



The Digital Baltic Road memorandum will accelerate the deployment of 5G mobile communications network in the Baltics

Today, on September 28, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Baltic countries regarding the development of Via Baltica digital corridor for the purpose of connected and automatized driving and development of 5G technologies. The ministers of Latvia and Estonia signed the Memorandum of understanding during the Baltic Sea Region 5G Ecosystem Forum "5G Techritory" happening this week in Riga.

The Minister of Transport of Latvia Uldis Augulis, together with the Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology of Estonia Rene Tammist, signed a **Memorandum of Understanding of the Baltic States on the Development of Interconnected and Automated Driving and 5G Technology in the Via Baltica digital corridor**, or the Digital Baltic Road in short, which will be signed later on by the Minister of Transport and Communications of Lithuania Rokas Masiulis.

Uldis Augulis, Minister of Transport of Latvia: *"I am truly grateful for the opportunity to reaffirm our unity and willingness to cooperate in the development of transport and electronic communications infrastructure within the framework of the 100th anniversary celebration of the Baltic States. Transport digitalisation, accompanied by a rapid technological development of electronic communications infrastructure, is both a challenge for the near future and an opportunity for Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania to set an example for other European Union Member States in cross-border cooperation".*

The introduction of 5G technology plays an important role in promoting entrepreneurship and raising the quality of life of the people by reducing the digital gap between large cities and remote populated areas. The fact that the new technologies are rapidly acquired in the Baltic States has also been observed by mobile operators.

Juris Binde, President of Latvijas Mobilais Telefons: *"The agreement on the development of the Via Baltica digital corridor confirms the ambition of the Baltic States to be among the leaders in the implementation of intelligent transport systems. This will be the basis for safer, faster and more convenient traffic in the future. The Baltic States have traditionally had strong positions in mobile technology development. According to OECD, people in Latvia are among the most active users of the mobile internet in the world".*

Implementing the Memorandum, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia will support pilot projects for intelligent transport systems in conjunction with the accelerated deployment of the 5G mobile communications network on the European route E67 Tallinn – Riga – Kaunas – border of Lithuania/Poland. An important part of the commitment is to ensure cross-border cooperation in particular, so that the established systems could operate unrestrictedly, both in border areas and along the entire transport corridor.

Vehicles will use 5G networks for data transfer between themselves and for communication with the surrounding infrastructure, as well as data collection from various types of infrastructure sensors for further processing. Therefore, the benefits of 5G, such as low signal retention, the simultaneous presence of many devices within the network, a secure and uninterrupted data connection, are an essential

prerequisite for the success of intelligent transport systems. The Memorandum is in line with the European Gigabit Society and the connectivity target – continued deployment of 5G coverage on the main roads of the European Transport Network by 2025.

The signed Memorandum is the basis for further cooperation between Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania in the development of interconnected and intelligent mobility while giving a positive signal to potential investors. It is also a signal for the transport and electronic communications industry to develop and implement intelligent technology solutions that will make roads safer, vehicles – more environmentally friendly, and, more importantly, driving will become more efficient by reducing travel time.

The cooperation process involves the exchange of information and knowledge and a set of good practice examples. The creation of such cross-border corridors is also supported by the European Commission and will make it possible to qualify for the use of European infrastructure financial support instruments for project implementation.

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