

French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs meets with Rail Baltica team

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Industry news

Rail Baltica



Today, during her official visit to Latvia, the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Ms Catherine Colonna, took the opportunity to acquaint herself with the Rail Baltica project - an ambitious European infrastructure initiative. Accompanied by her delegation, Minister Colonna engaged with Latvian Minister for Transport, Kaspars Briškens, and met with the management representatives of Rail Baltica's delivery organizations, as well as the Rail Baltica Central Node construction team. Minister Colonna was also offered a tour of the construction site at Riga Central Station.

The Rail Baltica project holds a prominent position in European transport infrastructure, functioning as a crucial link within both the North Sea - Baltic Sea TEN-T corridor and the Baltic Sea - Black Sea - Aegean Sea TEN-T corridor. The project aspires to bridge the gap in transport links by 2030, aligning with the objectives of the European Union.

"Rail Baltica is the basis for a new economic and security corridor, which as an ecosystem will create broad opportunities for development and cooperation. France is an important strategic partner in the implementation of the project, and I am glad to hear about further cooperation," said the Minister of Transport Kaspars Briškens, adding, "If Rail Baltica were already there, we could have significantly increased our support for Ukraine in their fight, including ensuring cargo flows."

"Rail Baltica, while undoubtedly vital for the connectivity and security of the Baltic states, transcends its regional significance to become an integral component of the broader European transport network—a bridge closing a crucial transport gap by 2030. The minister's keen interest in this project underscores our shared vision of Rail Baltica as a European ambition. Today's meeting served as a valuable high-level platform for engaging in discussions about our ongoing cooperation, and the pursuit of opportunities to enhance our partnership," emphasized Thierry Boussillon, Chief Programme Management Officer at RB Rail AS.

"The French delegation visited one of the most technically complex and largest Rail Baltica construction sites today, where the progress already allows us to grasp its scale and future functionality. Soon we anticipate continuing Latvia's progress starting mainline construction outside Rīga," emphasized Kaspars Vingris, Chairman of The Board of national implementing body Eiropas

Dzelzceļa līnijas. "Our collaboration with French companies is close in various aspects of Rail Baltica implementation. Here at Riga Central Station, Egis Group is a FIDIC engineer. We are learning from our international partners and their experience in high-speed railway infrastructure construction, both as a client and Latvian companies."

With France's well-established high-speed railway network, the nation brings invaluable knowledge and experience to the Rail Baltica initiative and the Baltic region. An important strategic partner in the Rail Baltica project, French companies have been involved in a spectrum of critical functions in the delivery of Rail Baltica. These include engineering consulting, construction supervision, provision of Notified Body (NoBo) services, Assessment Body (AsBo) services, as well as Control-Command and Signalling engineering and works supervision.

Minister Colonna's visit underscored the strong bonds between France and the Rail Baltica initiative. She engaged in fruitful discussions with key stakeholders, including Latvian Minister of Transport Kaspars Briškens, representatives of the project's central coordinator, RB Rail AS, including Thierry Boussillon, Chief Programme Management Officer, and Emilien Dang, Chief Technical Officer. She also met with the national implementing body in Latvia, SIA Eiropas Dzelzceļa līnijas, represented by its Chairman of the Board, Kaspars Vingris. Progress of Riga Central hub construction and engineering activities were introduced by the engineer's representative David Boulet and executive director of construction company Bererix Guntis Āboliņš - Āboliņš.

During her visit, Minister Colonna had the opportunity to witness firsthand the progress of the Rail Baltica Riga Central Node, one of the international stations on the Rail Baltica route.

About Rail Baltica

Rail Baltica is one of Europe's largest high-speed infrastructure projects, aiming to establish a modern and sustainable rail link that connects the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with the European rail network. It is also a part of the trans-European transport corridor.

Rail Baltica will be a fully electrified, double-track railway with a standard gauge of 1435 mm and will be equipped with ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System) and designed to meet European standards. With a design speed of 249 km/h, Rail Baltica will significantly reduce travel times between the Baltic States and major European cities. It will serve as a modern infrastructure for passenger, freight, and military mobility, promoting accessibility and facilitating business, tourism, and cultural exchange. Additionally, the project will enhance the Baltic region's position as a vital transit hub, fostering stronger trade connections and promoting regional cooperation.

About RB Rail AS

RB Rail AS is a multinational joint venture of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania established to lead and coordinate the implementation of the Rail Baltica Global Project, the first infrastructure development project of this scale in the Baltic region. More about Rail Baltica global project: www.railbaltica.org

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