-project the outline here is just of the purpose of general information.

However, as one of the results of the project workshop in Siauliai it should be stated in this context that the project partners favoured the variants I and/or II. The recommendation to foresee the establishment of one GVZ (logistics centre) between Siauliai and Radviliskis has been formulated by the partners on this occasion.

Contrary to the situation regarding possible alignments north of Kaunas, the alignment of Rail Baltica from Kaunas (south) to the Polish border is fully analyzed and the alignment is in principle agreed politically.

Considering the resolution of Lithuanian Government “Concerning European standard railway Rail Baltica route design and implementation works’ coordination” (approved in 2005), the following project implementation terms are defined for the railway section from the Lithuanian - Polish border via Marijampole to Kaunas until the year 2010. The "Special Plan of Alignment of European Standard Gauge Railway Polish-Lithuanian Border – Marijampolė – Kaunas" describes a solution based on the following technical parameters:

- Gauge width: 1435 mm
- Mixed (goods and passengers) transportation
- Designed speed: 160 km/h
- Vertical and horizontal alignment assure a speed of ≥200 km/h\(^{15}\)

In Lithuania the construction of Rail Baltica is a strategic national project and is included into the **Strategy on use of EU-Structural Funds for 2007-2013 and its Operational Programmes**.

In total, for the 2007-2013 programming period 67% of the EU financial support to the Lithuanian transport sector has been assigned to Rail Baltica.

However, for the development of railway infrastructure in **2004-2006**, 8 projects for ERDF assistance have been approved. By implementation of the projects, attempts are made to ensure regular and safe railway traffic, increase train speed. Railway passenger terminals are being reconstructed in Vilnius and Kaunas, in order to improve passenger carriage and servicing quality. Introduction of the system for maintenance and control of the wheel-sets is foreseen to increase the safety of railway transport and reduce air pollution. Railway road accessibility is undergoing reconstruction in the Klaipėda Port as well.

The Ministry of Transport of Lithuania has decided to speed up and increase its efforts on the implementation of Rail Baltica. It has been confirmed – again – that

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\(^{15}\) COWI / European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy: Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways, Draft interim report, July 2006
the main task is the section from the Polish border to Kaunas. 600 mio LTL have been reserved for this task in the period 2007 – 2013.

A special programme has been opened within the state budget for Rail Baltica implementation where state and TEN-T funds are concentrated. 2,6 mio EUR have been allocated for the preparation of the design for the Polish border- Marijampole section cross-border project.

Funds have also been assigned to the development of a logistic centre near Marijampole.

This concept for the Rail Baltica cross-border section has been defined and has been presented to the European Commission (EC). According to information provided by the Lithuanian Ministry of Transport, Poland is presently preparing its application for the same cross-border section. If the application is successful the design works for the 80 to 100 km long section can be started. The first stage would be the Border-Marijampole section, followed by the Marijampole- Kaunas section.

Meetings were held between Lithuanian and Polish delegates in late 2006 and it has been agreed that there will be a strategic planning group established. In a similar meeting in January 2007 it was agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministers of Transport of the two countries will be signed – which has been done in March 2007.

**2007.01.25**

**Rail Baltica: Lithuania - Poland Border Crossing Point to Be Determined in February**

Joint Lithuanian - Polish Meeting of the group of experts of the "Rail Baltica" project held in Warsaw on 22, 2007.

Joint Lithuanian - Polish Meeting of the group of experts of the "Rail Baltica" project was held in Warsaw on 22nd of January, 2007. The Polish colleagues have been informed, that Lithuanian Government has made a decision to start construction of the European railway line from the border station of Lithuania to Marijampolė (about 40 km). The investments for the line mentioned to be allocated from the state budget. The Lithuanian delegation also informed Polish colleagues, that "Rail Baltica" project center has been established in our company.

Polish experts stated, that the study carried out by consulting company COWI is not sufficient for the project to be implemented. It would be necessary to carry out a supplementary study on economic feasibility of the project. The project line Warsaw - Białystok – Sokolka is to be financed from the European Union Cohesion Fund and will be completed this year.

The ministers of Transport and Communication of the Republics of Lithuania and Poland have been proposed to sign the Protocol of Border Crossing Point in February.

**Source:** Lietuvos Geležinkeliai website

Concerning the section from Kaunas to the Latvian border, a design study on modernization of this section to 160 km/h speed standard needs to be carried out.

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16 Mr Albertas Aruna, Ministry of Transport, Transport Investment Directorate, Lithuania; Rail Baltica INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION GROUP MEETING, Riga, 20th April 2007
and is envisaged by the responsible partners. A cross-border project concept could be employed here\textsuperscript{17}.

\textsuperscript{17} Mr Albertas Aruna, Ministry of Transport, Transport Investment Directorate, Lithuania; Rail Baltica INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION GROUP MEETING, Riga, 20th April 2007 (Minutes)
In 2002 the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania approved the General Spatial Plan of Lithuania – the main document for spatial planning (see outline in annex). Its solutions must be followed preparing other documents of spatial planning on national, regional and district level. According to the approved General Spatial Plan of the Republic of Lithuania railway transport infrastructure has also to be developed. “Plan 7” is the planning document of the development of the Technical Infrastructure, where the development of the railway infrastructure is regulated very precisely and clearly. Concerning Rail Baltica development the construction of the international track Warszawa–Kaunas–Riga–Tallinn next to the currently existing railway line is explicitly foreseen.

On 9 December, 2003 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania by the resolution No. 1568 approved the plan of the implementation measures of the General Spatial Plan of Lithuania and assigned the monitoring of its implementation to the Ministry of Environment. According to the Clause 64 of the approved plan (as presented below) for the planning and construction works in the context of the international railway track “Rail Baltica” concrete actions are identified.

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18 The General Spatial Plan of the Republic of Lithuania may be found in the website [http://gis.am.lt](http://gis.am.lt)
Rail Baltica, WP 1 – “Regional development perspectives”

APPROVED by the resolution of 9 December, 2003 No. 1568 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

EXTRACT FROM THE PLAN OF THE IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES OF THE GENERAL SPATIAL PLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Measure</th>
<th>Short description of the measure and expected result</th>
<th>Responsible actors</th>
<th>Term of implementation</th>
<th>Use of the funds of the European Union</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical Infrastructure</td>
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<td>Transport</td>
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<td>Railway transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>64. To perform the works in I Trans-European transport corridor Warszawa–Kaunas–Riga–Tallinn</td>
<td>the infrastructure of main railways to the direction north-south will be modernized (track &quot;Rail Baltica&quot; of I transport corridor): the potential will be increased and the missing link of the European standard from the state border Lithuania – Poland to the intersection of I and IX transport corridors (meeting the standards of AGC and AGTC). In order to achieve these aims the following projects will be implemented: the telecommunication equipments in the sections state border with Poland–Seštokai–Kazlų Rūda, Palemonas–Gaižūnai, Šiauliai–Joniškis–state border with Latvia will be modernized. The railway for trains going at the speed of 100 kilometres per hour in the section state border with Poland–Seštokai–Kazlų Rūda will be rebuilt. Signal and energy supply equipments in the sections Palemonas–Gaižūnai, Šiauliai–Joniškis–state border with Latvia will be modernized. Two level crossings in the sections Palemonas–Gaižūnai, Šiauliai–Joniškis–state border with Latvia will be built. It will be necessary to take land for the needs of the society.</td>
<td>The Ministry of Communication, Joint Stock Company „Lietuvos geležinkeliai“ (Lithuanian Railways)</td>
<td>year 2005</td>
<td>year 2008</td>
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<td>Name of the Measure</td>
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<td>the railway in the sections Palemonas–Gaižūnai, Siauliai–Joniškis– state border with Latvia will be reconstructed: adjusted for trains going at the speed of 160 kilometres per hour. It will be necessary to take land for the needs of the society.</td>
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<td>the railway in the section of the European track state border with Poland–Šeštokai–Kaunas will be built. It will be necessary to take land for the needs of the society.</td>
<td>The Ministry of Communication, the Directorate of Transport Investments</td>
<td>year 2010</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Planning process. The national level is incorporated into the region level under the horizontal and vertical regional planning processes. Horizontal and vertical trends are two main ways for implementation of regional policy in Lithuania. The first means regional policy being a part of the state public policy coming through joint social and economical plans and strategies (e.g. General Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania; Long-term Economic Development Strategy of Lithuania until 2015 and etc). In such a case the planning process is implemented through various Lithuanian branch-ministries.

The vertical way is based on the laws and special programs directly related with the regional policy forming (e.g. Law on Regional Development).

According to the current legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania the regional (county governor) administrations are not the proprietors of the railway lines so all planning documents related to the selection of the Rail Baltica track, the changing of already foreseen track or taking other decisions is the issue of national level. Regional administrations are only the participants of the planning process preparing planning provisions for the documents of spatial planning on the national level, participating in the procedures of public discussion and coordination of prepared document. Regional administrations also perform the functions assigned by the State on the land taking for the needs of the society.

The Lithuanian regions affected by the Rail Baltica development, planning and implementation and the Counties Marijampole, Kaunas, Siauliai and Panevėžys. They are shortly presented in the following chapters.

The full set of information delivered by the four County administrations can be received from the Lead Partner as well as the German project partners as listed on page 28.

Moreover, an overview of the planning context in Lithuania – the legal basis and the relevant authorities – for planning at county level/ the regional is provided in the annex.

Apart from including the Rail Baltica connection in their national and regional plans the responsible authorities in Lithuania have already cared for the preparation of relevant studies for the southern section:

- “Pre-feasibility Study for EGR Link from the Polish border to Kaunas”, GOPA-Consultants (2000).
- “European Gauge Railway Line from the Polish-Lithuanian Border to Kaunas and the Multimodal Centre” (2003).
In October 2000, HPC-Consulting GMBH (Germany) prepared a study “Intelligent Transport Systems and Inter-Operability Development Concept for the Kaunas Logistic Node”. The new intermodal terminal place was proposed in Mauručiai, 20 km South-West from Kaunas. In December, 2003 Ardanuy (Spain) completed the study “European Gauge Railway Line from Polish-Lithuanian Border to Kaunas and Multimodal Centre”. The technical solutions including multimodal centre were proposed 19.

3.3.1.1 Marijampolė County

Marijampolė County is located in the southwest of Lithuania offering good possibilities for business and tourism development due to its geographical and strategically convenient situation.

The area of the County covers 4463 square km. Marijampolė County consists of five municipalities with the County’s administrative centre being Marijampolė. The city has a population of 48 thousand inhabitants, which makes it the seventh biggest city in Lithuania.

It borders with Kaliningrad Region (Russian Federation) and Poland. Marijampolė County has four border crossing points. Three of them are the road border crossing points, one of them is a railway border crossing point: Kybartai-Nesterov (on Lithuania-Russian Federation border).

Marijampolė County is crossed by branch-lines of two TEN corridors:

- Railway line that belongs to I North-South Transit Corridor Tallinn-Riga-Kaunas-Varsaw;
- Railway line that belongs to East-West direction: IX D corridor (Kaunas-Kaliningrad).

County General Plan

The decision to start the preparation of the County General Plan has been made on the 7th of May 2003 by Marijampolė County Governor. The General Plan will be finalized in 2007.

The Legal basis is – as presented in detail in the annex 5.2 to this report – the Lithuanian Law on Planning of Territories, the General Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on the County Governing as well as the Law on Regional Development. Moreover, the Resolution of Government of the Republic of Lithuania “Concerning the Measures for Implementation of General Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania” needs to be included in this list, too.

The main aim of the County General Plan is to ensure a sustainable development of the County, i.e. to create conditions for public and economic development and to form territory protection basics.

19 Information taken from the Draft interim report of the pre-feasibility study on Rail Baltica railway; COWI / European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy; July 2006
The following objectives are defined for the implementation of this aim:

- To implement and detail the solution of the General Plan of the Territory of the Republic of Lithuania in the County considering the main national development aims, principles and its implementation priorities, described in the Lithuanian General Plan;
- To prepare county’s management and sustainable development framework and principal regulations by coordinating state, regional and municipal interests and evaluating the administrative functions on the county level.

The main aim of the County General Plan is realized under following strategic development trends:

- Improvement of life quality of the county population by developing social-cultural and technical infrastructure;
- Stimulation of economic growth by specializing economic activities according to the territorial potential by taking into account functional conversion and ecological technologies;
- Encouragement of environment quality through the environment protection and landscape preservation and its identity.

Regional Development Plan (RDP)
The Marijampole Regional Development Plan for 2003-2007 has been prepared on the basis of the following legal documents, national programmes and guidelines:

- The Law on Regional Development:
- The Single Programming Document for 2004-2006;
- The Methodology for preparation and renewal of regional development plans.

The RDP thus is a prerequisite for the implementation of the national EU-Structural Funds measures at regional level in Lithuania.

The Plan has been approved by Regional Development Council on the 1st of October 2003. The report on implementation of the Regional Development Plan for 2003-2007 has been prepared and approved by Regional Development Council in December 2005.

Following the requirements of national regional policy and taking into account the Strategy on Regional policy of Lithuania until 2013, the Law on Regional Development and the Methodology for preparation and renewal of regional development plans, a renewed Marijampolė Regional Development Plan for 2006-2013 was prepared by a regional working group in consultation with social – economic partners.

The Regional Development Plan has been prepared in order:

- to foresee main social – economic development directions of the county;
- to define development priorities, aims, and objectives, also their implementation measures;
- to reduce regional social – economic disparities;
- to take advantage of the EU SF financial support.
The plan will have a legal impact on the following activities:
- It will be the main document for the implementation of the regional policy at a regional level;
- It will create the conditions for setting the problematic territories and development of the whole territory;
- It will serve for foreign investors allocating the investments in the county.

All the regional municipalities while preparing/renewing their strategic development plans have to include measures identified in Marijampolė Regional Development Plan. All the applicants submitting projects for EU SF support have to prove their compliance with Regional Development Plan.

**Aims** of the Marijampolė Regional Development Plan for 2006-2013:
- To improve competitiveness in industry and business;
- To create a favourable environment for the development of business, industry and investments;
- To develop and modernize transport infrastructure;
- To create modern regional waste management system;
- To ensure that everyone could get a qualitative, professional education and create conditions for life-long learning;
- To improve medical services and accessibility of social services;
- To improve competitiveness of agriculture;
- To retain and modernize rural technical engineering and public infrastructure;
- To improve tourism infrastructure and services.

**Objectives** (only those objectives, which are connected with Rail Baltica are mentioned) of Marijampolė Regional Development Plan for 2006-2013:
- To create infrastructure of the international and national logistic centre.
- To create and develop industrial zones and parks with modern infrastructure.
- To develop transport infrastructure.
- To increase regional attractiveness for investments.

The following projects which have or possibly will have connection with Rail Baltica are being implemented in Marijampolė County:
- Establishment of Marijampolė industrial zone. The project on development of Marijampole industrial zone will supplement the infrastructure of Rail Baltica.
- Encouragement of industrial zones and green field investments in Euroregion Nemunas (cross – border project);
Development of road infrastructure in Lithuania-Poland border area (cross – border project).

