

WELCOME!

ÜLLE RAJASALU

Harju County Governor



Welcome

Welcome dear ladies and gentleman,

I want to thank Finnish Transport agency, our host today, especially Mr Juhani Tervala, all our project partners, City of Helsinki, City of Tallinn, Femern Belt Development fund and our consultants representing Sweco group.

Las spring I as Harju County Governor announced a tender for Helsinki –Tallinn fixed link pre-feasibility study in Tallinn, this can be considered as a starting point to this project. As a symbolic bridge we decided to reveal the results at this side of the Gulf of Finland in Helsinki.



Welcome



The story of this pre-feasibility study goes further back. When I started as Harju County Governor in 2010, all these ideas were in fact floating in the air. Mainly in twin-city strategies, but also stated in special plans as a reservation for tunnel opening in Viimsi Municipality. It was a subject, but a serious study did not exist at that time. It could be even said that mega project of this magnitude was considered to be in certain sense some sort of political taboo.

I believe that even the most beautiful idea is useless if not put into practice. Every new solution, sometimes even unrealistic-one, is worth investigating if it might work. Today we witness just such a study. And revealing the secrecy, it turns out that it may just work.



Welcome

Harju County Government is in the process of planning high-speed railway connection Rail Baltic. Fast on-land connection to Central-Europe raises logical question, if and how can we further strengthen the economic and social impact of Rail Baltic. By removing missing link on TEN-T North Sea – Baltic corridor between Tallinn and Helsinki we can increase the importance of the entire corridor.

A Harjumaa and Uusimaa region with its 2.2 million inhabitants is one of the potential centres on Baltic Sea: we have some of the best universities; a good reputation in innovation, our IT sector is strong. Bringing together the networks of the two countries, allows mobilizing capital and implementing great ideas. Better the physical connectivity allows increasing the attractiveness of the whole region. A better connection with the world is a competitive advantage.



Welcome

Connecting the two cities will affect the labour market in both countries strongly, the specialised workplaces will become more accessible and, in the case of the smart economy, it is of great importance. Improved accessibility and a balance between two economies will provide additional opportunities for entrepreneurs. We have exciting times ahead of us and we can positively affect the development, if we concentrate our resources towards closer cooperation.



Welcome

Results of the study show that this fixed link is imaginable on certain conditions. But what does this "imaginable" to give us? Mainly, the question of whether we're ready to move on? In this project we tried to learn from the experience of Denmark. And I suggest we and you-all-ask our friends from Denmark, how they have reached so far that their project has received political support from the State. It probably has not been all easy and realisation of infrastructure project of such scale needs strong background work, as well as cross-border cooperation to reach the common goal.



Welcome

As a representative of the state in Harju county, Estonian capital region, I will try to do my all to ensure strategic cooperation with Finland on the state level. It covers the potential fixed link as well as other areas. Implementing common strategies will hugely contribute to both countries. It cannot be done spontaneously or on a project basis, we need a permanent structure to implement activities of common interest.

Dear guests. We are speaking of enthusing subjects. I have to admit that I am excited. There is lot of work to be done but this work is really interesting. Large investments mean huge opportunities for the economy. Large investments to both Rail Baltic project and tunnel project can and must be seen as a potential opportunity as it brings capital to the local economy and technical solutions as well as patents created can bring additional revenue in the future.



Welcome

As we are speaking about first results, I hope that political taboos are disappearing and we can start full debate on the issue. You can all assist on going forward. The broader the debate on this project is, the more likely we can reap the benefits of more interconnected economy. If Finland and Estonia decide to execute big dreams then lot of exciting can happen.

I am readily available for all comments and questions after the official part of the event.

Thank You!

