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Demonstration of the train crossing the Vuoksi River (Sito Oy)

LUUMÄKI-IMATRA-RUSSIAN BORDER DOUBLE TRACK – A SIGNIFICANT NEW RAIL TRANSPORT ROUTE BETWEEN EU, RUSSIA AND ASIA

The Luumäki-Imatra-Russian border double track and the Imatra border crossing point for international rail traffic will provide a new, more feasible and less expensive cargo route from the EU to Russia and Asia through the new Losevo-Kamennogorsk-Svetogorsk double track railway in Russia.

The Luumäki-Imatra-Russian border double track

The railway between Luumäki and Imatra in South-East Finland is one of the most operated parts of the Finnish one track rail road. In the coming years, transportation volumes carried on this line are expected to increase following the opening of railway cargo transport for competition and export through Imatra. The connection to the new Losevo-Kamennogorsk double track in Russia through Imatra and Svetogorsk also allows for cargo traffic between Finland and Russia to be directed to this more cost-efficient route.

Finland and Russia signed a new agreement concerning cargo transport by rail in 2015. It allows free competition of the railway cargo transport across the Finnish eastern border. The agreement was ratified and entered into force on 22nd December 2016.

The current rail infrastructure of the Imatra border crossing point and between the Russian border-Imatra-Luumäki does not suffice the increasing volumes of passengers and railway cargo between the EU, Finland, Russia and Asia. Therefore, the Finnish government decided in 2016 to build a new Luumäki-Imatra-Russian border double track in South-East Finland.



*Imatra-Svetogorsk border crossing point in South-East Finland.
(Imatran kaupunki/Lentokuva Vallas Oy / Hannu Vallas)*





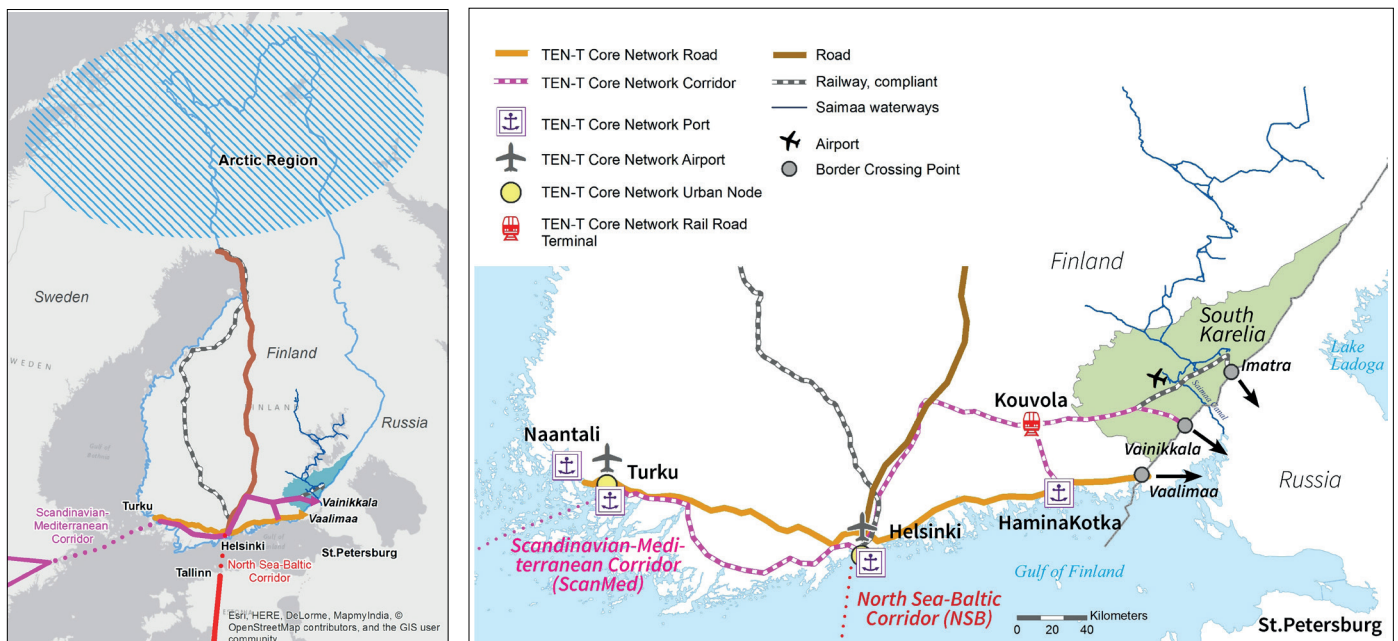
Demonstration of the new double track bridge over the Saimaa Canal. (Sito Oy)

The Scan-Med Core Network Corridor and the international rail cargo connection to Russia and Asia

The Scandinavian–Mediterranean Core Network Corridor starts from the Finnish-Russian border. The core network corridor’s current rail connection from the Russian border to Helsinki begins in Vainikkala. However, Vainikkala will concentrate only in the international transport of dangerous goods and passenger traffic (Allegro trains between St. Petersburg and Helsinki) and the rail cargo will use the new international border crossing point in Imatra.

The daily number of trains in Vainikkala does not necessitate a double track. Therefore, it is not a part of planned

investments in Finland. However, the safety of the railway yard in Vainikkala will be improved by 27 M€ to facilitate passenger traffic and the transport of dangerous goods. Compared to Vainikkala, the volumes in Imatra are already high and they will still increase with the new Finnish-Russian agreement which allows free competition of the railway cargo transport across the Finnish eastern border. Together, Vainikkala and Imatra shall form the strategic TEN-T gateway from the EU to Russia and Asia.



