



LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS APLINKOS MINISTERIJA
THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

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25 June 2015 No. (10-3)-D8-4785

**REGARDING NOTIFICATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPEAN GAUGE
RAILWAY LINE BETWEEN KAUNAS AND THE LITHUANIAN-LATVIAN BORDER**

According to Lithuanian legislation, the Directive 2001/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council On the Assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment and the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a transboundary context (Espoo Convention), construction of long distance railway traffic lines is subject to the environmental impact assessment.

The construction of European gauge public railway line between Kaunas and the Lithuanian-Latvian border is part of a large project of transboundary scale – the EU Trans-European Network development, linking railway infrastructure of Baltic States with Poland and other parts of western Europe. Taking into account that some territories in Lithuania and Latvia which are planned to be crossed by the Rail Baltica 2 railway line are characterized by complicated geological condition (these territories can be affected by the contemporary geological processes such as karst process) we would like to notify you about the initiation of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure for the planned construction of the railway line.

The EIA procedure is being initiated by Lietuvos Geležinkeliai AB under the provided authority of the Minister of Transport and Communication of the Republic of Lithuania, the consultant of the developer URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited, represented by URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited branch within the Republic of Lithuania is preparing the EIA documentation (EIA program and report).

In the EIA two main route alternatives will be considered:

Alternative No. 1: *Rokai – Palemonas* (Kaunas city municipality) – *Neveronys* (Kaunas district municipality) – *Jonava – Pagiriai* (Kėdainiai district municipality) – *Ramygala – Upytė – Janališkiai* (Panevėžys district municipality) – *Pušalotas – Joniškėlis – Vaškai – Kiemėnai – Dagiai* (Pasvalys district municipality);

Alternative No. 2: *Rokai – Palemonas* (Kaunas city municipality) – *Neveronys* (Kaunas district municipality) – *Jonava – Pagiriai* (Kėdainiai district municipality) – *Ramygala – Upytė – Janališkiai* (Panevėžys district municipality) – *Pušalotas – Joniškėlis – Vaškai – Kiemėnai – Kamardė* (Pasvalys district municipality).

The main considered alternatives differ by the parameters of the intended railway station in Panevėžys city and the crossing point of the Lithuanian-Latvian border. In case of alternative No. 1 the crossing point is Dagiai (Pasvalys district municipality), in case of alternative No. 2 – Kamardė (Pasvalys district municipality). The tracks of the railway line are situated respectively.

We would like to note that EIA is performed in parallel to the stage of the special plan of the European gauge railway line between Kaunas and the Lithuanian–Latvian border. The Republic of Latvia has been already notified about the initiation of the spatial plan and the strategic environmental assessment and has expressed its willingness to participate in this procedure.

Therefore, the alternatives No. 3 and No. 4, which were identified within the special plan concept and strategic environmental report the European gauge railway line between Kaunas and the Lithuanian – Latvian border have been eliminated due to the refusal to construct the track of railway line through the area of Panevėžys city municipality and the bilateral consultations with Latvian side, which showed that Kiemėnai (Pasvalys district municipality) and Majėnai (Pasvalys district municipality) would not be acceptable to Latvian side as border crossing points.

The national EIA procedure is performed in two subsequent stages. During the first stage the EIA program (scoping document) is prepared and presented to the relevant parties of EIA (the state authorities responsible for healthcare, fire prevention, protection of cultural heritage, local authorities) and to the public for review and consultation. The EIA program defines scope and content of EIA report and shall be approved by the competent authority – Environmental Protection Agency.

During the second stage, the EIA report is prepared based on the approved EIA program and with due respect to the opinions and statements made by the public, the relevant parties of EIA and the affected Parties (when transboundary EIA is applicable). The EIA report will be reviewed by the relevant parties of EIA, the public and the affected parties before the adoption of the substantiated decision on the permissibility of the proposed economic activity in the selected location. The decision is planned to be taken by the end of this year.

Please advise us about your willingness to participate in the EIA procedure by 24 of July 2015. In case of positive answer please provide comments on the submitted EIA program (the document is in English) by the same date. Your response to this notification and comments should be addressed to Mr. Vitalijus Auglys point of contact regarding Notification in accordance with Article 3 of the Espoo Convention. The contact information is provided below:

Mr Vitalijus Auglys
Director of Pollution Prevention Department
Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania
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Please find enclosed EIA program (paper version).

Sincerely yours,

Vice-Minister

Algirdas Genevičius



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