



Vides pārraudzības valsts birojs

Environment State Bureau of the Republic of Latvia

Rūpniecības iela 23, Rīga, LV-1045, Latvia, phone +371 67321173, e-mail pasts@vpvb.gov.lv, www.vpvb.gov.lv

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The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania

Edita Daraškaitė
edita.daraskaite@am.lt

For information: **Vitalijus Auglys**
vitalijus.auglys@am.lt

Beata Silobritiene
beata.silobritiene@am.lt

Regarding the strategic environmental assessment

The Environment State Bureau (hereinafter – the Bureau), acting as the competent authority regarding the strategic environmental assessment (hereinafter – the SEA) in Latvia, would like to thank the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania regarding the sent information about the Engineering Infrastructure Development Plan of the „*Rail Baltica*” Railway Line Kaunas – Lithuania-Latvia State Border Engineering Systems and Regional Stations project (hereinafter – the Plan). According to the arguments included in the Explanatory note, it is concluded that the Plan does not cause any consequences for the environment of the Republic of Latvia, thus cross-border consultations are not required.

The Bureau evaluated submitted information and asked the competent authorities for an opinion regarding the possible significant transboundary impacts of the Plan. Please be informed that comments were received from the Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia, the State Environment Service, the Zemgale Planning Region, and the Bauska District Municipality. The Bureau has gathered and evaluated opinions expressed by mentioned authorities and agrees with estimation that the Plan is not likely to have significant transboundary environmental impacts on the territory of the Republic of Latvia. Thus, Latvia is not going to participate in the SEA of the Plan and request transboundary consultations under the Article 10 of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context) and to Article 7 of the Directive 2001/42/EC of the European parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programs on the environment.

Please be informed that the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia and the State Environment Service provided more detailed comments regarding the Plan.

The Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia concluded that the Plan does not foresee any change the approved position of the *Rail Baltica* route in the territory of Lithuania, which has been previously assessed and discussed in the context of transboundary impacts. Thus, it is not expected that the implementation of the Plan could have a negative impact on the environment in the territory of Latvia. In addition, the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia informs, that SIA “*Eiropas Dzelzceļa līnijas*” (the national implementer of the *Rail Baltica* project in Latvia) and AS “*RB Rail*” haven’t other specific comments or proposals for the development of the Plan. The exhibition and coordination of the above-mentioned *Rail Baltica* system solutions are carried out based on mutual cooperation and information exchange between the participants in the *Rail Baltica* project. However, the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia highlighted if, during the development of the Plan, changes are made to its solutions with transboundary effects, or if such impact (likelihood) is identified during the SEA, it would be necessary to inform the Republic of Latvia.

The State Environment Service noted that an environmental impact assessment procedure has been carried out for the *Rail Baltica* railway line in the territory of the Republic of Latvia, during which various impacts on the environment, their importance, and the necessary measures to reduce the impacts have been identified. In the opinion of the State Environment Service, during the assessment of the SEA of the Plan in the Republic of Lithuania regarding the implementation of the project, it should not be necessary to identify significantly different potential environmental impacts, which have already been identified within the EIA procedure of the *Rail Baltica* project in the territory of the Republic of Latvia. During the development of the Plan, it is possible to apply various planning principles and solutions that will prevent a negative impact on the population and the quality of the environment in general also in the territory of the Republic of Latvia. At the same time, the State Environment Service points out that the *Rail Baltica* infrastructure solutions in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania must be synchronized with the *Rail Baltica* infrastructure solutions in the territory of the Republic of Latvia. In addition, the solutions provided in the Plan should not cause changes in the position of the *Rail Baltica* railway line in the territory of the Republic of Latvia, as well as cause significant changes in other downstream infrastructure in the territory of the Republic of Latvia. If the above mentioned cannot be ensured when developing the Plan, the Republic of Lithuania should conduct transboundary consultations with the Republic of Latvia regarding the development of the Plan.

We kindly ask the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania and developer of the Plan consider above mentioned as well as inform us about the results of the SEA and findings of transboundary impact, especially if negative impacts on the environment are possible on the territory of Latvia. In addition, we kindly ask to inform us in case there are planned (are necessary) any changes of the for pre-planned solutions during development of the planning document.

Looking forward to continuing our successful bilateral cooperation in the field of environmental assessment in the transboundary context.

Yours sincerely,

Daiga Avdejanova (signature*) Director of Environment State Bureau of the Republic of Latvia

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Ilze Lielvalode, +371 67770813,
e-mail: ilze.lielvalode@vpvb.gov.lv