

Esteemed Governor and Deputy Mayor,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for joining our publication event today and thanks to the Finnish Transport Agency for hosting us.

I would like to start by expressing my warmest thanks all the partners and people who have made the Helsinki-Tallinn fixed link pre-feasibility study possible:

- TALSINKIFIX project
- Harju County, City of Tallinn
- Finnish Transport Agency
- City of Helsinki

The study is an important step for the future twin city development of Tallinn and Helsinki. A vast number of different indicators show that the citizens want to have a twin city. Actually, based on their actions, a twin city of Tallinn and Helsinki already exists and is doing well.

According to some estimations, there are already 100,000 Estonians working in Finland, especially in the construction sector, but in many other fields, as well. The number of liner traffic passengers in the Port of Helsinki reached about 11 million last year, where routes between Helsinki and Tallinn account for 75 percent of the passengers. It is also interesting to note that Estonians are the fastest growing residents group with foreign language background in Helsinki.

We also know that both Tallinn and Helsinki are popular cruise destinations within the Baltic Sea and share a joint interest to increase their attractiveness as tourist destinations.

Indeed, the dynamics of the twin city is important for both cities and their future economic development. The dense flow of people crossing the Gulf of Finland is beneficial to us both.

In the next phase, it is important to widely evaluate the societal impacts of the tunnel project, especially in terms of economic development. It would also be beneficial to integrate the respective national levels in the work.

Ladies and gentlemen

In conclusion, Helsinki is ready to start preparing a project aiming at a tunnel study together with Tallinn. A fixed link between the two cities would create a basis for an Estonian – Finnish growth vision. The project has the potential to give a significant positive impact on the competitiveness and attractiveness both locally and nationally.

Once completed, the tunnel connection would bring a new dimension to the movement of passengers, services and goods. In addition, the transport facilities towards Eastern and Central Europe as well as the Mediterranean would greatly speed up, thus improving the integration and cohesion of the European Union.

Thank you for your attention.