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Rail Baltica Monitoring Task Force meeting in Vilnius: visit to project construction sites and future plans

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The National Audit Office of Lithuania hosted a meeting of the Rail Baltica Project Monitoring Task Force on 24-25 May. Representatives of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) and members of the Monitoring Group discussed the progress of the project both internationally and in Lithuania, its risks as well as future activities of the Task Force, including opportunities for another cooperative audit of the project.

"I am convinced that the auditors of our countries are doing a great job in closely monitoring the implementation of this global project, which is of great importance for Europe not only in terms of the economy but also in terms of national security, especially in the current circumstances," said Auditor General Mindaugas Macijauskas during the meeting.

At the meeting, "RB Rail AS", the company implementing Rail Baltica, presented the progress of the project and its financing in the Baltic States, and "LTG Infra" presented the development of the project construction works in Lithuania. "Vilnius Economics" experts gave a presentation on the risks related to the calculation of railway infrastructure costs and pricing. At the end of the presentations, the participants visited the Rail Baltica construction sites in the Jonava district to assess the progress of the construction of the railway line on the Kaunas and Lithuanian-Latvian border section.

During the meeting, the members of the project monitoring team took the opportunity to discuss in person the risks and issues related to the planned next cooperative audit.

Rail Baltica is the most important and largest rail infrastructure project in the Baltic region, integrating the Baltic countries into the European rail network. The project involves five European Union countries - Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and indirectly Finland. The total investment in the project in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia is around EUR 5.788 billion. The project is expected to generate socio-economic benefits of more than EUR 16 billion.

Considering the strategic importance of the ambitious international project and the amount of financial resources necessary for its implementation, the SAIs from the countries participating in the project have been cooperating since 2016, as the Memorandum of Understanding on the monitoring of the project was signed by the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian SAIs on 20 October 2016 in Bratislava. Regular meetings of the Rail Baltica Project Monitoring Task Force have been held since 2016.

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