

PROTOCOL

**OF THE MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION
FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA**

The meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission for Cross-border Cooperation of the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Latvia (here and after – the Commission) was held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 3-4 December 2015.

List of participants of the meeting – members of the Commission and invited persons is provided in the Attachment 1.

Delegation of the Republic of Lithuania was chaired by Mr. Julius Morkūnas, vice minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania.

Delegation of the Republic of Latvia was chaired by Mr. Edgars Tavors, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia.

The Commission has adopted following Agenda at the beginning of the meeting:

1. Opening of the meeting. Welcome speeches of Chairs of the Commission.
2. Cooperation in the transport sector:
 - 2.1 Cross-border Cooperation Projects between Latvia and Lithuania in the Scope of European Union Financing Road Infrastructure.
 - 2.2. Implementation of the “Rail Baltica” project.
 - 2.3. Possibilities of Resumption of Train Traffic on Rēņģe-Mažeikiai Cross-Border Section
3. Maritime Spatial Planning.
4. Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and Government of the Republic of Lithuania about the Maintenance of the Latvian – Lithuanian State Border and the Activities of the Plenipotentiary Border Representatives.
5. Celebration of Balts Unity Day.
6. Commemoration of the Centenary of the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Latvia.
7. Common Information Space.
8. Learning of Latvian and Lithuanian Languages in the Border Region.
9. Fair Competition Issues in Procurement Procedures
10. European Commission Initiative – Survey on Obstacles in Border Regions
11. Information about 2014–2020 INTERREG V-A Latvia and Lithuania Cooperation Programme

1. Opening of the meeting. Welcome speeches of Chairs of the Commission

2. Cooperation in the Transport Sector:

2.1 Cross-border Cooperation Projects between Latvia and Lithuania in the Scope of European Union Financing Road Infrastructure

Both side representatives made presentations on the implementation of cross-border co-operation projects between Latvia and Lithuania in the road sector.

The Commission emphasized the importance of further close cooperation between the national road administrations in order to implement the projects of the cross-border co-operation priority list, as well as to investigate actual opportunity for new projects.

The Commission recommended further develop mutual cross-border co-operation and coordination of actions in regard to the implementation of road reconstruction sections from various European funds and national budgets.

2.2. Implementation of the “Rail Baltica” Project

Both sides reported on the progress in the development of the Rail Baltica Project and confirmed their readiness to implement all necessary procedures to reach the agreement on border crossing coordinates according to the outcome of the planning process, as well as to perform all other necessary activities to finalize environmental impact assessment procedures both in Latvian and Lithuania.

2.3. Possibilities of Resumption of Train Traffic on Rengė-Mažeikiai Cross-Border Section

The Commission was informed that currently this case is under dispute between European Commission and Joint Stock Company „Lietuvos geležinkeliai” ("Lithuanian Railways") and further decision on this question will be taken by the JSC "Lithuanian railways" after this case is closed.

3. Maritime Spatial Planning

The Commission took note of information exchanged by Lithuanian and Latvian counterparts on current situation on maritime spatial planning and presentations made on the relevant projects of each country. Both sides expressed an intention to proceed with cooperation on maritime spatial planning basing on legal demands with national and international legislation, related to both countries.

4. Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and Government of the Republic of Lithuania about the Maintenance of the Latvian – Lithuanian State Border and the Activities of the Plenipotentiary Border Representatives

Latvian side has provided information on the situation with the development of the Agreement. The Commission recommended to restore a discussion without delay on the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and Government of the Republic of Lithuania about the maintenance of the Latvian – Lithuanian state border and the activities of the Plenipotentiary Border Representatives.

5. Celebration of Balts Unity Day

The Commission reflected on the tradition of organizing of Balts Unity Day. In the year 2016 Balts Unity Day will be organized in the city of Liepāja, Latvia.

The Commission proposed to Latvian and Lithuanian municipalities to take active part in organization of Balts Unity Days events using regional and cross-border approach of cooperation.

6. Commemoration of the Centenary of the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Latvia

The Commission has emphasized importance to organize joint events related to Commemoration of the Centenary of the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Latvia on local level. It was proposed to use cross-border approach for Commemoration and recommended to inform about the events the national coordinators as well the Commission.

7. Common Information Space

The Commission encouraged the municipalities to inform in their websites about the cultural, tourist and other important events both in Lithuania and Latvia, with the aim to stimulate local cross-border tourism.

8. Learning of Latvian and Lithuanian Languages in the Border Region

The Commission supports the need – to facilitate cooperation of local communities of the cross-border region, as well as better conditions for job creation and for improvement of bilateral investment possibilities. Both cooperating parties will seek to this end for EU Funds and other available means of financing for the purpose of learning of the state languages (LT and LV) of each of cooperating countries of local communities of the cross-border region – learning respectively the language of the neighbouring country.

As an addition to this joint initiative, the camps for strengthening of language skills to be envisaged within the general learning process.

9. Fair Competition Issues in Procurement Procedures

The Commission has proposed to initiate a discussion on the issues in collaboration with both Latvian and Lithuanian competent authorities.

10. European Commission Initiative – Survey on Obstacles in Border Regions

Latvian side addressed the Lithuanian side with regard to coordinate the involvement of Latvian and Lithuanian border municipalities and regions in the survey conducted by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) examining the existing obstacles in border regions and its influence on people, organisations, businesses and public authorities.

11. Information about 2014–2020 INTERREG V-A Latvia and Lithuania Cooperation Programme

Latvian side has presented 2014–2020 INTERREG V-A Latvia and Lithuania Cooperation Programme.

Edgars Tavors



Chair of the Latvian Side
of the Intergovernmental Commission for
Cross-border Cooperation of the Republic of
Lithuania and the Republic of Latvia

Julius Morkūnas



Chair of the Lithuanian Side
of the Intergovernmental Commission for
Cross-border Cooperation of the Republic of
Lithuania and the Republic of Latvia