The transport connections with Russia are vital for the whole EU, Finnish industry and business and the vast economic potential of the Arctic region.



UPM-Kymmene Oyj, Forest industry

Investments for the international rail cargo transport

Finnish Transport Agency has evaluated the different alternatives for the Luumäki–Imatra–Russian border track. The best alternative for industry and the economic life is the one with the double track between Luumäki and Imatra, the triangle track in Imatra and the electrified double track between Imatra and the Russian border.

- The budget of the Finnish government for 2017 includes the construction of the first stage of the double track between Imatra and Joutseno and the improvement of the current track between Imatra and Luumäki (165 M€).
 - In addition, a separate decision has been made to build three new bridges along the double track section. Construction of the new bridges has been started and the work could be completed by the summer 2021 (24 M€, Saimaa Canal, old Main road 6, and Mansikkakoski).
 - The second stage of the double track includes the construction between Joutseno and Luumäki, as well as between Imatra–Imatrankoski–Russian border. The second stage will be constructed at the same time with the Russian Kamennogorsk–Svetogorsk double track.
- South-East Finland-Russia CBC 2014-2020 Programme will provide support for the construction of the control system and the improvement of the traffic arrangements in the Imatra road- and railborder crossing point (5 M€).

In Russia, the current Losevo–Kamennogorsk–Svetogorsk track provides a direct cargo traffic connection between the EU and the extensive Russian railway network to China and Far East. There is already a double track railway between Losevo–Kamennogorsk, and, according to the Russian authorities, the Kamennogorsk–Svetogorsk double track to the Finnish border will be completed in the 2020s. After that, there will be increased volumes on the track.

There will also be a new high-speed rail line, the Khorgos railway, between Moscow and Kazan. It will span 770 kilometres and will traverse seven regions of Russia. The project, currently being designed with an expected completion date is in the 2020s, is slated to be the first segment of an ambitious worldwide high-speed transport corridor that links Europe and Asia by rail.

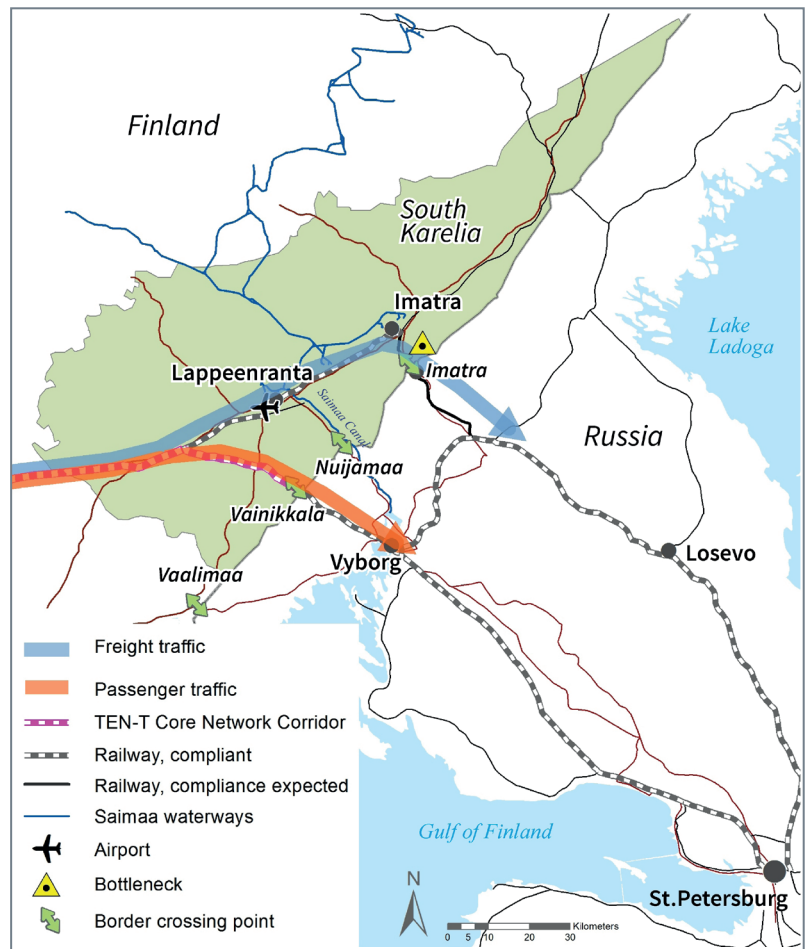


Demonstration of the Mansikkakoski bridge over the Vuoksi River. (Sito Oy)



New rail connection from Imatra to Russia and Asia

The Imatra and Vainikkala border crossing points together form a strategic rail connection as a part of the TEN-T network across the external border of the EU to Russia and Asia.



Regional Council of South Karelia suggests

- The Imatra border crossing point and the Luumäki–Imatra–Russian border rail connection shall be included in the next Work Plan of the Scandinavian–Mediterranean Corridor.
- The Imatra border crossing point and the Luumäki–Imatra–Russian border rail connection shall be included in the TEN-T core network when it is updated in 2023.
- The Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications shall approve the general plan for the Imatra–Russian border railway during 2018 and prepare a railway plan based on it by autumn 2019.
- The investment decision on the Imatra–Russian border railway stretch shall be made by 2020, utilizing the opportunity to use the EU’s CEF financing.



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REGIONAL COUNCIL OF SOUTH KARELIA
Kauppakatu 40 D, 53100 Lappeenranta
kirjaamo@ekarjala.fi

www.ekarjala.fi/liitto/