One more important project, named “Construction of Baraginė logistic centre” which has a direct connection to Rail Baltica is under discussion between ministries, regional and local authorities, entrepreneurs. The idea of the project is based on the Rail Baltica Special plan, approved by the Lithuanian Government. According to the above mentioned Rail Baltica Special plan the European railway route will pass Marijampole town. The construction of a passenger station and a loading station at Baragine village is planned outside the town. Total area of these infrastructure objects, together with the industrial zone might reach 200 hectares. The main activities of logistic centre would be:
- Overload from one type of transport to another;
- Load storage;
- Custom operations;
- Load distribution in smaller pieces and delivery to final receiver with the help of modern information technologies.

Activities in the field of cross-border cooperation (CBC)
Marijampole County has signed agreements on cooperation with the neighbouring regions, i.e. Podlaskie voivodship (Poland) and Kaliningrad region (Russian Federation). Cooperation with Podlaskie voivodship mainly develops in the following directions:
- Cooperation in the field of extreme situations and crisis management (information and experience exchange on transit of dangerous loads through the Lithuanian-Polish border, preparation of analysis on predictive extreme situations, trainings);
- Cooperation in environment protection (common analysis of the water quality of frontier rivers and lakes);
- Cooperation in the field of business (organization of international exhibitions, meetings with entrepreneurs, common publications on the state of the environment in the border regions);
- Cooperation in preparation and implementation of cross-border projects;
- Cooperation of fire and rescue services (prevention of serious accidents that might cause danger to health, property and environment, preparation for effective rescue operations; reaction to emergency situations; preparation for the reconstruction of buildings, areas, economic and social structures destroyed by disasters or accidents);

Infrastructure projects within INTEREG III A Lithuania, Poland and Kaliningrad Region of Russian Federation neighbourhood programme:

Investment promotion of industrial areas and “green fields“ in the Euroregion Nemunas (Duration: March 2006 – December 2007)
- To develop cooperation between countries in order to stimulate investments;
- To improve business environment;
- To create conditions for business expansion, establishment of new enterprises and new working places;
- To reduce regional disparities;
- To form an attractive environment for investments.
Development of road infrastructure in the Lithuanian and Polish border area
(March 2006 – December 2007)

- To prepare technical documentation on rebuilding/reconstruction of the border roads in the territory of Lithuanian side;
- To rebuild/reconstruct some road parts in the Lithuanian territory up to the border with Poland, according to the prepared technical documentation (the result – 12 parts of the roads in the Lithuanian-Polish border area, on the Lithuanian side have been rebuilt/reconstructed);

Marijampole County Governor’s administration chairs a Border cooperation working group of the Lithuanian-Polish intergovernmental cross-border co-operation commission, coordinates bilateral cooperation with partner regions from Germany, Poland, Denmark and Russian Federation, and participates in various cross-border projects.

In 2003 Marijampole Regional Development Council approved the resolution “Rail Baltica development perspectives”, which declares:

- The creation of Rail Baltica infrastructure will stimulate business development in the region, attract direct foreign investments and create additional jobs;
- The construction of Rail Baltica must follow the Law on Regional Development and serve for regional development;
- Representatives of Marijampole region and other regions must be involved into the discussion process on Rail Baltica;
- The conception and vision of the international railway development has to be considered in the Regional Development Councils, which have to submit their proposals to the responsible institutions.

Rail Baltica will have a significant importance for the region. The arrival of a high-speed train in Marijampole, a medium size town is seen as an opportunity of economic and social development. The town will suddenly become more attractive and easily accessible and connected to other cities. Such a new situation has been already experienced in other European countries during the last 30 years. Marijampole will have an opportunity to develop its own philosophy on how to combine this new train service and its specific urban needs. New Marijampole passenger station will be located approximately at km. 40 according to the Rail Baltica Special plan. The passenger station might become a transit station for the passengers travelling by a bus and possibly by plains also. As Marijampole is at a crossing of very important European and national highways and railways it is reasonable to construct a freight loading station, which could serve for delivering of goods by trucks in the region or freighting (by trucks or railway) them to Kaliningrad region, Poland or Belarus.

Implementation of Rail Baltica project will support the following regional development goals:

- To improve competitiveness in industry and business;
- To create a favourable environment for the development of business, industry and investments;
• To develop and modernize transport infrastructure;
• To improve tourism infrastructure and services.

Moreover, the project will support the creation of the conditions for the development of multimodal transportation, growth of transit flows, will integrate Lithuania and Marijampole county into the European railway network. It will contribute to the reduction of unemployment, development of new businesses, growth of tourist flows and improvement of social-economic cohesion.

Some activities related with Rail Baltica take place, i.e. implementation of the project “Establishment of Marijampole industrial zone” and discussions on the preparation of the detail plan for construction of Baragine freight loading station.

Marijampole Regional Development Plan covers regional measures, which are closely related with this national project (e.g. construction of a freight loading station, approach roads, viaducts, development of an industrial zone etc).

Implementation of the Rail Baltica project could be a driving force for the regional economic development. The positive impact of Rail Baltica for the Region is mentioned in the Regional Development Plan. The European standard railway line will integrate region into European transport network. It will create possibilities for the development of new business, especially services, increase employment and create additional jobs.
3.3.1.2 Kaunas County

Kaunas Region is the central Region in the country. It is the geographical, educational, as well as industrial and transport centre of Lithuania.

The Region comprises the city of Kaunas, Birstonas, and the districts of Kaunas, Kaisiadorys, Prienai, Raseiniai, Kedainiai and Jonava Districts. The Region covers the area of 8.089 km², and its population numbers in 2005 year is 685766 (19.9 % of Lithuania population). The Region borders on Vilnius, Utena, Panevezys, Siauliai, Taurage, Marijampole and Alytus Regions. The Kaunas County is situated in the intensive economical zone. It together with Vilnius County makes Vilnius and Kaunas two-city region, which is named as metropolitan centre of European importance, expanding the competitiveness of country and international side.

Situated in the middle of the Region on the confluence of the two largest Lithuanian rivers, the city of Kaunas has been considered one of the most important cities in the country’s history. The Nemunas river, still used for navigation today, has historically contributed to the development of the city. The city is also located at the crossroads of the country’s two major motorways: the A1 motorway Vilnius - Kaunas - Klaipeda is a connection between the capital city of Vilnius and the ice-free Klaipėda Seaport. The Via Baltica (road E67) leading from Estonia via Latvia to Poland is integrated into the TransEuropean motorway system, serving as a connection between Nordic countries and Central and Western Europe. Because of the Region’s location in the very centre of the country and good road infrastructure, the state border crossing points are easy to reach. The Kalvarija border crossing point to Poland is just 85 km away from Kaunas, and the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation is 96 km away from Kaunas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Distance (km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Kalvarija</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Salociai</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaliningrad</td>
<td>Kybartai</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>Medininkai</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Kaunas Free Economic Zone (Kaunas FEZ) is a site of about 5 km² located near Kaunas, the second largest Lithuanian city, and is planned to become one of the largest free economic zones in the Baltic Sea Region. The plans include construction of a river harbour a mere two kilometres away from the territory of the Free Economic Zone. Some Districts of the Region, such as Jonava, Kedainiai and Kaunas, have been industrial centres for many years, with deep traditions in textile and fibre, electronics, chemical, wood processing and furniture industries. Prienai District is famous for its aviation centre and the Experimental Aviation Sport Factory, while the town of Birstonas, situated on the spectacular banks of the Nemunas river, is a recovery centre providing all kinds of sanatoria. The area is famous for its spa. In addition, the Region's recreational areas contribute to the development of the local industry.

The Region is at the crossroads of the main national motorways crossing the country from east to west and from north to south: the A1 motorway leads from the capital Vilnius to the ice-free Klaipeda Seaport via Kaunas City. Vilnius is just 100 km away from Kaunas, and the Klaipeda Seaport is 220 km from Kaunas.

Via Baltica (E67), a European priority transport corridor connecting Helsinki, St-Petersburg and Warsaw, crosses the Region from north to south. The motorway is integrated into the TransEuropean motorway system, serving as a connection between Nordic countries and Central and Western Europe. The Polish border can be reached by route No. 5 leading to Suwalki in Poland via Marijampole Region.

The industrial centres of Kedainiai and Jonava are both situated on the roads connecting them directly to the Region's centre of Kaunas and other parts of the country.

Kaunas Karmelava International Airport is the biggest cargo airport in Lithuania handling 2/3 of the country's cargo. It is located 8 km northeast from the city of Kaunas, close to the main Lithuanian motorway Vilnius - Kaunas - Klaipeda. Moreover, the airport is not far from the main cargo handling railway station of Jonava that is situated at the transport junction of Central Lithuania. The same Vilnius - Kaunas motorway leads to the country's largest Vilnius International Airport, 100 km away from Kaunas. Palanga International Airport (236 km away from Kaunas) is a small modern regional airport at the country's seaside.

The Region is crossed by several railway lines leading to the Kaliningrad Region (Russia), Latvia and the Klaipeda Seaport, and is convenient both for passenger and cargo transportation. The Jonava railway junction is just 16 km from Kaunas Karmelava International Airport. The biggest industrial enterprises of the Region have convenient access to railway lines.

The project of Rail Baltica (although it is not named Rail Baltica in the planning documents of the Kaunas County administration) - the European standard-gauge railway line section between the Lithuanian-Polish border and Marijampole-Kaunas – is under development.

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20 [www.kfez.lt](http://www.kfez.lt)
Kaunas County Spatial Plan

The Spatial Plan of Kaunas County considers the following content:

1. Analysis and evaluation of current situation:
   Analysis and evaluation of situation for territorial and special structures and their elements;
   Investigation of territorial problematic situations and habitats;
   Estimation of development tendencies.

Source: Kaunas County Governor’s Administration
2. Conception:
   General objectives of development and solutions of main development directions;
   Functional priorities of municipalities;
   Common singularities of territorial regulation.

The general Spatial Plan of the County is the main document in the Spatial Planning of the County. Its main goal is to improve the quality of population life, to stimulate County’s economic growth and to improve the quality of environment situation.

The main principle and goal of the general Spatial Plan of the County is ensuring of harmonious (stable) way of the spatial development of the County. In order to realize the chosen main strategic principle it is necessary to observe the following principal provisions of the County management.

1. The directions of social-economical and ecological policy of the County, country and municipalities must be interrelated and not controversial;
2. The County must actively contribute to balanced and harmonious (stable) implementation of development conception on national and European level;
3. The use of the resources of the County territory must conform to the general long-term needs of the society, must be balanced from the functional point of view and guarantee the decreasing of the pollution in natural environment;
4. The preservation and development of the County’s identity must refer to various territorial factors: geopolitical, economical, natural diversity, cultural diversity, etc.;
5. The quality of County’s environment is the property of the people of all the County and must be preserved because of its natural value.

The importance of spatial plan is defined by the purposes of its existence:

- stimulation of education and self-education;
- development of social – cultural and technical infrastructure;
- economic activity spatial differentiation by detailed specific characteristics, using function of conversion also progressive and informational technologies, stimulating competition;
- optimising land use;
- developing environment protection;
- preservation of valuable nature surroundings;
- enlarge landscape originality

**Kaunas Regional Development Plan**

The Regional Development Plan of Kaunas County was prepared in several stages. In the year 1999 a group of selected experts from several institutions such as Kaunas County Governor Administration, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuanian University of Agriculture, Forum of Kaunas development, Kaunas chamber of commerce, industry and crafts and Chamber of Agriculture of Lithuania started the preparation of the draft of Kaunas regional development plan “Kaunas regionas 2000+", which was adopted by Kaunas County Council in 10 of December, in

The Regional Development Plan is the main document outlining the plan of actions and the priorities of their financing which includes the development of industrial, tourism and recreation facilities, small and medium enterprises, roads and railways, airports and economical development centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rail Baltica aspects fixed / defined in the County’s planning documents/ plans:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spatial plan: “When the European standards railway will be implemented from Warszawa to Tallinn and an intermodal terminal will be built, Kaunas county could be the biggest and the main transport and logistic centre of Baltic States”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Development Plan: “It is proposed to develop a project of European standards railway from Warszawa to Kaunas”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Trans-European railway would encourage the economic growth of the County. Attractive industrial and logistics centres would appear. Railway transport is a means of transport that has less negative impact than car transport.

The main activity is the goods carriage, passenger transportation is also very important for the region.

Existing railway lines connect Kaunas with the airports of Vilnius and Riga, Klaipėda and Kaliningradas harbours. The infrastructure of car roads is well developed in the region.

Rail Baltica route will help to establish more favourable regional zones for investments and to develop tourism business.

### 3.3.1.3 Panevėžys County

Panevėžys County is situated in the North – Eastern part of Lithuania, in the ethnic region known as Western Aukštaitija. It is situated on the mid-way between the two capitals - Vilnius (Lithuania) and Riga (Latvia).

The county’s population was 289,612 at the beginning of 2006 or - 8.5% of the Lithuania’s population. The population density of 36.7 people / km² is below the national average. Urban inhabitants make up 59% of the county population, the majority of them live in Panevėžys City.

40% of the Region’s residents live in the city of Panevezys. Other major towns in the Region are Rokiskis, Birzai, Pasvalys and Kupiškis. Young people between 0 and 15 make up 19%, able
bodies make up 59.5%, retired people make up 21.5% of all the Region's population. There were 1 143 women per 1 000 men in the county at the beginning of 2006. Lithuanians make up 96% of the county's population.

The Region's area is 7,881 km².

Panevėžys County is a region of well-developed industry and agriculture. More than 7% of the Lithuanian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is created here. Over 700 industrial companies have over 22 000 employees. Over 60% of the County output is produced in the City of Panevėžys.

Exports make up about 60%. Panevėžys County has the following leading companies:

AB "Rokiškio sūris" - the largest dairy company, AB "Kalnapilio-Tauro Grupė" - brewery, UAB "Ochoco Lumber" - lumber processing company, AB "Panevėžio Statybos Trestas" - construction company and AB "Lėvuo" - trading company.

More than 130 joint ventures of 30 foreign countries are successfully operating in Panevėžys County. 21 joint venture with Germany, 16 - with Russia, 11 - with the USA, 10 - with Sweden, 10- with Poland, 9 - with Ireland, etc.

The largest investors are Switzerland, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, Finland, the United Kingdom, Germany, the USA, Ireland and Denmark. Panevėžys County is the fourth largest one in Lithuania regarding the amount of foreign investment. Vilnius, Klaipėda and Kaunas Counties attract more foreign investors. At the beginning of 2005 direct foreign investment in Panevėžys County was over 210 million Euros. or 721 Euros per an inhabitant. It made up 4.5% of all direct foreign investment of Lithuania.

The majority of foreign capital was invested into the processing industry, textiles, lumber production, sugar and foodstuff production, wholesale, retail and communication services.

Panevėžys County has a convenient geographical location transport infrastructure. The nearest airports of the County: Vilnius - 140 km, Kaunas - 120 km, Palanga - 240 km, Ryga (Latvia) - 150 km. Ice-free Klaipėda port is 240 km and Riga (Latvia) port is 150 km away from Panevėžys.

