



Ms Sandija Balka
Ministry of Environmental Protection
and Regional Development of Latvia
sandija.balka@varam.gov.lv

Our ref 29.06.2020 No 7-15/20/2641-4

Notification concerning the resumption of the
planning procedure of the Rail Baltica 1435 mm
railway route Pärnu county plan

Dear Ms Balka

As the Party of origin, Estonia is hereby sending a notification concerning the resumption of the
planning procedure of the Rail Baltica 1435 mm railway route Pärnu county plan.

Background

On August 30, 2013 Estonia notified Latvia about the initiation of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) of the Rail Baltic 1435 mm railway route county plans of Harju, Rapla and Pärnu counties. Latvia participated in the SEA procedure as an affected Party. On May 21, 2018 Latvia was informed about the adoption of the county plans that determined the Rail Baltica railway route corridor in Estonia.

Resumption of the planning procedure of the Pärnu county plan

On May 19, 2020 the Supreme Court of Estonia issued a judgement annulling the Rail Baltica railway route sections 3A, 4A and 4H in Pärnu county (illustrative map is enclosed). In terms of route section 4A, an appropriate assessment concerning the Luitemaa Special Area of Conservation has not been carried out as part of the SEA and planning procedure. To eliminate the error and in the context of elaborating new route alternatives, adequate margin of discretion must be provided for the administrative authority. Therefore, route section 4A – together with route sections 3A and 4H which are directly connected to route section 4A – have been annulled. Please be informed that the annulled route sections are not located directly by the border of Estonia and Latvia. A map illustrating the Rail Baltica railway route corridor in Pärnu county – together with the annulled route sections 3A, 4A and 4H – is enclosed.

Following the judgement of the Supreme Court of Estonia, the Ministry of Finance of Estonia has decided to resume the planning procedure of the Pärnu county plan in terms of the annulled route

sections 3A, 4A and 4H in Pärnu county. SEA is part of preparing the county plan initiated by the Government of the Republic of Estonia in 2012. Resuming of the original planning procedure means that legislation in force in 2012 will be applied (i.e. 2012 version of the Planning Act). Procedural acts which are not related to the reasons for the resumption of proceedings shall not be repeated.

In the course of preparing the Pärnu county plan new route alternatives will be elaborated and assessed in the SEA report. After the resumption of the planning procedure, the draft planning solution is prepared that will also be made available for the public to comment. Approvals for the county plan have to be obtained from the concerned authorities. After the acceptance of the county plan, the publication (i.e. public display and public hearing) of the county plan together with the SEA report follows.

Transboundary SEA

The implementation of the Pärnu county plan may potentially result in significant environmental impact which is likely to be transboundary. Therefore, Estonia is sending Latvia a notification.

If Latvia intends to participate in the SEA procedure as an affected Party, the summaries of the Pärnu county plan and the SEA report will be forwarded to Latvia (in the stage of the publication of the county plan and SEA report). Consultations are commenced concerning environmental impact resulting from the implementation of the county plan and environmental measures to be taken. Upon preparation of the county plan, the results of transboundary consultations must be taken into account. Regarding the timeframes and translation of documentation, the agreed approach of the Commission on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context between Estonia and Latvia is followed.

In addition, we would like to draw your attention on the following. On June 18, 2019 Estonia notified Latvia concerning the route section „Pärnu – Estonia-Latvia border“ of the Rail Baltica railway line. The decision-maker – the Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority – has initiated environmental impact assessment (EIA), based on the developer’s intention to assess environmental impact in the course of preparation of building design documentation. The decision-maker has initiated EIAs in eight sections of the railway line in Estonia.

Latvia has indicated its wish to participate in the EIA procedure of the route section „Pärnu – Estonia-Latvia border“. Considering the judgement of the Supreme Court of Estonia and the resumption of the planning procedure of the Pärnu county plan, the developer RB Rail AS has informed that the EIA procedure of the route section „Pärnu – Estonia-Latvia border“ has been put on hold.

Answer to the notification

Kindly send the answer to this notification to the Ministry of the Environment (keskkonnaministeerium@envir.ee) by August 28, 2020 at the latest, and:

- acknowledge the receipt of the notification;
- indicate whether your country intends to participate in the transboundary SEA procedure.

Contacts information

The coordinator of preparation of the Pärnu county plan: Ministry of Finance of Estonia – Ms Heddy Klasen, heddy.klasen@fin.ee.

Developer: RB Rail AS: Rail Baltic Estonia OÜ – Mr Roland Müür, roland.muur@rbe.ee.

SEA procedure: Ministry of the Environment of Estonia – Mr Rainer Persidski, rainer.persidski@envir.ee.

Sincerely Yours,



Kaupo Heinma
Point of Contact for the Espoo Convention

Enclosure: Rail Baltica railway route corridor in Pärnu county

For information:

Ms Iveta Jegere, Environment State Bureau of Latvia, iveta.jegere@vpvb.gov.lv

Ms Heddy Klasen, Ministry of Finance of Estonia, heddy.klasen@fin.ee

Mr Roland Müür, Rail Baltic Estonia OÜ, roland.muur@rbe.ee

Rainer Persidski, + 372 626 2973, rainer.persidski@envir.ee
Ülle Luiks, +372 626 0742, ulle.luiks@envir.ee