

Planning corridors and hubs is a global issue

The RailForum 2015 seminar in Kouvola provided insightful presentations and different views on logistics, hubs and corridors. In addition to Finnish speakers, the audience in Kouvola had a chance to hear thoughts and views from Germany, Austria, Sweden, Belarus and Russia.

All speakers agreed on the need for co-operation across borders. Planning good logistics is a global issue.

Corridors, hubs and logistics in general must be seen as a network. If one of its parts doesn't function well, the whole service level in the whole network suffers, said professor **Jarkko Rantala** from Tampere Technical University.

When planning corridors, hubs and the connecting infra, we must exceed national boundaries and believe in co-operation.

Kouvola connects

I have spent hundreds of hours at the Kouvola railway station, mostly in my youth, when the legendary Kalakukko fast train, in the steam engine times, from Kuopio to Helsinki, stopped there for 30-40 minutes. Until the 1990s, Kouvola was mainly known as a railway city and an administrative center, the former Prime Minister **Paavo Lipponen** said in his opening speech.

Lipponen saw Finland as an important connecting point between different networks.

The Baltic Sea countries and Norway have a total population of 163 million. Via Baltica and Rail Baltica will make the connection to Berlin and further to Central and Southern Europe and Turkey much better. In this long term vision there will be a tunnel between Helsinki and Tallinn. In a less remote vision, there will be a rail connection to Kirkenes on the Barents Sea, the last missing link in European South-North logistics.

Lipponen was happy to see Kouvola in the TEN-T network and as part of the west-east core connection between EU and Russia, proving the only EU-based border crossing to Russia.

With globalization and rapidly growing traffic, Kouvola has become part of the Europe-Asia connection via Russia to Asia, with huge potential for more traffic and economic development, he said.

Lipponen encouraged Kouvola people to believe in future on rails and encouraged investments in RRT, the rail-road-terminal.