The railway line crossing the districts of Panevėžys, Kupiškis and Rokiškis connects Panevėžys County with main Lithuanian railway transport IXB corridor and also with Seaport of Klaipėda. Panevėžys County has an international Via Baltica highway connecting Europe with the Baltic States of Latvia, Estonia, Finland. International highway E272 connects Panevėžys with the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, Belaruss and Klaipėda port, coastal centre, health resorts of Neringa, Palanga and Šiauliai, Northern regional centre. Border control offices of Saločiai and Obeliai are of great importance for the region. Freight forwarding is more intensive at Kalvarijos and Saločiai customs offices. The importance of Via Baltica transport corridor increases.

The narrow gauge railway Panevėžys – Rubikiai is attractive for tourism.
Spatial Plan
The Spatial Plan of the Panevėžys County Governor’s Administration is under construction. The main goal of Panevėžys County spatial development is assurance of Panevėžys County spatial sustainable development. General strategic goals are improvement of population life quality, stimulation County’s economic growth and supporting environment quality.

An analysis of the existing conditions is carried out and a conception of territorial development is elaborated. There are defined preconditions and purposes of territorial development, general spatial conception, differentiation of territorial development, organization of regional spatial politics.

Formed priorities and goals of development, which are related with region development plans and supplements it.

The priorities are:
1. Sustainable development.
2. Assurance of healthy living surroundings.
3. Proper nature and intellectual resources use.
4. Moderate social assurance, population welfare, growth of economy.

Regional Development Plan
The Regional Development Plan of the Panevėžys County Governor’s Administration has been approved by the Regional County Council on 19.03.2004.

A bottom-up procedure has been applied in the preparation process: creation of 4 working groups; using brainstorming methods; ranking procedures; identification of the vision, definition of priorities, aims, tasks and means.

VISION OF PANEVĖŽYS REGION

- The region having the potential of knowledge and science, a developed network of information technologies, an independent university, modern, rational and effective education system applied for the disabled.
- The region implementing high tech and producing quality goods, competitive foodstuffs and industrial output, having developed small and medium-sized businesses, promoting crafts and favourable investment conditions.
- The region applying organic farming and alternative businesses and the development of foodstuff and agricultural companies.
- The region of well-developed road and tourism infrastructure with cherished valuables of cultural and natural heritage.

The identified priorities are:
1. Development of information, safe and healthy society
2. Development of wide and competitive businesses
3. Agricultural and rural development
4. Quality development of living surroundings

In the given context of discussion the Rail Baltica development the priority 4 “Quality development of living surroundings” is of specific relevance. It is further defined by the following formulated goals and tasks:

4.1. To form sustainable development of communication system.

Tasks:
4.1.1. To modernize and develop the infrastructure of international highways and transport corridors making good conditions for cargo and passengers transit.

Mean 4.1.1.7. To prepare development studies for Panevezys railway network, railway transport corridor, evaluating of cargo and passengers transit.

4.1.2. To develop infrastructure of local communication in the region.
4.1.3. To develop the network for pedestrians and cycling tracs.

4.2. To modernize and develop engineer support, ensuring the quality of services.

Tasks:
4.2.1. Development and creation of systems for water supplying and sewage removal.
4.2.2. To modernize the heating system in the region. To develop and support disposal of alternatives types of energy.
4.2.3. Modernization and development of electricity and gas supply.

4.3. Regional and local development.

Task:
4.3.1. To form long-term sustainable policy for the development of the regional territory.

The project partners from the Panevėžys region accept that the Rail Baltica route in Lithuania from the Lithuanian-Polish border to Marijampole has been approved and that it is planned to finish this stage until 2010. They also agree that from Marijampole the line goes almost straight and parallel to Via Baltica road at a distance of 2-3 km towards the southern part of Kaunas and at km 70 two alternatives are discussed: either eastern by-pass or western by-pass of Kaunas.

However, there are some discussions on the regional level, whether the route has to go further on through Siauliai or Panevezys. In the Panevėžys County Spatial Comprehensive Plan Development Conception it stated that “there is a possibility Rail Baltica to be formed through Panevėžys and Pasvalys, at first done more detailed researches and economic calculations”. Therefore, the Panevėžys project partners are of the opinion that two alternatives of Rail Baltica need to be taken into consideration:
1. Kaunas – Šiauliai – Riga (or other city) and
2. Kaunas – Panevėžys – Riga (or other city).

These discussions were also carried out during the project workshop in Silauliai.

Panevėžys County Governor’s Administration is a partner of the INTERREG IIIB project ‘Baltic Tangent’. The project’s main goal is to contribute to improved and sustainable integration within the international economic corridor. In this context the main national development priorities are formulated, which in case of Panevėžys in the area of rail transport are:

- Railway infrastructure priorities: upgrading of railway line Radviliškis – Obeliai – Daugavpils.

Transport infrastructure projects are closely related to development of logistics centers and implementation of inter-modality principle into reality. The construction of Panevėžys inter-modal terminal is planned.

The project „Logistic center and industrial park“ supports the development of Rail Baltica. Also Via Baltica has a huge influence for Rail Baltica.

Panevėžys County Governor’s administration is cooperating with the Communication Ministry of Latvia for Rail Baltica.

Moreover, there are contacts and cooperations with Latvia in the field of special tourism development.

3.3.1.4 Šiauliai County

This northern County of Lithuania includes portions of both Žemaitija and Western Aukštaitija ethnographic regions. The County encompasses Šiauliai City and the regional municipalities of Akmenė, Joniškis, Kelmė, Pakruojis, Radviliškis and Šiauliai region.

The overall territory comprises 854 thousand hectares.

Population (thousands) - 367,2 In Šiauliai City – the centre of the region – 134 thousand inhabitants. In Šiauliai County the inhabitants according to age groups are distributed as follows: to 15 years of age – 20,9 per cent; of employable age – 58,9 per cent; of pensionable age – 20,2 per cent. (The data of the year 2003).

The centre of Šiauliai Region is Šiauliai. The functional spine of the territory of the Region consists of the main zone of the activity of social economical and urbanistic functions surrounding the foreseen axis of metropolic urbanistic integration and the international axis Via Hanseatrica. The main constituents of the spatial structure of the region are urban and natural frameworks and agrarian, territorial structures of recreation and cultural heritage.
The territory of the County is intersected by arterial and land roads important to Lithuania. The international importance is assigned to the road A12/E77 (trans-European transport corridor I A, VIA Hanseatica). The roads of national importance are A9/E272 (Šiauliai - Panevėžys) and A11/E272 (Šiauliai – Palanga), which join Šiauliai County with main points of attraction of the country: the county centres, the capital, the harbour. These roads are international and belong to the TINA transport network.

In the region industry is dominating: food and drinks, electrotechnics, building materials, leather and leather items, peat and dolomite extraction and production. The soil in the region is fertile, therefore, growing and processing agricultural production is an important direction of the development of the region. In the County there are quite a big number of specialized farms. Beautiful nature of the region and the abundance of the objects of cultural heritage attract more and more tourists. The tourism sector in Šiauliai Region has quite a big potential for development.

Šiauliai Region is the region of Northern Lithuania, having its history, convenient geographical situation, developed transport network, rapidly developing economy and agriculture, high level of science, education and culture. The centre of the territory of the region is Šiauliai City having an airport, the technical potentialities of which are big. It is a unique object in the Baltic region, the conversion project of which would be useful for the development of the economy of Šiauliai Region and Lithuania. The region has a large railway junction in Radviliškis, international automobile transport corridors of VIA HANSEATICA and TINA.

The distance from the centre of the region Šiauliai City to Vilnius airport is 230 km; to Riga airport – 130 km; to Palanga airport – 150 km. To Klaipėda harbour – 160 km. The length of the railway of Šiauliai Region is 279 km, station roads make up 213 km of it, runways – 71 km. In the region there is a large railway junction in Radviliškis. The territory of the County is crossed by arterial and land roads important to Lithuania. The international importance is assigned to the road A12/E77 (trans-European transport corridor I A, VIA Hanseatica). The roads of national importance are A9/E272 (Šiauliai - Panevėžys) and A11/E272 (Šiauliai – Palanga), which join the Šiauliai County with main points of attraction of the country: the regional centres, the capital, the harbour. These roads are international and belong to the TINA transport network.

**Spatial Plan**

The essentials of the General Spatial Plan of Šiauliai County in brief:

- In 2000 – 2003 the preparation stage was accomplished.
- In 2003 – 2004 the analysis and evaluation of the current situation was performed.
- Currently the report of the General Spatial Plan of Šiauliai County Strategic evaluation of the impact on the environment (SEIE) of the conception of county spatial development and the directions of the conception of county spatial development are prepared.
- The conception of the Spatial development of the County is approved by the Council of Regional Development and has been presented to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for approval in 2007.
The main principle and goal of the general Spatial Plan of the County is the ensuring of harmonious (stable) way of the spatial development of the County. In order to realize the chosen main strategic principle it is necessary to observe the following principal provisions of the County management:

- The directions of social-economical and ecological policy of the County, country and municipalities must be interrelated and not controversial;
- The quality of County’s environment is the property of the people of all the County and must be preserved because of its natural value.
- The use of the resources of the County territory must conform to the general long-term needs of the society, must be balanced from the functional point of view and guarantee the decreasing of the pollution in natural environment.
- The County must actively contribute to balanced and harmonious (stable) implementation of development conception on national and European level;
- The preservation and development of the County’s identity must refer to various territorial factors: geopolitical, economical, natural diversity, cultural diversity, etc.
The overall objectives of the Spatial Plan are – selected on the basis of relevance in the given context:

1. Coordinating the needs and interests of the state, County and its municipalities and evaluating administrative management functions of county level, to prepare the bases and principal provisions of administration and harmonious development of the County’s territory.
2. To develop and improve current spatial structure of the County, to form and develop its urban system.
3. To foresee the instruments for the improvement of life and environment quality.
4. To develop technical and other infrastructure necessary for the satisfaction of the needs of the society.
5. To form principal provisions of territory protection from hazardous natural and technogeneic processes.
6. To foresee the instruments ensuring rational use of natural resources, ecological balance, formation of natural framework, preservation of values of nature and cultural heritage.
7. To foresee the directions of the development of territories of bio-production economy, industry, business, recreation and other purposes, to form favourable conditions for the development of economy and business.
8. To foresee territories for which it is necessary to prepare special plans.
9. To reserve territories for the objects necessary for the development of technical infrastructure and the satisfaction of other needs of the society.
10. To form planning conditions for special plans of county level, general and special plans of its municipalities, to transfer national and regional Spatial Plans to the plans of municipality level.

In the General Spatial Plan of Lithuania it is foreseen to develop the arterial railway, establishing international Rail Baltica railway via the territory of Šiauliai County. In the conception of General Spatial Plan of Šiauliai County, which currently is under preparation, it is foreseen to modernize and rehabilitate the railway which is important for goods / freight carriage.

Lithuania has agreed to modernize its railway corridors according to AGC and AGTC standards.

The main planned works in the railway sector are:
- modernization and electrification of international East-West railway corridor IXB (IXB2 and IXB3);
- construction of the railway Rail Baltica of the European track;
- modernization of IA corridor;
- modernization of the section Radviliškis-Obeliai;
- reconstruction of the section Kužiai-Mažeikiai;
- modernization of the section Šiauliai-Joniškis - state border.
Regional Development Plan

In 2003 the Development Plan of Šiauliai region for 2004 – 2006 was prepared. On 25-09-2003 the Development Plan was approved by the Šiauliai Council of Regional Development. In 2004 the monitoring and the amendments of the Development Plan were accomplished.

The procedures are foreseen in the methods of the preparation and renovation of regional Development Plans approved by the decree of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania of 04-10-2002 No. 482. Regional Development Plan is the main document outlining the plan of actions and the priorities of their financing.

Objectives - spatial development goals with relevance for Rail Baltica development

1.1. To develop and to modernize road infrastructure of Šiauliai region, by integrating it into United System of EU and by improving the quality of Local roads.
1.2. To ensure the accessibility and stability of power supply and to increase the efficiency of its use by reducing negative impact on the environment. To create engineering infrastructure in the towns.
1.3. To ensure healthy and clean environment for the population of Region.
1.4. To ensure high quality and accessibility of health services for Region populations.
1.5. To create optimum network of educational, vocational, scientific, studying and social service establishments, to improve the quality of services and their accessibility for population. To reduce social isolation.

…

3.1. Increase of industrial and business competitive ability.
3.2. Improvement of industrial and business environment.
3.3. Development of infrastructure of information technologies.
3.4. Development of tourism infrastructure and encouragement of tourism business.

4.1. Improvement of the life of residents of rural areas and infrastructure.
…

PRIORITY 1: Development of social and economical infrastructure  
Development of social and economic infrastructure of the Region based on the principles of cohesive development.

PRIORITY 2: Development of human resources  
Development of competitive ability of human resources and development of competencies and structures in the management of social processes.

PRIORITY 3: Development of production and service sector  
Development of industry and business thus increasing the competitive ability of the Region.

PRIORITY 4: Development of agriculture, rural areas and fisheries
Modernization and increase of competitive ability of agriculture, rural areas and pisciculture. Development of rural communities.

The sources of implementing the strategy will be funds of state budget, municipality budgets, EU structural funds and private funds.

**Main projects which currently are under implementation comprise:**

Use of Spatial Planning possibilities and local potential in order to decrease the decline of remote settlements, HINTERLAND. This project corresponds to the Priority 1 of Regional Development Plan: „Development of social and economical infrastructure of economy “.

Implementing Instrument 2.2. „Development of competence and abilities of labour force to adopt to changes“ of General Programming Document (GPD) of Lithuania for 2004-2006, the project „DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCE AND ABILITIES OF THE GOVERNOR OF ADMINISTRATION OF ŠIAULIAI COUNTY TO ADOPT TO CHANGES“ was approved. It corresponds to the Priority 2 of Regional Development Plan: „Development of human resources“.

Towards Open Doors. The project corresponds to the Priority 2 of Regional Development Plan and is sponsored by the initiative of European Community Initiative EQUAL (The fund of support of development programmes of human resources).

“Development of the Baltic tourism network in the Via-Hanseatica development zone” project corresponds to the Priority 3 of Regional Development Plan “Industry and business development increasing the competitiveness of the region”.

The existing railway lines connect the centre of the region with the airports of Vilnius and Riga, Klaipėda harbour. The main railway development activities in the region today are related to goods (freight) carriage. However, passenger transportation is also considered very important for the region, because the railway connects the centre of the County with the capital of Lithuania and the seaside, but here measures to increase awareness and acceptance – together with measures in increasing the attractively of the rail connections – would be necessary – see case study “Short-term improvements of passenger rail connections on Rail Baltica …”, which is a part of the work done in WP 1.

Summing up it can be stated that Rail Baltica as a trans-European railway would encourage the economic growth of the County. Attractive industrial and logistics centres would appear. Railway transport is a means of transport that has less negative impact than car transport. Rail Baltica route will help to establish more favourable regional zones for investments and to develop tourism business.

