

**THE REFEC PROJECT** activities have started 1.2.2018 and the partners have been busy organizing the project itself with contracts, timetables, plans and information materials. So now we are ready to release the first newsletter !

**THE REFEC PROJECT AIMS** at reinforcing the establishment of Eastern Finland - Eastern Estonia transport corridor. One solution to make the corridor cargo flow more efficient could be establishing a transport connection between ports of Loviisa (FI) and Kunda (EE).

**THE PROJECT INCLUDES** concrete measures to support Loviisa-Kunda transport connection: port operative and investment plans, roadmap to comply with the regulatory requirements and needed licences, best practise transferred from similar connections in the Baltic Sea Region, ferry scheduling and route option plans integrating potential shipping companies to contribute to the business model(s).

**THE CARGO POTENTIAL** of the corridor is analysed and the impact of the developed corridor is verified (cargo volume using the corridor and Loviisa-Kunda connection, reduced travel time and socio-economic impacts). **BENEFITS:** faster, more fluent transportation and direct connections between eastern parts of Finland and Estonia, relieving the pressure of growing heavy traffic (traffic jams, emissions, noise, dust) in the city centres of Tallinn and Helsinki. The decreased mileage in transports means also less CO2 emissions.

**PROJECT MEETINGS** and also the first steering group (SG) meeting has been held. SG members gave valuable input to the freight potential analysis of the corridor which is under way. The preliminary results of statistical analysis are ready, and the project is about to start the survey to get further input on the feasibility of the Loviisa-Kunda connection. Moreover, interviews for key stakeholders are conducted before mid-summer.

**THE AIM IS** to analyse the freight potential of the transport corridor and the potential for a new ferry link between the ports of Loviisa (FI) and Kunda (EE). The results of previous projects e.g. the TriK (passenger and freight potential study of Kunda, Kotka and Kronstadt) and Eesti 2030+ strategy (which foresees the maritime connection) are taken into account.

Analysis is based on a survey, interviews, statistical data and other sources. The work includes defining the hinterland areas for both ports from where cargo would potentially be transported via the new ferry link, identification of and analysis on the cargo-owner industries, freight forwarder and transport companies, estimations on the type and amount of cargo (roro units) and passenger cars as an additional service on the route.

The future freight volume in different market conditions is also assessed. Different scenarios will be created on the basis of a workshop, which is held in September 2018.

The web-based surveys for stakeholders and companies in both countries starts shortly – so be ready !