**BUT:**

“Rail Baltica line is of little potential, because it is not foreseen in the General Spatial Plan of Lithuania, larger economic financial resources and the procedures of taking land for railway construction (time resources) would be necessary. In the territory of Šiauliai County the railway station system having the features of historic-architectural heritage is developed.”
3.4 Latvia

Existing rail infrastructure

Similar to the case of road infrastructure, the density of the railroads is reasonably adequate. However, the quality of the railway lines is deteriorating which can be noticed by the fact that the average speed is decreasing from year to year. In addition, a quarter of the total length of railway lines are not equipped with traffic control systems that correspond to the safety standards of the EU8. The rail infrastructure does not ensure direct connections with central and Western Europe, which is defined as a further area that needs to be developed.

Source: www.cemt.org/topics/rail/Paris05/Latvia.pdf

Cargo to and from Latvian ports are mainly transported by rail. Rail cargo transportation accounts for 52% of the total amount of cargo transported by land and this number has tendency to increase. Transit transportation by rail accounts for approximately 85% of the total amount of
cargoes transported by rail - mainly from ports of Russia and Belarus to ports of Latvia (East – West transit corridor). In cargo transportation transit of oil products, chemicals and mineral fertilizers is the prevalent. Container train traffic linking Latvian ports with Russia and Kazakhstan are still in development process.

Here is a list of the main advantages of the Latvian railway system:

- branched network linking ports of Riga, Ventspils and Liepaja to the points of cargo transshipment, Russia, the CIS and other regions;
- rail gauge (1520 mm) analogue with the gauge of railway network of neighbouring countries (Russia, CIS);
- branched network of feeder roads in ports allowing for direct cargo transshipment into vessels;
- modern technologies allowing for fast procedures of loading and unloading;
- automated transportation control system providing link to neighbouring countries and allowing for control of the movement of trains and wagons;
- flexible tariff policy.\(^1\)

In Latvia the railway development of the direction east-west is considered more important than north-south direction due to high volumes of cargo coming from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan etc to the ports of Riga and Ventspils. In Latvia there are no major plans to improve the railway sections in the North-South direction.

This also implies that Rail Baltica is not included in the transport development plans for Latvia.

Leading political parties in Latvia support further integration in the Baltic Sea Region, the EU and the development of infrastructure facilities like Rail Baltica as means of this process. However, at this stage the overall political position in Latvia is to await the conclusions of the feasibility study, to make sure that the implementation of the project and related investments would create sufficient economical, political and social gains to justify the required investments.

On 18/04/2007 the European coordinator of Rail Baltica project Mr P. Telička had a meeting in Riga with the Latvian Minister of Transport. It was explained that in the short- to medium-term perspective the implementation of the Rail Baltica project (with EU gauge) will not be reasonably possible. Therefore, Mr. Telička promoted the upgrading of the existing line as a 1st stage of Rail Baltica development. An agreement was reached that Latvia labels upgrading works on the existing line as 1st stage of Rail Baltica and starts investments to get the line in an operational state. However, Mr Telička from his side supports EU assistance from the TEN-T budget to investments in the existing line.

Concerning EU funds: 67 mio EUR were reserved from CF under 2007-2013 programming period for Rail Baltica, however recently a decision was made re-allocating 20 mio EUR from this amount to development of public transport. So, 47 mio EUR remain reserved for Rail Baltica. The work on the national plan of reserved territories for future infrastructure needs of the Republic of Latvia is now under preparation. The MoT of Latvia will try to reserve a line for the future Rail Baltica (new line of EU gauge)\(^2\).

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\(^1\) Website of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Republic of Latvia; www.transport.lv
3.5 Estonia

Existing rail infrastructure

The Estonian railway network is roughly 1000 km long. The amount of cargo transport handled by rail in Estonia is constantly increasing. For that reason the rather low capacity of the main rail lines and especially of the border stations is becoming a problem. Especially there is a need to upgrade the border stations with Russia as this will be an EU border with Russia. At present, 66% of the shares of Estonian Railways Ltd are private and the current Estonian railway investment plan does not foresee any Cohesion fund projects. However, the government is currently looking over the plan and there are some possible rail projects in the Cohesion fund pipeline.

The rail transport system in Estonia consists of circa 1200 km of railway lines, of which 900 km are currently in public use. The infrastructure of the railway network is completely privatized and is regulated and surveyed by the Estonian Railway Inspectorate (Estonian: Raudteeinspektsooni).

All railways in Estonia are broad gauge (1520 mm), the same as in Russia, Belarus, Latvia, and Lithuania. The 1520 mm gauge used in Estonia is also compatible with Finland’s 1524 mm gauge.

Railways in Estonia today are used mostly for freight transport, but also for passenger traffic.

Network:
* Total length: circa 1200 km, of which 958 km in public use.
* Gauge: 1520 mm broad gauge
* Electrified: circa 130 km.

The Estonian railway network is owned by the state-owned company AS Eesti Raudtee and the private company Edelaraudtee Infrastruktuuri AS. These railway network infrastructure operators provide all railway network services for railway operators running freight and passenger services. AS Eesti Raudtee provides approximately 800 km of track, of which 107 km is double track and 133 km is electrified. Edelaraudtee Infrastruktuuri AS maintains 298 km of track which consists of 219 km of main line and 79 km of station line.

Main lines:

 Owned by AS Eesti Raudtee:
  o Tallinn–Tapa–Narva, 209.6 km. This line was completed in 1870. It was originally a part of the railway network of the Russian Empire, connecting Paldiski to St. Petersburg via Tallinn and Narva.
Rail Baltica, WP 1 – “Regional development perspectives”

- Tallinn–Keila–Paldiski, 47.7 km.
- Keila–Riisipere, 24.4 km. This line is part of the former Tallinn–Haapsalu line, that was completed in 1905.
- Tapa–Tartu, 112.5 km.
- Tartu–Valga, 82.5 km. International connection from Valga in Estonia to Valka in Latvia.
- Tartu–Petseri, 83.5 km. International connection from Piiroja in Estonia to Petseri in Russia. The line was built between 1929 and 1931.
- Valga–Petseri, 91.5 km. International connection from Piiroja in Estonia to Petseri in Russia.

Owned by Edelaraudtee Infrastrukturi AS:
- Tallinn–Lelle–Pärnu–Mõisaküla, 190.0 km. International connection has existed from Mõisaküla to Latvia, but there is no connection at the moment. The stretch Pärnu–Mõisaküla is planned to be removed.[2]
- Lelle–Viljandi, 78.7 km. This line connects Viljandi to the Tallinn–Mõisaküla line via Lelle.

A daily passenger service connects Tallinn with St. Petersburg and Moscow, operated by the Estonian company GO Rail. The other railway lines to neighbouring countries are not used for direct passenger traffic at the moment, even though it is possible to take a taxi from Valga in Estonia over the border to Latvia, and continue the journey southwards towards Riga from there.

Based on several studies on the performance of the Estonian transport sector, considering the opinions of the logistics and transport stakeholders and taking into account the needs of the present transport service market, one of the objectives of the Transport Development Plan (TDP) is the development of the railway passenger services along the major domestic and international routes, including the development of Rail Baltica (standard gauge 1435 mm). The decision to implement the plans will be based on more detailed studies of the feasibility of the plans.

According to the visions of the TDP, the Rail Baltica line will be completed in 2016 in conformity with EU standards, allowing a high-speed connection from Estonia to Western Europe.[23]

The realisation of the Rail Baltica line is one of the most important infrastructure projects for Estonia. Rail Baltica aims to re-establish the connection between the Baltic States and Central and Western Europe with European standard in order to tie the Baltic States to Europe. The principle thoughts have been formulated in the „Estonia 2010 National Spatial Plan“. According to the Estonian National Spatial Plan, Estonia must develop the Rail Baltica line for fast rail transport, extended in the north by rail-ferry connection(s) to Finland.

Because in Estonia the concept of Rail Baltica is mainly based on the political willingness at present, as economic, technical, environmental and spatial planning aspects are not investigated yet.

A number of issues should be taken into account when discussing the development options for Rail Baltica.

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o In domestic railway transport, the demand for services and speeds are still low.

o In freight transport the east-west transit traffic has a high share. Estonia has no important quantity of own goods transported by rail. It is a transit country and income from Russian transit is very important for the ports. Rail Baltica and an improved connection to Finland shall create a counterbalance and an improved market position. This only is possible by a link with European standard, which is independent from Russian goods transport that will require Russian standard track even in the future. Therefore, the national planning focuses on a new, direct line to Latvia. From their point of view only by that way real development impulses could be reached for Estonia. But the realisation of this conception is not yet assured.

o The existing railway infrastructure has Russian standard and is mainly used for transporting Russian goods from and to the harbours and handling places. The above mentioned National Spatial Plan contains rudimental fundamental ideas for developing handling places. But these considerations have not been followed up and are currently not of any importance in Estonia.

o One opinion is that north/south traffic volumes (demand for passenger and freight transport) are too small to provide a cost-effective solution to the railway connection.

o The offer for in the passenger transport is very limited. Due to the quality of the existing infrastructure and the related low cruising speed others than short and regional offers are not attractive. There are no cross-border offers to the neighbouring country Latvia. A new direct line connecting Tallinn and Riga is therefore considered a key component of Rail Baltica.

o Mid- and Western Estonia is low population density areas with no remarkable industrial concentration.

o Estonian railway is privatised, but currently there exists the idea that the state should by out the private partners. The fundamental decisions will be taken by the end of 2006/beginning of 2007. The financing of this intention is still unclear. At the same time the corresponding further ideas for the development of the railway infrastructure are subject to financing. This fact has also impacts on the decision on Rail Baltica. It is still vague when these decisions will be taken.

o The Rail Baltica cross-border section between Estonia and Latvia is not fixed. Therefore close cooperation between Estonia and Latvia is necessary, also at the official level.

Based on this situation, in Estonia there are no further activities for considering the regional development surrounding Rail Baltica. „First of all the Government has to make the principle decision on the railway link, the standards and financing“. At the current date the involvement of regional and local partners is rejected as not useful as the geographical alignment is not known. Therefore the activities within the Interreg project are not considered as necessary. If the railway link will be realised, Estonia as the whole country will benefit from it24.

The decision has been taken by the (new) Estonian Government to follow a step by step approach in implementing Rail Baltica. Speed target is accordingly 120 km/h. Decision on this

24 Mr. Wilfried Laboor, Ministry of Infrastructure, Federal State of Brandenburg (Germany); minutes of the Meetings with Estonian project parters on November 20 and 21, 2006 in Tallinn
approach has also been supported by coalition agreement, so there is a guarantee for a respective implementation. However, the state will not provide guarantees for any international loans (also specified in the coalition agreement). No investment has been envisaged, only budget line for co-financing of TEN-T supported studies. However, there are voices objecting the approach. The Ministry of Interior of Estonia clearly supports the implementation of Rail Baltica as it has been outlined in numerous studies and policy documents. The Estonian MoI considers it difficult to accept that an upgrading of the existing rail line (with the existing, non-EU rail gauge, long detours e.t.c.) is being called Rail Baltica, which in accordance with the original Rail Baltica concept, implies a EU gauge railway line following the straightest possible route. Concerns are raised if the old line with detours will be attractive.

However, a common understanding is formulated that the old railway line is not really Rail Baltica, but if it is not labelled as Rail Baltica 1st stage and investments are not made in upgrading of the existing infrastructure, it can be reasonably believed that the project will cease.

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25 Mr. Anti Moppel, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications (EST); Rail Baltica INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION GROUP MEETING, Riga, 20th April 2007 (Minutes)
26 Mr Jaak Maandi, Ministry of Interior (EST); Rail Baltica INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION GROUP MEETING, Riga, 20th April 2007 (Minutes)
A map of the Rail Baltica development zone has been prepared on the basis of the results of the project workshop in Siauliai as well as of the discussions during the meetings of project partners on different occasions.

This map shows the railway planning status of Rail Baltica in all participating regions, which have delivered the respective information in the course of implementing the Rail Baltica Interreg project. Other development related aspects – national/ regional development planning (formal and informal) as well as specific projects are also included into the map, as far as respective information had been delivered by the project partners. Moreover, the map includes results from the technical pre-feasibility study.

Map 1 is attached to the digital / electronic version of this report in bitmap and jpeg-format. One hard copy in DIN-A0-format has been delivered to the GTZ Twinning Office, the “original” version of the map, which has been used by the projects partners i.e. during the project workshops, has been left with the Lead Partner after having been presented during the final conference of the Rail Baltica project.
4 Development perspectives

In order to assess the medium- and long-term perspectives of the realisation of Rail Baltica it is necessary to

1. analyse the existing visions for the development of Rail Baltica, as they are expressed in the policy papers, planning documents statements, declarations etc.
2. try to identify the political will of the stakeholders of the process on the basis of a comparison of the visions, plans and declarations (point 1) with their respective implementation.

Both steps have been done in the first two sections of this report – as far as it has been possible given the limited support of the project partners in the light of their vanishing interest in the project.

The analysis of the visions of rail transport between Berlin and Helsinki clearly presents the existence of the intention to plan and build the Rail Baltica line:

As outlined in section 2 of this report a joint vision and strategy for the Baltic Sea region was elaborated by the countries in the region in the early 1990s and the idea of Rail Baltica first appeared in 1994 in the joint political document Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010 as an important element for spatial development in the Baltic Sea region. The latest update of the document was made in 2001. Later, on 15 September 2003 the Rail Baltica Co-ordination Group (representing Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) agreed on the key aspects to be considered in future studies of Rail Baltica investments. And most recently, a Declaration of Intent was signed on 27 March 2006 by the transport ministers of the project countries except Germany.

As expected, the identification of the political will of the relevant stakeholders proves to be much more difficult. As mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter the political will to materialise the Rail Baltica idea is essential. One aspect of relevance in assessing the political will of the actors involved is to define their specific interest in the project.

The interests of the main stakeholders might be summarised as follows:

Public administrations

The political stakeholders (e.g. Ministries of Transport, Ministries of Finance) are influenced in their decisions mainly by the following aspects:

- A pressure to facilitate environmental friendly transport technologies (railways)
- A growing demand for mobility and increased road safety, which requires modernisation and extension of the other modes
- Railway transit traffic and ports are contributing to a considerable extent to the GDP
- Other sectors of the national economies competing for the limited budgets
Rail Baltica, WP 1 – “Regional development perspectives”

Railways
- Railways (infrastructure managers, operators) are mainly interested in the core business, which is Russian transit in the Baltic countries and east-west / north (ports)-south transit in Poland.
- Railways in the Baltic countries are competitors with regard to east-west transit and thus primarily interested in the modernisation of their respective corridors.
- Railway operators in the Baltic States are afraid that a European gauge Rail Baltica corridor will interfere with their flexibility to develop in freight transport.

Ports, maritime industry
- All the Baltic sea ports are highly interested in increasing their capacity and in diversifying the services offered in order to improve their competitive situations.
- The sea ports demand upgrading of the access to the ports, both by rail and road.
- Maritime operators (especially of ferry lines) are facing loss of traffic potentials, when the Rail Baltica corridor is modernised.

Is the absence of interest in the implementation of the Rail Baltica Interreg-project an indicator for the lack of political will? The presentations under section 3 reveal that the visions and transnational, European programmes and plans are not complemented by respective actions. The relevant question behind the second step is: What has been done in practical terms? The information collected from various sources in order to describe the current status of Rail Baltica planning in the different countries involved gives the indication that the real work has not even commenced, yet.

The existing railway line of Helsinki corridor Nr.1 is included in the TINA map (see section 2 of this report), but from the year 1999 there was no railway connection between Tallinn (Estonia) and Shestokai (Poland) any more. The failures of the rail were – and still are – low technical speed, non-optimal tracking, time consuming border crossing procedures, low quality passenger wagons and low quality services for the travellers.

A common understanding in the three Baltic countries about the need to re-establish railway connection on Helsinki corridor Nr.1 can be assumed when summing up the results of section 2 and 3. Moreover, after signing a cooperation agreement between three Ministers of Transport of the Baltic States, in Latvia further action was taken by establishing an advisory board, that include not only officials from different governmental organisations but also representatives from the partner regions and NGOs. Also representatives from Lithuania and Estonia as well as from Germany and the VASAB secretariat confirmed that the project, which shall be labelled as "International co-operation project Rail Baltica", is strongly supported as a priority based on national transport sector and spatial development concepts. The project’s idea corresponds not only to Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region but also to the new European transport policy – new White paper “European Transport policy for 2010: Time to decide”, where transport user’s needs are placed at the heart of the strategy.

The main idea behind Rail Baltica is to develop high-quality connections for passenger and freight transport between the Baltic States and Poland, as well as between the Baltic States and other EU countries through the hub Warsaw. Improved rail lines will result in more efficient land-

\[27\): Dzintra UPMACE, and Andulis ZIDKOVS: Key note on ‘Baltic rail’, date unknown
bound connections. Improved rail links will benefit the environment, contribute to alleviate congestion on the European road network, increase the accessibility of the Baltic States and potentially improve conditions for accelerated regional development in the countries involved.

Representatives of the Rail Baltica partner countries regularly agree that there is the urgent need to build the railway line and to serve three main purposes:
- promotion of this railway link, as it is not adequately included in existing investment programmes;
- support this promotion by demonstrating the technical and economical feasibility of rehabilitation investments;
- to indicate complementary regional development measures.

Concerning the last bullet point the following questions come up:
1. What are the expected impacts on regional development induced by Rail Baltica implementation?
2. What are the regional development measures foreseen by the involved States and regions?

The information taken from the filled questionnaires and gathered during the project workshops (see section 3) lead to the conclusion that the expectations of the actors at national and regional levels in the affected countries are very high:

Summary of expectations expressed in section 3 -

Expectations of the project partners concerning the impact of Rail Baltica on regional development

The expectations regarding the effects of Rail Baltica implementation from the “transport planning perspective” are rather clear. It is obvious that the European standard railway line will support the creation of the conditions for the development of multimodal transportation, growth of transit flows, and will integrate the national and regional rail transport systems into the European railway transport network. The towns where a high-speed train is going to stop are expected become more attractive, more easily accessible and better connected to other cities. In the case of Marijampole the expectations led to concrete transport development planning activities: The passenger station is planned to become a transit station for the passengers travelling by a bus and possibly by plains also. As Marijampole is at a crossing of very important European and national highways and railways it is reasonable to construct a freight loading station, which could serve for delivering of goods by trucks in the region or freighting (by trucks or railway) them to Kaliningrad region, Poland or Belarus.

When it comes to formulate the expectations concerning the impact of regional development in the countries involved, the partners unanimously mention that Rail Baltica will have a great importance for the region. It would create possibilities for the development of new business, especially services, reduce unemployment, create additional jobs, and increase tourist flows. Thus, the implementation of the Rail Baltica project is seen to be a driving force for the regional development.

28 European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy/ COWI-Consortium: Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways - Main conclusions and recommendations, January 2007
economic development: the trans-European railway would encourage the economic growth of the regions by stimulating business development in the region and attracting direct foreign investments. Rail Baltica route would help to establish more favourable regional zones for investments (attractive industrial and logistics centres would appear) and to develop tourism business.

The role of Rail Baltica for a medium size town (like for example Marijampole) is seen as an opportunity of economic and social development, even the improvement of social-economic cohesion is formulated as an expected impact.

It is not subject of this report to assess or determine the impacts of Rail Baltica planning and implementation of the regional and spatial development in a defined “development zone” or “corridor”. Concrete assessments are to be carried out as soon as the relevant decisions concerning the alignment of Rail Baltica etc. have been made. However, in the following a rough outline of relevant aspects of regional development in the context of rail infrastructure development will be presented in order to try to give an indication to which degree the expectations formulated above are realistic and justified.

4.1 Regional Development aspects

It needs to be stressed that this section does not represent a result of the work carried out in the context of work package 1. No activities related to a discussion of regional and/ or spatial development aspects in the context of Rail Baltica planning and realisation were carried out in the course of implementing this Interreg project. No discussion on regional development measures in the project area took place. Exception: the case studies.

Assessing regional impacts of transport investments

It is virtually impossible to tackle the question of the regional impact from the macroeconomic angle, because of the dearth of statistics at provincial and even municipal levels with respect, for example, to trends in net terms in per capita income, employment and trade flows. These data are often available at regional level, but then it is impossible to establish a causal link between changes to the region’s transport network and its economic development because of the multiplicity of factors involved. Highly complex macroeconomic models have indeed been created in order to try to measure this impact, but they are cumbersome and lead to controversial results.

The aim of regional development policy is to create a situation of sustained, autonomous growth which will bring the per capita income of the less favoured regions closer to the European average. Infrastructure contributes only indirectly to this aim: in itself, it has only a marginal multiplier effect, as infrastructure use does not contribute significantly either towards increasing the national product, the creation of permanent jobs or the transfer of technology, nor does it
have an impact as a purchaser on the other regional industries or services. This role is very difficult to assess or even quantify.

For high-speed trains it has been evaluated that they promote employment and generate income in the centre of the towns served, which often have an average per capita income at the outset which is higher than the regional, national or even Community average.

If the outlying areas of the region have inadequate access to the infrastructure financed, this may encourage economic activities to relocate to sites which are better served. According to studies carried out in research centres, there is a strong presumption that major interregional links which bring the main centre(s) of a less favoured region closer to the rest of the country may accentuate the disparities in development within the region in question if they have poor connections with the rest of the region: besides, all things being equal, economic activities will tend to converge towards the better-equipped and more accessible centres.

Conflicts between (EU- and national) transport and regional development policies
In the previous sections it is outlined sufficiently that the implementation of the railway line between (Berlin -) Warsaw – Kaunas – Riga – Tallinn (– Helsinki) is a priority of EU-, national and regional transport policy and development. Different reasons are formulated to justify this priority. All of these justifications contain the expectation that apart from improving the situations in the transport and environment sectors the new (or upgraded) rail lines will have a positive impact on regional development.

The questions to be asked here are:
1. Again: Why didn’t the fact that Rail Baltica is considered a high priority in the context of the EU- and National Transport Policies lead to a quick and steady planning and implementation (procedure)?
2. Is a positive effect on regional development granted?

Looking at the questions from the regional development perspective, which is the subject of consideration here, lead to one possible explanation that a trans-national agreed strategy for development of and investing in Rail Baltica needs to balance – among others – the transport and regional policy priorities. The co-ordination of EU- and national policies, in particular of the interactions between EU transport and TENs policies and national regional development policies in terms of both the horizontal interactions (between policy areas) and vertical interactions (between different levels of policy making) contain potential conflicts of both objective and impact.

The objective of reducing disparities in growth rates between the regions is enshrined in the fifth recital to the Treaty establishing the European Community: “Anxious to strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions”.

In 1988, reform of the Structural Funds introduced a new distinction between the different levels of regional development in terms of “Objective” classifications. The main category was labelled “Objective 1 – Economic adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind” and embraces all regions recording average per capita income 75% below the Community average.
The adoption of the Single European Act served to speed up the process, according unequivocal priority to the aim of strengthening the Community’s economic and social fabric. At the same time, the go-ahead was given to doubling the Structural Fund’s budgetary appropriations.

The Treaty on European Union (the Treaty of Maastricht) gave the EIB increased responsibilities in the drive towards greater economic and social unity. These responsibilities encompass:

1. direct contributions towards financing capital projects in areas eligible for assistance under the Structural Funds;
2. operations in areas covered by other specific support measures promoted by the European Union;
3. Infrastructure financing having an indirect impact on regional development.

Transport policy is full of conflicts, not least the potential conflict between the use of infrastructure as a means of competing networks, improving accessibility and enhancing mobility with the need to regulate the use of networks to reduce congestion and make users generally more aware of the full resource costs of the transport they consume. Transport as an agent of economic growth conflicts with transport as a destination of public funds. Transport as an agent of enhancing competitiveness conflicts with transport as an agent of improving accessibility and cohesion. Transport as a source of welfare through mobility conflicts with the need to control harmful effects on the environment.

Conflict also arises because of the problem in identifying the spatial distribution of both benefits and costs from any particular policy. Thus lower level governments may only be interested in schemes which appear to have local benefits within their jurisdiction.

Infrastructure policy is still too dominated by the concept of completing networks and responding to the special pleading of individual regions to be on a network.

Research has shown that despite the expectations of transport policy documents, the impacts on GDP or welfare of significant infrastructure investments are quite small. This is true at both national and regional level. However, although this is true on average, the impacts of individual projects can be significant, especially in the longer term. Similarly, the relative impacts on spatial structure could also only be more substantial if a longer-term and more dynamic view were taken.

With regard to the wider links of transport policy to other policy areas, there is a concern that issues of spatial development have been allowed to drive the transport policies implemented. Transport has been used very much as an agent of structural and spatial development policy without regard for its other consequences, or for the less positive implications for spatial development.

But what would be the impact of Rail Baltica on the regional and/or spatial development in the affected countries? There is no clear indication, yet. And it seems as if there is no consensus among the project partners.

\[\textit{i.e. ESPON 2.1.1; Territorial Impact of EU Transport and TEN Policies}\]
The recent years the relationships between transportation and regional development have been undergone significant changes. Regional development used to be a dominantly endogenous process where local forces were “unleashed” by investments in productive capacities and infrastructures. Partially due to transportation, other forces have also been unleashed. Comparative advantages can be exploited at an extended geographical scale without the diminishing returns linked with higher management and distribution costs. This came to be known as “globalisation”, which is challenging our understanding of regions and their dynamics. “Corridors” have been acknowledged since the 1960s as structures shaping urbanisation and regional development. Corridors are today a global urbanisation trend and have taken a variety of functions. Such corridors are dependent on efficient and high capacity transport systems. However, many corridors show serious accessibility and transport capacity issues. In such a context railway development appears to be resurging. Although this observation applies dominantly to rail freight, there is also some potential regarding passenger rail, as we have seen with the emergence of high-speed train (HST) systems in Europe, but also Japan. A global modal shift is currently in the making, which will trigger a significant resurgence of rail transport. Rail corridors of the twenty-first century will take shape to accommodate additional transport demand, alleviate higher energy costs, and cope with congestion. The globalised market enhances the need for efficient and functional rail networks.

In its chapter 4 “Spatial structure” the VASAB 2010 Plus Spatial Development Action Programme highlights that on one hand the potential for environment friendly modes of transport depends on spatial structures of cities and regions. On the other hand the need to improve performance qualities of railways is stressed clearly.

In some parts of the BSR (particularly in its Eastern part), deficient transport infrastructure is a bottleneck to regional development, using the potentials from interregional integration. The improvement of some important transport corridors is not considered in national and trans-national development programmes. Its need shall be demonstrated based on regional development analyses. A closer dialogue of spatial planning with transport sector institutions concerning trans-national infrastructure development is required.

The study “Territorial Impact of EU Transport and TEN Policies” recommends encouraging greater cooperation between all actors in transport planning and the other policy areas: “It is the inconsistency in policy making by national, regional and local governments across the EU which is the source of the greatest potential set of problems”. Such a cooperation is now necessary when it comes to the crucial phase of elaborating the fundamentals for decision making with regards to Rail Baltica planning and implementation. In the context of the Interreg-project Rail Baltica the participation of the partners and their cooperation leaves room for improvement. In order to strengthen the cooperation in future it the positive impacts of Rail Baltica on regional development in the single States and regions should be assessed and communicated to the partners.

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30 Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Department of Economics and Geography, Hofstra University; Inter-Metropolitan Rail Corridors and Regional Development; in: Report on the Building Inter-Metropolitan Rail Corridors Public Policy Forum, February 21, 2006; Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware
4.2 Action Plan including recommendations for the next 15 years

There is no competitive alternative to road transport between Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius and Warsaw, both in the passenger and freight transport sector. The concept of Rail Baltica refers to the imaginative, strategic and sustainable north-south rail project connecting Tallinn via Riga and Kaunas with Warsaw and Berlin. Despite the fact that Rail Baltica is one of the TEN-T priority projects, it has become clear that very little specific planning and analysis has been made for the project in the countries. This fact is perfectly illustrated in the following article publish in the Baltic Times.

Rail Baltica, Via Baltica projects still far beyond the horizon
The Baltic Times, Mar 23, 2005
By Ben Nimmo

RIGA - Two of the EU’s highest-profile projects in the Baltics are the ongoing Via Baltica road upgrade and the proposed Rail Baltica rail link from Warsaw to Tallinn. Both serve one common purpose: to bind the areas’ transport networks firmly into EU structures, thus creating a rapid and effective transport corridor from Scandinavia to Central and Eastern Europe.

It is an impressive vision, and both projects have been given eye-catching titles that imply great changes to come. But the most important question is to what extent they will ever be achieved.

In itself, the idea of improving north-south transport links is a good one. The Baltics now form the most direct land corridor from Finland to central Europe, and in the words of Andulis Zidkovs, director of the investment department at the Latvian Transport Ministry, “the shortest way is always the best.”

Whereas before May 1, 2004, the only way for EU-bound Finnish travellers to avoid half a dozen lengthy border crossings was to take the sea route to Germany’s ports or drive across Sweden and the Oresund bridge, they can now drive directly through the Baltics - EU territory all the way. The same applies in the other direction, and given the new EU members’ rapid increase in living standards, the traffic is unlikely to be one-way.

[…] Rail Baltica looks far more radical. A joint initiative by transport ministers from Poland and the Baltics, it foresees the creation of a high-speed, European-gauge rail link from Warsaw to Tallinn. At present, Baltic trains run on Soviet-gauge tracks, which are not compatible with the European gauge present in Poland and further west.

Conceived in 2003, the initiative has been included as a priority in the European Commission’s “TEN-T” trans-European transport plan, and the Commission has agreed to fund a preliminary feasibility study, due for completion in late 2006.

If all goes according to plan, the Warsaw-Kaunas section should be ready in 2010, Kaunas-Riga in 2014 and Riga-Tallinn in 2016. Political clouds are already gathering over the project. As Zidkovs points out, “Everyone wants the project to come to them,” so these dates are only guidelines.

Rail Baltica seems to fit the EU’s aims better than Via Baltica. Rail transport is more environmentally friendly than road transport, improves road safety, and is potentially much faster. If Rail Baltica’s trains followed the French TGV model, they could make the journey from Tallinn to Riga in a little over two hours.
The same economic arguments backing Via Baltica apply to the rail variant. While Zidkovs admits that “at the moment there is effectively no international rail transport in the region,” he firmly believes that this will change.

“There is a clear need for such a line. If you look at a map of Europe, the only land route from the Baltics to the west is through Poland, and the conditions on Polish roads are very well known. If we look even 30 years in the future, of course there will be demand, and don’t forget that a railway line is an investment for a hundred years in the future,” he says.

It is just as well that he takes such a long view, because the cost could be formidable. “Just to construct the new line on Latvian territory, we expect costs to reach around one billion euros, and we won’t be able to finance it all with EU money, so we will need private-sector involvement,” Zidkovs adds.

The project dwarfs Via Baltica. Given that no technical details will be discussed until after the presentation of the EC’s study next December, it could last a generation. “There will be public consultations in Brussels this April for stakeholders to air their views,” says Zidkovs.

And one can expect a lot more talking before the first rail is laid.

In the final analysis, both projects meet valid needs. However, the sheer expense renders their full implementation unlikely. While the Via Baltica is based on an existing road network and can thus be implemented piecemeal, Rail Baltica would require construction from scratch, with all the cost and risk that entails.

Looking at the long term, as Zidkovs recommends, the latter project is unquestionably the more promising. But long-term projects require long-term capital and political will. It may be that, come 2016, the first high-speed train will be cruising between Tallinn and Warsaw - but don’t book your tickets just yet.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

The southern Baltic Sea area possesses as one the most dynamic growth regions of the world the potential for a sustainable development. Efficient and sustainable traffic solutions are on the one hand means and at the same time preconditions for the utilisation of this potential.

As long as there is no study identifying the impacts of Rail Baltica on regional and / or spatial development the relevant actors in the countries involved in the planning and implementation of this major rail infrastructure project should continue under the assumption, that transport infrastructure does contribute to regional development, provided that certain conditions are met.

However, such a study on regional development impacts of Rail Baltica and complementary regional development measures should be designed and carried out once the necessary decisions regarding the alignment of the railway has been taken by all partners involved. All potential alignment options should be systematically and transparently examined with clearly defined selection criteria for further consideration and analysis. A first step is finally made by starting the work on developing a methodology for the assessment of spatial planning, regional development and socio-economic aspects to be used for the evaluation of various rail-route alternatives of Rail Baltica. A respective study has been tendered in August 2007.
Questions to be answered in the context of a “follow-up” project on Rail Baltica spatial/ regional development aspects and impacts:

- What will be the regions affected by the railway investment measures? Definition of a development corridor ...
- Assess or determine the impacts of Rail Baltica planning and implementation of the regional and spatial development in a defined “development zone” or “corridor”.
- Does the infrastructure (Rail Baltica) bring the less favoured region closer to the country’s economic centres (the infrastructure must not merely pass through but serve the region)?
- Is the capacity of the regional network feeding the new infrastructure adequate?
- ...

Spatial development including European polycentric development aspects should be considered in the analysis, especially the accessibility in time rather distance, thus securing the project applicability within the framework of a common intra-European transport policy promoting the development of trans-European networks as a key element for the creation of the internal market and the reinforcement of economic and social cohesion. (EC Treaty, Chapter XV, Article 154-156)\(^3\)

A common master plan for Rail Baltica is at this stage absolutely necessary in order to avoid possible different understandings of the same concepts in each country. Each country should formulate its expectations from Rail Baltica (e.g. in terms of accessibility e.t.c.) and then step by step a common understanding and agreement on the final design and content of such a master plan could be reached\(^3\).

It will be necessary to guarantee the political will and a long-term commitment for the development of Rail Baltica. This commitment should not only be limited to the aspects of transport development and planning, but needs to include the broader perspective of impacts for the spatial and regional (economic) development of the areas affected by the railway investment measures. An approach has to be developed to add to the existing trans-national infrastructure concepts (as outlined in section 2) strategies for the development of defined spatial corridors aiming a improvement of the regional development and at effective integration across the BSR and across the whole of Europe.

Apart from political will and commitment the relevant actors (basically at national level) need to ensure the funding of the infrastructure investments for creation a comprehensive trans-European inter-modal transportation network work in the southern Baltic Sea area with its backbone Rail Baltica.

\(^3\) Summary of the Rail Baltica International Coordination Group Meeting on 4 September 2006 in Riga

\(^3\) Such a master plan has also been subject to discussion on the Rail Baltica INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION GROUP MEETING, Riga, 20th April 2007. No decision was made.
Efficient and lasting traffic solutions in the southern Baltic Sea area require a trans-national co-operation between public and private participants on different levels. Future co-operations and/or projects should include the private sector actors in a suitable way.

The explicit consideration of Rail Baltica transport, spatial and regional development aspects and impacts in national spatial plans of linkages with corresponding plans in neighbouring countries has to be promoted. From the document “VASAB 2010 Plus Spatial Development Action Programme” it can be taken that the majority of national spatial development plans and concepts of BSR countries have been prepared only recently. They pursue largely consistent objectives. Examples are the Lithuanian national and regional plans as presented in section 3 of this report.

However, there are shortcomings, which in the context of Rail Baltica planning and implementation will have a negative effect:

- There is little coordination of policies and cooperation on the sectoral level within the single partner countries.
- Coordination of the regional policy is one of the weakest points.
- Trans-national aspects are not adequately reflected in national plans (only in some cases, also border areas and coastal zones are addressed as trans-national issues – needs to be verified ...). Most national plans don’t show systematically linkages with neighbouring countries for all relevant aspects of the spatial system. Cross-border plan interdependencies needs to be made more transparent.

Regional and local authorities (social-economic partners) should be more actively involved into the discussions and decision making process on strategic questions related to the construction of Rail Baltica and the surrounding infrastructure, identification of problematic territories and target regions, etc.

Further assessment should be undertaken to cover effects of inter-modality, interoperability, socio-economic and environmental effects of adding convenient and speedy rail connection, increasing oil prices, changes in European public traveling habits (increased popularity of single day business trips, self-managed weekend city breaks, increasing security constrains in air travel sector competing for short to medium range travel, recent developments of tourism flows etc.).

Moreover, a rough evaluation of the national plans for programming and implementation of the EU-Cohesion and Structural Funds in the RAIL BALICA countries (is not subject of this report) reveal that notin all of the countries involved the funds for these major investments have been earmarked for the programming period 2007 – 2013 (– this needs to be verified by checking the final versions of the relevant CF-/SF-programming documents!!!). A “concerted action” should be envisaged to ensure the availability of EU-Structural and Cohesion Funds for Rail Baltica related investments in the coming programming period.

The largest gains in accessibility in east and south-east Europe are due to the enlargement process itself, even for the accession countries and western Balkan countries, because the
process of European integration and the enlargement of the EU have reduced barriers to travel and the transport of goods not only between EU member states but also between the EU and other countries. Infrastructure projects contribute to this effect and, not surprisingly, the more infrastructure projects are implemented in Eastern Europe, the larger the effect there. The results of a study\textsuperscript{33} confirm the need for a spatially-differentiated spatial policy which does not adopt the same development model for all European countries but which differentiates it according to the phase of development of each country. Such a strategy implies that, in the already highly-developed and urbanised old EU member states, the economically most successful large agglomerations should not be further promoted but that existing or emerging polycentric structures should be strengthened, predominantly through improving the accessibility of medium-level central places and compensating for the accessibility deficits of rural and peripheral regions.

However, in the still-urbanising new member states – as well as in the accession countries and western Balkan countries – it may be justified, over a transition period of ten to fifteen years, to enhance the growth dynamics of these countries via fast and efficient transport connections between their capital cities and the major agglomerations and economic centres in western Europe. After that period, however, the risk of the over-dominance of these cities will have to be reduced by a shift in the focus of transport investments first to medium-sized cities and, later, as in the old EU member states, to rural and peripheral regions.

4.2.1 The relevant results of the Pre-Feasibility Study for the formulation of the Action Plan

The pre-feasibility study identifies three investment packages for the realisation of the Rail Baltica. As a result of the discussions in the frame of this project it can be concluded that only the packages 1 and 2 can realistically be taken into consideration. A summarised description is presented in the following:

Package 1: Design speed of minimum 120 km/h

Package 1 represents a solution, which secures a minimum design speed of 120 km/h from Tallinn to Warsaw. The package describes a situation where Russian standards are maintained in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - except from the section from Kaunas to the Lithuanian/Polish border where a new line with European standards (not electrified) is constructed according to already agreed standards. The package includes the construction of a 185 km partly new and more direct line from Joniskis via Radviliskis to Kaunas. Alternatively, the existing line could be upgraded/ extended. This option is considered a sub-variant in Package 1.

\textsuperscript{33}Klaus Spiekermann and Michael Wegener: The role of transport infrastructure for regional development in south-east Europe; in: South-East Europe Review 1/2006, S. 51 – 61
This package requires that a re-loading station or logistics centre be established in the Kaunas region.

**Package 2: Design speed of minimum 160 km/h**

The second package reflects a rather ambitious plan for implementing Rail Baltica. It includes a north-south connection providing a design speed of at least 160 km/h. The package also includes the construction of a new line from Kaunas to the Lithuanian/Polish border based on European standards (not electrified). It requires that a re-loading station or logistics centre be established in the Kaunas region.

The main option includes the construction of a new and more direct line from Joniskis via Radviliskis to Kaunas, but as for Package 1, a sub-variant is considered, based on upgrading of the existing line between these cities.

Another sub-variant is also considered where a new line is constructed from Riga - via Bauska and Panevezys - to Kaunas.

**Package 3** is the most ambitious plan for implementing Rail Baltica since it is based on the European gauge standard on all north-south sections. But the different railway gauges (“European standard gauge” of 1435 mm and "Russian gauge" of 1520 mm) in the partner countries remain a major obstacle for the all-European railway integration. “This implies that Rail Baltica should either be developed as a stand-alone system based on European standards or by improving the existing system based on Russian standards with an improved re-loading station at the point of conversion between the two standards” (COWI-Interim Report). However, from the results of the work in the frame of this Interreg-project it can be taken that this option would – if at all – only be realised in the (very) long term.

The implementation of investment package 1 is expected to increase the passenger transport flows along the Rail Baltica corridor, which is induced both by modal shifts and by changes in the route choice. Furthermore, the implementation of investment package 1 is expected to result in a moderate increase in the passenger demand on the lines feeding the Rail Baltica corridor, such as Liepaja – Jelgava or Klaipeda – Siaulai. The impacts in the southern part of Rail Baltica are more prominent than in the northern part of the corridor. One reason for this is that the section Tartu – Tallinn is expected to be upgraded, independently of the investment options under examination.

The investments of package 2 are expected to result in a further increase in demand in the southern part of the Rail Baltica corridor. On the new line between Kaunas and Radviliskis, the annual passenger transport volume is expected to amount to 1.6 million passengers per year in 2034.

Generally, large rail freight flows in the countries are strongly oriented in the east-west direction (except in Estonia). The implementation of investment package 1 shows that a moderate shift of approximately 1.5 million tonnes from road to rail can be expected in the future. The implementation of investment package 2 will only slightly improve the operational speeds of freight trains compared to the speeds of investment package 1, as the freight trains can only to a
limited degree make use of the potential for higher speeds. The Rail Baltica traffic will in some sections share the tracks with quite intensive east-west traffic, which goes towards the Baltic ports. The transport flows generated in investment package 2 are to a large extent similar to that of investment package 1.34

Summarising it can be stated that with the implementation of the Rail Baltica the passenger transport flows will increase, impact on freight traffic is limited.

Regarding the speed of the rail connection in this context it should be noted that when discussing the justifications of investments in the high-speed option, it should be clear that such a line might be used almost exclusively for passenger traffic. For operational reasons it is difficult to mix high-speed and normal passenger traffic on the same line, and the same applies to freight traffic. Otherwise, the capacity of such a line would be severely limited. Project partners object the development of a high-speed line mainly because of the fact that if such an option is selected, the relevant EU regulations with regard to interoperability have to be applied.

The experts carrying out the pre-feasibility study conclude that all three investment packages are considered economically - but not financially - feasible. None of them is clearly dominant, although package 1 provides the highest return on investments and must be considered the economically most robust option. “The least costly investment package (1) has the highest IRR and B/C ratio and it is assessed to be the most robust solution, which can be developed further over time in pace with the development in the demand. Furthermore, it is the fastest and least complicated option to implement, but it will offer limited benefits to freight transport.”35

34 European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy/ COWI-Consortium: Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways - Main conclusions and recommendations, January 2007
35 European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy/ COWI-Consortium: Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways - Main conclusions and recommendations, January 2007
Step-by-step implementation

Strategically, it has to be decided if the development of Rail Baltica shall be implemented by improving and modernising the existing broad gauge system or as a new independent rail system with European gauge.

With regard to these technical standards, the Rail Baltica Co-ordination Group, consisting of authorised officials from the project countries, in 2003 agreed on the key aspects which should be included in a feasibility study, which included the European track gauge standard of 1435 mm. In the course of the Rail Baltica International Coordination Group meetings the precondition has been defined that Rail Baltica shall be a railway service according EU railway standards and service quality requirements.

As can be taken from the information available on the development perspectives of Rail Baltica collected in the discussions during the expert meetings and workshops held in the context of WP 1 of this Interreg-project and as summarised in this report it must be stated that this option is realistic in the (very) long-term perspective only.

Obviously, a European gauge system will have to be developed from south to north in order to make sense, but if Rail Baltica is developed by improving the existing broad gauge system, it is recommended that detailed studies are used to identify the most optimal sequence of investments in the network.

The current analysis shows that it could prove to be optimal to give first priority to:

1. Sections around the major cities, as a significant share of the benefits is linked to regional transport
2. Sections, which are also used for east-west transport, as this accounts for a large share of rail transport in the project countries

Furthermore, it could prove to be optimal to begin upgrading the existing infrastructure in the north, as traffic volumes are higher in the northern part of the corridor.\(^{36}\)

\(^{36}\) European Commission, Directorate-General Regional Policy/ COWI-Consortium: Feasibility study on Rail Baltica railways - Main conclusions and recommendations, January 2007
4.2.2 Medium-term (7 years horizon)

The development perspectives will be looked at as two development stages: the first stage will cover the medium-term (7 years) time horizon, during which the reconstruction of the existing Russian gauge will be a focus within the Baltic States and Poland. The second stage, the long-term perspective (15 years time horizon) will include the policy option of construction of European standard gauge in these countries.

To quote Ben Nimmo from the Baltic Times (feature of Mar 23, 2005): “If all goes according to plan, the Warsaw-Kaunas section should be ready in 2010, Kaunas-Riga in 2014 and Riga-Tallinn in 2016”.

During the Tallinn meeting the Ministers of Transport of the partner countries have taken a declaration according to which research shall be carried out in 2008 – 2010 aimed at identifying the best possible opportunities in reorganizing the railroad facilities on the line between Tallinn and Parnu - on the border between Estonia and Latvia. An international expert team shall also be organized, the composition of which is going to be decided, soon. The first meeting of the group is planned by the end of the year 2007 in Vilnius.

The following items are going to be discussed by the experts followed by further implementation thereof:

- following huge reconstruction of the railroad from Tallinn to Warsaw the speed of 120km per hour could be reached. Accordingly, the distance from Riga to Tallinn could be covered in approximately three hours.

- it is anticipated to increase the speed on the railroad track from Tallinn to Riga up to 160km per hour during the second stage of the implementation of the project.

- during the third stage of the implementation of the project the railing of the track will be replaced with the European standard railing - from 1520mm to 1435mm, and the railroad to Riga will be rectified and directed through Parnu town.
Measures and steps envisaged in the partner countries until the year 2014:

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<th>General / All countries</th>
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<td>Make the necessary decisions regarding the alignment of the railway (on the basis of the</td>
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<td>methodology currently elaborated in the context of this Rail Baltica Interreg project)</td>
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<td>supported by all partners involved</td>
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<td>Concentration on the implementation of package 1 as defined in the pre-feasibility study and</td>
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<td>presented in section 4.2.1 of this report</td>
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<td>Development of sections around the major cities, as a significant share of the benefits is</td>
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<td>Development of sections, which are also used for east-west transport, as this accounts for a</td>
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<td>large share of rail transport in the project countries</td>
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<td>Preparation of a study on regional development impacts of Rail Baltica and complementary</td>
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<td>Further assessment of effects of inter-modality, interoperability, socio-economic and</td>
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<td>environmental effects of Rail Baltica as a convenient and speedy rail connection</td>
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<td>Promotion of the explicit consideration of Rail Baltica transport, spatial and regional</td>
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<td>development aspects and impacts in national spatial plans of linkages with corresponding</td>
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<td>plans in neighbouring countries</td>
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<td>Improvement of the coordination of policies and cooperation on the sectoral level – in</td>
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<td>particular regional policy – within the single partner countries</td>
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<td>Ensuring adequate reflection of trans-national aspects in national and regional plans and</td>
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<td>show systematically linkages with neighbouring countries for all relevant aspects of the</td>
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<td>spatial system</td>
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<td>Preparation of a common master plan for Rail Baltica in order to avoid possible different</td>
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<td>understandings of the same concepts in each country. Formulation of the expectations,</td>
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<td>objectives, functions regarding Rail Baltica (e.g. in terms of accessibility e.t.c.)</td>
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<td>Development of and agreement on a joint planning procedure for Rail Baltica</td>
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<tr>
<td>A “concerted action” should be envisaged to ensure the availability of EU-Structural and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion Funds for Rail Baltica related investments in the coming programming period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of the recommendations of the two case studies carried out in the context of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work package 1 of the Rail Baltica BSR Interreg project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of a study for the section Białystok- border Poland/Lithuania - final report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ready in 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernisation of the railway lines which are the Polish part of Rail Baltica (Corridor I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation of the official alignment of the Polish part of Rail Baltica (status quo: Warsaw Wschodnia – Białystok – Sokółka – Suwałki – Trakiszki – Polish/Lithuanian border</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Lithuania**

Realisation of the national plan of maintaining (and expanding) in the medium-term the East-West connection on Russian gauge, and connecting Kaunas to the South with the European Standard gauge railway network

**First priority for the development of Rail Baltica: part south of Kaunas**

Realisation of the railway section from the Lithuanian - Polish border via Marijampole to Kaunas until the year 2010:
- Gauge width: 1435 mm
- Mixed (goods and passengers) transportation
- Designed speed: 160 km/h
- Vertical and horizontal alignment assure a speed of ≥200 km/h

Development of a logistic centre near Marijampole, creation of infrastructure of the international and national logistic centre

Creation and development of industrial zones and parks with modern infrastructure (Marijampolė industrial zone)

Construction of a passenger station and a loading station at Baragine village near Marijampole to become a transit station for the passengers travelling by air, road and rail

Construct a freight loading station near Marijampole

Encouragement of industrial zones and green field investments in the Euroregion Nemunas

Development of road infrastructure in Lithuania-Poland border area

**Second priority for the development of Rail Baltica: connection with the West - East railway lines from Klaipeda to Vilnius and further East**

Development of railway infrastructure from EU-funds (ERDF) of the programming years 2004-2006 (8 projects): ensuring regular and safe railway traffic, increasing train speed. Railway passenger terminals are being reconstructed in Vilnius and Kaunas. Introduction of the system for maintenance and control of the wheel-sets to increase the safety of railway transport and reduce air pollution.

Railway road accessibility is undergoing reconstruction in the Klaipėda Port

Intermodal terminal to be built in Kaunas

**Third priority for the development of Rail Baltica: part north of Kaunas**

Final decision on one of the four options currently discussed as presented in section 3.3. of this report - in the frame of the joint master plan for Rail Baltica

Assessment of the options in respect to border crossings Lithuania – Latvia via Radviliskis/Jelgava or via Panevezys/Bauska – and decision making!

Carrying out a design study on the modernization of the section from Kaunas to the Latvian border to 160 km/h speed standard (could be a cross-border project concept!)

Latvia and Lithuania jointly preparing an application for TEN-T financial support to cross-border section of Rail Baltica

Planning for the establishment of one GVZ (logistics centre) between and Radviliskis or near Panevėžys

Decision of the investments in the construction of inter – modal terminal, logistic center and industrial parks near Siauliai or Panevėžys
### Lithuania – Whole track

| Modernisation of the telecommunication equipments in the sections state border with Poland–Šeštokai–Kazlų Rūda, Palemonas–Gaižūnai, Šiauliai–Joniškis– state border with Latvia |

### Latvia

| In the short- to medium-term perspective the implementation of the Rail Baltica project (with EU gauge) will not be reasonably possible |
| Upgrading of the existing line as a 1st stage of Rail Baltica development: starting preparations and implementation of investments to get the line in an operational state |
| Assessment of the options in respect to border crossings Latvia – Estonia via Valka/Valga or via Ainazi/Parnu – and decision making! |

### Estonia

| Assessment of the economic, technical, environmental and spatial planning aspects of Rail Baltica for Estonia |
| Increase cooperation between Estonia and Latvia, also at the official level |
| Fix the Rail Baltica cross-border section between Estonia and Latvia |
| Preparation of the construction of the new direct line connecting Tallinn and Riga as a key component of Rail Baltica |
4.2.3 Long-term (15 years horizon)

The decision with regard to a high-speed line will first of all be influenced by the future potential of passengers for long-distance traffic.

The COWI-experts in carrying out the technical pre-feasibility study for Rail Baltica presented in their interim reports that in the year 2034 around 1.9 million passengers per year are the be expected between Bialystok and Elk, 1.2 million are expected to be carried across the Polish/Lithuanian border, while 1.5 million passengers per year are forecasted on the new line between Kaunas and Radviliskis.

The following graph demonstrates the change of transport flows until 2020 as forecasted by EU-experts in the context of ESPON-studies on “Territorial Impact of EU Transport and TEN Policies”. Taking this as a rough guideline for the direction in which the long-term perspective of Rail Baltica has to be developed it supports the efforts to build the railway track in line with the plans and visions expressed already today in the planning documents and policy papers.
Change of Transportation Flows 2000 - 2020

Regional Change of Vehicle Unit Kilometres Travelled
TEN-STAC base year 2000 vs. European+ scenario 2020

- up to 26%
- 25% up to below 33%
- 33% up to below 43%
- 43% up to below 70%
- 70% and more

Regional change of transport flows

Markedly Increasing Railway Transport Flows

- 2.5 up to 5.0 million passengers or 10.0 up to 20.0 million tonnes
- 5.0 up to 7.0 million passengers or 20.0 up to 30.0 million tonnes
- more than 7.0 million passengers or more than 30.0 million tonnes (per year, difference 2000-2020)

Source: ESPON 2.1.1, Territorial Impact of EU Transport and TEN Policies
**Measures and steps envisaged in the partner countries until the year 2022:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General / All countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of package 3 as defined in the pre-feasibility study and presented in section 4.2.1 of this report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of sections around the major cities, as a significant share of the benefits is linked to regional transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of sections, which are also used for east-west transport, as this accounts for a large share of rail transport in the project countries</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Link the plans to build a dedicated high speed line based upon the French TGV model and possibly even to use French built TGV style trains (as presented by Polish government in the past) with the Rail Baltica development</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lithuania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLAN OF THE IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES OF THE GENERAL SPATIAL PLAN OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA</strong> – measure to be completed until 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the railway for trains going at the speed of 100 kilometres per hour in the section state border with Poland–Šeštokai–Kazlų Rūda will be rebuilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>signal and energy supply equipments in the sections Palemonas–Gaiziūnai, Šiauliai–Joniškis– state border with Latvia will be modernized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two level crossings in the sections Palemonas–Gaiziūnai, Šiauliai–Joniškis– state border with Latvia will be built.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the railway in the sections Palemonas–Gaiziūnai, Šiauliai–Joniškis– state border with Latvia will be reconstructed: adjusted for trains going at the speed of 160 kilometres per hour</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Rail Baltica part north of Kaunas</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of one GVZ (logistics centre) between Siauliai and Radviliskis (or Panavecys)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latvia</th>
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<tr>
<th>Estonia</th>
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</table>

According to the visions of the TDP, the Rail Baltica line will be completed in 2016 in conformity with EU standards, allowing a high-speed connection from Estonia to Western Europe.
4.3 The case studies

A successful implementation of any of the analysed development options will be a means to realise a long-term development vision: to change Rail Baltica from an imaginative and policy-driven European project to a strategic and sustainable, but pragmatic north-south rail corridor providing cost-effective transport services for the countries involved in pace with the development of the demand for such services.

At this stage it is important to maintain the option to realise the long-term development vision. In order to start to fill the vision with life one of the first tasks to be carried out is to create public awareness. Even more important is to offer incentives to potential passengers of Rail Baltica to use the existing infrastructure facilities and connections.

In order to support or initiate such a process two case studies aiming at the provision of recommendations and practical examples for options and opportunities to improve the passenger rail transport along the Rail Baltica corridor through the implementation of organisational, communicative and tariff measures. These measures can be implemented in the short-and medium term perspective and would immediately contribute to bringing the Rail Baltica back to the minds of the people in the Rail Baltica countries.

The tourism sector has been identified as major area for such interventions and has therefore been selected as the main objects of investigation of one of the case studies.

WP 1 - case studies:

1. Touristische Mobilitätsbroschüre "Mit der Bahn entlang der Rail Baltica - Zentral-, Ostpolen und Litauen ohne PKW entdecken" – Touristic Mobility Guide „With trains along the Rail Baltica routes – Discovering Central and Eastern Poland and Lithuania without car”

2. Untersuchung über kurzfristige Verbesserungsmöglichkeiten im Eisenbahnpersonenverkehr entlang des Rail Baltica-Korridors durch organisatorische, kommunikative und tarifliche Maßnahmen (Städtetarif im deutsch-polnischen Grenzraum) - Expert's assessment for short-term improvement in the rail (long-distance) passenger traffic in the Rail Baltica passage through the implementation of organisational, communicative and tariff measures (Joint tariff in the German-Polish border area).
5 Annexes
5.1 Map
5.2 **Lithuania: Legal basis and Institutions responsible for the implementation of National Regional Policy**

Institutions responsible for the implementation of National Regional Policy:

**National level:**
- The Lithuanian Government (forms National Regional Development Council, approves its composition, sets criteria for the selection of problematic territories, discusses Plan for Reduction of regional social-economic disparities, approves the list of problematic territories, approves programmes for the development of problematic territories, decides on the measures, which might be included into Single Programming Document, etc);
- Ministry of the Interior (initiates preparation of Plan for Reduction of social-economic disparities and submits it to the National Regional Development Council, participates in preparation of state and sectorial development strategies, organizes preparation of programmes for the development of problematic territories, consults Regional Development Councils and County governor’s administrations on preparation and implementation of Regional Development Plans, etc);
- National Regional Development Council (discusses aims, objectives and measures of National Regional Policy, sectorial development programmes and makes suggestions, discusses Plan for Reduction of regional social-economic disparities and makes suggestions, discusses Regional development programme, etc).

**Regional level:**
- Regional Development Council (discusses and approves regional Development Plan, submits proposals to the Government and National Regional Development Council concerning the implementation of the Regional Development Plan, discusses and submits proposals concerning Plan for Reduction of regional social-economic disparities, debates on the projects proposed by the County Governor’s Administration or municipalities and submits its conclusions to the Ministry of Finance, forms working groups, etc.)
- County Governor’s Administration (prepares Regional Development Plan while taking into account the Strategic Plans of the municipalities, participates in the preparation and implementation of programmes for the development of problematic territories, makes proposals to the Regional Development Council, concerning the implementation of Regional Development Plan, coordinates activities of the municipalities and social-economic partners in implementing decisions related with the implementation of National regional development policy in the region, etc.)
The **Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania** prepares law deeds needed for spatial planning policy, gives planning conditions under its competence, gives spatial planning documents obligatory preparation demands to organiser of programming if executed or supposed to execute activity or its not execution may have negative consequences for welfare or environment quality.

The **County Governors** realize state spatial planning policy in their Counties, organise and coordinate County’s level preparation of spatial planning documents under its competence, carry out realization monitoring of spatial planning level of Government or government authorized institution or County under its competence.

The **Regional Development Councils** accept decisions.

The **Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania** prepares the methodology for the preparation and updating Regional development plans.

The **County Governors** realize state regional development policy in County, organise and coordinates the preparation of Regional development plans under its competence, carry out realization of monitoring of Regional development plans.

**Regional Development Councils** make decisions regarding plan approval.

**Legal basis:**

**Spatial Plan**

Lietuvos Respublikos teritorijų planavimo įstatymas 2004 m. sausio 15 d. Nr. IX-1962, Vilnius;

„The Republic of Lithuania Spatial panning law“ 2004 January 15, No IX-1962, Vilnius

Apskrities bendrojo (generalinio) plano rengimo taisyklės patvirtintos Lietuvos Respublikos aplinkos ministro 2004 m. gegužės 7 d. įsakymu Nr. D1-263, Vilnius;

„Regulations for the preparation County comprehensive (general) plan“, Approved by the Environment Minister of Republic of Lithuania 2004 May 7, No D1-263, Vilnius

**Regional Development Plan**

Lietuvos Respublikos Regioninės plėtros įstatymas“ 2002 m. gruodžio 10 d. Nr. IX-1285, Vilnius;

“The Republic of Lithuania Regional development law”, 2002 December 10, No IX-1285, Vilnius;

Regionų plėtros planų parengimo ir atnaujinimo metodika patvirtinta Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministro 2002 m. spalio 4 d. įsakymu Nr. 482/

“The methodology for the preparation and updating Regional development plans”, Approved by the Minister of Internal Affairs of Republic of Lithuania, 2002 October 4, No 482
5.3 Questionnaire to the National Experts

Note: As outlined in the „Rationale“ (section 1 of this report) the approach of collecting data by using the questionnaire had been stopped by the project partners. The documents is shown here as a reference only.

Cover letter:

Dear Project Partners,

In order to quickly commence work on the RAIL BALTICA project and not to spend too much time and effort on its analysis part it has been decided to develop a questionnaire for collecting the necessary information for working on work package 1 (WP1) to be filled in by national experts and/or public servants in the fields of spatial planning as well as regional development.

The attached tables represent the first draft of this questionnaire to be circulated to representatives of all participating countries, regions and relevant municipalities – not only the “official RAIL BALTICA Project Partners” – through the RAIL BALTICA international and national working groups.

It has to be taken into account that the current version of the questionnaire displays only a first step into the assessment approach and needs further elaboration in the course of the project. However, this further specification and detailing will be part of the interactions between the work packages 1 and 2, according to the work plan of the project.

Therefore, this first draft of the questionnaire should be regarded as a basis for the first discussions in the framework of analysing the situations concerning spatial planning and regional development in the partner countries and their regions and municipalities.

Any comments, amendments additional question etc. are highly welcome!

The chosen approach

The single tables of the questionnaire are self-explanatory: the first one covers the whole complex of spatial planning and regional (development) planning at the different levels of the planning hierarchies in the participating countries, including aspects of mutual harmonisation of the planning processes and documents; the second one deals with concrete development projects, in particular rail transport projects in the project area (existing and planned).

The questions make direct reference to RAIL BALTICA and should be answered in light of the planning procedure for the route.

In order to provide the necessary information the partners are asked to identify and analyse national specific information and list key national documents. Since it will not be possible to translate all the various national documents of relevance into English the questions refer to their main stipulations and impacts on spatial and regional development and in particular to the RAIL BALTICA planning process.
The questionnaire needs to be filled in by as many persons – experts – as possible, as the personal views of representatives of the different planning levels in the partner countries’ hierarchies as well as from different disciplines will provide valuable information for the analysis of the different planning systems, the relevant legislation and its implementation. Therefore, the RAIL BALTICA partners are invited to distribute the questionnaire not just among themselves, but also to other institutions, authorities and/or persons involved in spatial and regional development and planning – to everyone who can contribute to fill the analysis with substance.

Once this part of the questionnaire will be filled in by a sufficient number of project partners as well as other national/ regional experts, we will be presented with a detailed picture of the legislative and administrative situations, the goals and strategies as well as the current planning processes in all regions / countries. On the basis of this information, common development goals and strategies for their implementation can be defined.

The second part of the questionnaire covers the assessment of the status of planning and development activities in the railway sector as well as specific (ongoing and planned) development projects. It is divided into the assessment fields:

- Status of Railway Planning and Development
- Infrastructure development projects
- Results / Impacts (on the region and on RAIL BALTICA)
- Status of the project

As in the first part of the questionnaire, the questions are related to the different horizontal levels: EU / BSR level, national level, regional level as well as “interregional level” in order to also cover aspects of cross-regional and cross-border cooperation.

The experts are asked to describe the national and regional goals and the focus of railway development activities, to describe the alignment in the regional plans, to explain how the alignments are fixed / defined in regional development planning etc.

For the specific projects, the experts are asked to describe all relevant development projects and to show to what extent the goals of these projects are in line with the spatial planning goals defined in the first table. Additionally, the impacts of all projects on the region and on RAIL BALTICA are to be assessed.

It would be of advantage, if the project partners could provide us with maps and other relevant material (documents in English only) – of course, electronic versions would be highly appreciated!

The questionnaire will lead to the perception of planning activities in the field of railway (and thus RAIL BALTICA) development. Additionally, the assessment of the present and planned development projects will show the different levels of development activities and may help to define priority actions for the RAIL BALTICA project, as well as presenting a basis for the activities foreseen under WP3.

We hope that you will agree with this approach and will find it to be a good basis for the first work steps under WPs 1 and 2.

In advance we would like to thank you for your cooperation!
QUESTIONNAIRE TO NATIONAL EXPERTS

Name of expert:

Country:

Institution of expert/ functions, position:

Place and date:

**Introduction** (for those experts who are not yet familiar with the RAIL BALTICA project)

In most Central and Eastern European states the expansion of the transport (and telecommunication) infrastructure is considered to be one of the main tasks of economic and social policy. Emphasis is laid on the improvement of transport links along the trans-European transport axes, resulting in considerable investments. These investments might not only contribute to the achievement of objectives of EU- and national transport policy but also represent incentives for regional development. The improvement of such transport links is expected to result in positive growth, income and employment effects. To reach these effects, the interactions between high-level transport infrastructure and settlement infrastructure, regional economy, regional transport networks and the requirements of environmental protection have to be taken into consideration.

It is obvious that realising trans-European transport axes comprises cross-border and trans-national cooperation in planning and implementation. The key issues for trans-national cooperation within the next decade have been discussed in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) – for example in the context of “VASAB 2010 Plus – Spatial Development Action Programme” and different INTEREG-/ Phare-Projects.

The trans-European railway RAIL BALTICA, linking Helsinki – Tallinn – Riga – Kaunas – Warsaw and continuing to Berlin is to be developed within the cooperating EU-Member States. The INTERREG III B project RAIL BALTICA aims at defining a trans-nationally concerted railway development strategy thus supporting spatial integration through co-ordinated transport infrastructure development and spatial/regional development. This project will contribute to jointly identifying measures suitable to maximize the benefit of high-level rail transport infrastructure to spatial and regional development, discussing guidelines for a better interconnection of regional development and the planning and implementation process of the RAIL BALTICA.

**Definition of national spatial and regional (development) policy**

The perception of what exactly ‘national spatial and regional (development) policy’ consists of is likely to vary between countries and partners. Therefore, a short definition is outlined in the following, just to give an overview of the scope of this relevant policy field and of what is covered by the questionnaire.

- Spatial (development) policies: Aspired / planned spatial order of housing, economic / industrial installations, infrastructure within a state. All activities of the relevant authorities to reach the aspired goals are summarized under the term of ‘Spatial Development Politics’. Spatial policies always comprise of the territorial dimension of planning.
- Spatial Planning: All planning activities intended to fill the areas defined in the comprehensive / regional / municipal spatial development plan. Spatial planning is an abstract term used to describe planning activities on a state, regional and municipal level aimed at the realization of the regional and municipal spatial development goals.

- Regional Development Planning: Level of spatial development planning between the national and municipal levels. Regional planning defines the spatial order of housing, economic / industrial installations, infrastructure etc. within a region. Regional planning goals are fixed in a Regional Development Plan.

- Regional Development: All activities aimed at reaching the goals fixed in a regional development plan. Regional development measures aim at implementing spatial development priorities on a regional level e.g. through regional structural policies. These policies define measures to achieve sustainable development of the areas and facilities defined in the spatial plans in terms of economic development, socio-political implications and environmental factors.

- Regional (development) policies have traditionally been comprised of a range of instruments:
  - **regional incentives**: By this is meant financial aid schemes to support the development of private-sector firms in designated aid areas. The most popular measures by far are grants in support of fixed capital investment, though subsidised loans are also found as well as fiscal concessions (increasingly rare), labour-related subsidies and, in the Nordic Member States, transport concessions.
  
  - **support for the business environment**: This form of assistance does not involve direct support to individual firms but rather focuses on “framework measures” to improve business conditions in problem regions: It includes local infrastructure provision (e.g. incubator units) as well as measures to enhance information, advice and consultancy, education and training and innovation support.

  - **infrastructure provision**: This refers to improvements in the physical infrastructure in the problem regions including major road and rail links, improvements in water supply and distribution networks and telecommunications facilities.

  - **planning instruments/development of regional strategies**: This involves the use of regional plans and programmes to analyse regional strengths and weaknesses and develop appropriate regional strategies in response.

  - **disincentives to location in congested areas or controls on location in such areas**: This covers both cost penalties and permit systems introduced to encourage firms to consider moving to less congested, problem region locations.

  - **the spatial distribution of the economic activities of the State**: By this is meant policies which cause state-owned concerns to invest in or move to problem region locations; more generally, it covers measures which aim to influence the location of public sector jobs, including those in the civil service.

  *(source: ESPON project 2.4.2, Integrated analysis of trans-national and national territories based on ESPON results)*

- Planning: All activities aimed at providing the concepts for the theoretical and methodological preparation as well as the concretion of spatial and structural development processes. The
concepts will have to regard social, environmental and economic aspects and will have to be oriented towards the needs of those affected by the concepts. Planning results will be defined in development plans which in turn will be implemented by administrative bodies/authorities on the national, regional and local levels.
EU Regional and Spatial Development Policy in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU regional policy / spatial planning</th>
<th>1. ESDP</th>
<th>2. TEN</th>
<th>3. VASAB</th>
<th>… please copy &amp; paste this table in order to add more columns</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal basis: key laws, acts or policy regulations; Main EU regional/spatial policy instruments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objectives / spatial development goals of EU policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Priorities</td>
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<td>Spatial targeting (approach to designating assisted areas, indicators, assisted area maps)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Derivation of an implementation strategy (instruments, measures, actors...)</td>
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<td>Fields of action and major projects</td>
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<td>Main regional/spatial policy instruments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instruments for cross-border cooperation (CBC)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedures for cross-border cooperation (CBC)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Main institutional structures for implementing EU regional policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional structures for CBC?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expected impact on RAIL BALTICA</td>
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**Assessment of the major EU spatial development/regional policy objectives and spatial patterns/trends**

In how far would you assess EU and national regional policy objectives in your country to be conflicting or complementary?

How do you assess both types of regional policy with regard to their importance within the country?

Have there been recent changes in the national regional policy approach (objectives and/or institutional settings) which have been influenced by EU regional policy?

In how far do EU and national regional policies evolve mutual influences with regard to spatial development objectives and institutional structures?

What are the main development challenges deriving from the spatial patterns and spatial development objectives formulated by the EU (e.g. in the ESDP), VASAB or others? Please argue with regard to the objectives of polycentricism, spatial cohesion, balanced spatial competition and spatial integration.

Complementarities or inconsistencies between spatial patterns/trends and spatial objectives?

Potentials / obstacles for CBC?

Relevance concerning RAIL BALTICA?
### National Planning, main characteristics

#### Spatial patterns and development challenges

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<tr>
<td>Legal basis: key laws, acts or policy regulations, Main regional/spatial policy instruments (in national language/ English translation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production and consultation obligations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client/ producer of the plan</td>
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<td>Official approval/ supervision of plan</td>
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<td>Plan elaboration and participation procedure</td>
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<td>Legal impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compensations for planning restrictions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternations (updates, changes) to the plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objectives - spatial development goals</td>
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<td>Priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provisions for cross-border cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>How are the RAIL BALTICA alignments fixed / defined in the documents/ plans etc.?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment of the major national spatial patterns/trends and the spatial development objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please characterise the main spatial patterns from a national policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perspective. Please refer to national key regional policy/ spatial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planning documents. “What are from your point of view the main spatial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patterns and trends within your country?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please list the main spatial development objectives: objectives of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polycentricism, spatial cohesion, balanced spatial competition and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spatial integration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Please assess to what extent EU and national regional policy approaches</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>address the main spatial patterns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there any activity in the field of cross-border cooperation (CBC)?</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>incapability or opportunities for successful cross-border cooperation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where do you see needs or potentials for a better coordination of national</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and EU regional policy / spatial development objectives and institutional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>settings?</td>
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<td>How does the coordination of regional and sector policies work?</td>
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<tr>
<td>participation of your institution / authority?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do the national development goals support RAIL BALTICA development?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will RAIL BALTICA support national development goals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Please copy & paste this table in order to add more columns
### Regional (Development) Planning

#### Basic information about the region
- Population structure / Population development
- Spatial structure
- Transport infrastructures
- Focal points for the development of the region (i.e. industry, tourism etc.)
- Protection of environment and open-spaces

#### Transport infrastructure
- General accessibility
- Connection to airport / harbour, port
- Connection to the railway network
- Connection to the national road network

#### Development strategy of the region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal basis: key laws, acts or policy regulations, Main regional/spatial policy instruments (in national language/ English translation)</th>
<th>1. Spatial Plan</th>
<th>2. Regional Development Plan</th>
<th>3. Development perspectives … *</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production and consultation obligations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compensations for planning restrictions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternations (updates, changes) to the plan</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Objectives - spatial development goals
- Priorities
- Derivation of an implementation strategy (instruments, measures, actors...)
- Fields of action and major projects
- Interrelation of projects and regional development strategy
- Provisions for cross-border cooperation
- Main institutional structures for regional policy (ministerial responsibilities; other national committees/councils; regional committees/councils; degree of decentralisation/centralisation)
- How are the RAIL BALTIMICA alignments fixed / defined in the documents/ plans etc.?
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment of the regional / county development and planning</th>
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<tr>
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<td>How is the national level incorporated into the regional level? - Mutual harmonisation of the planning processes and documents</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Municipal Development and Planning

#### Basic Information about the Municipality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of the town/municipality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position in the central-place system (lower, middle upper center)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated/remote geographic location, location within the regional/urban structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distances to neighboring towns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban structure &amp; development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Transport Infrastructure

<table>
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<tr>
<th>General accessibility</th>
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<td>Connection to airport/harbor, port</td>
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<td>Connection to the regional road network</td>
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<td>Connection to the public transport network</td>
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### Development Strategy of the Municipality

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<th>2. Land Use Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do you think that RAIL BALTICA will support regional development goals?</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
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<th>Infrastructure development projects</th>
<th>Results / Impacts (direct/ indirect)</th>
<th>Status (planned, under implementation finalized)</th>
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<td>Goals and Development focus?</td>
<td>List</td>
<td>List</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>Goals and Development focus?</td>
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<td>List</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>National</td>
<td>Goals and Development focus?</td>
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<td></td>
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**Alignment in national plans?**

Are the goals in line with spatial planning goals?

**Defined / fixed in national development planning?**

Are the goals in line with spatial planning goals?
### Cooperation and Development Projects

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<td>Title</td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>on Region</td>
<td>on Rail Baltica</td>
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<td>Interconnection with other transportation media?</td>
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<td>Interregional</td>
<td>Railway alignment coordinated?</td>
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Please copy & paste columns and rows if necessary!
5.4 Milestone 2 activity plan 2006-02-03
Rail Baltica, WP 1 – “Regional development perspectives”

**Milestone 2 (January-June 2006)**

**WP1**
- **17. Feb** – finalize questionnaire; circulate to partners
  - comments
- **Mar-Apr** – filling in the questionnaire
  - comments
- **28. Apr** – aggregated document
  - comments
- **Jun** – presentation of document
  - comments

**WP2**
- **Feb-Apr** – establishing coordination with TPFS
  - comments
- **Feb** – assessment paper elaborated
- **Apr** – assessment paper + template to partners
  - 5 national reports
- **May** – 1st discussion report prepared
- **Jun** – presentation of discussion report; invite COWI
  - comments

**WP3**
- **17. Feb** – finalize questionnaire; circulate to partners
  - comments
- **Mar-Apr** – filling in the questionnaire
- **28. Apr** – aggregated the common issues: handbook, checklist
  - comments
- **Jun** – presentation

**WP4**
- **Feb** – working group meeting in Poland:
  - activity plan of M2;
  - TOR for each partner;
  - concept of political promotion;
  - Annual conference in September 2006;
  - promotional activities;
  - logo of Rail Baltica.
- **Feb** – draft of Newsletter. Final in electronic version in beginning of March
- **Feb** – Web page www.rail-baltica.net
- **Jun** – working group meeting about updated activity plan for MS3

5 national reports