

Harri Helminen, Chairman of the Kouvola City Board

Opening greetings (approx. 5 mins)

Media briefing 9 November 2017, 2.00-4.00 pm Departure of the first container train from Kouvola to China

My Dear Representatives of the Media,

Welcome to Kouvola, Finland's railway city. I am very happy to tell you the wonderful news that regular container train traffic is starting between Kouvola and China. The first train, the **Kouvola Railgate Finland China Express**, will depart for Xi'an tomorrow.

Kouvola Railgate Finland will bring efficiency to transportation and a competitive edge to rail traffic. It will be significantly faster than sea freight and competitive in terms of price. The route will open new business opportunities and enable growth in both import and export volumes.

Kouvola has long traditions as a railway city, and we are a modern, international centre for cargo traffic. In a comparison of European logistics centres, Kouvola was rated the best in Northern Europe. Kouvola is home to about 200 logistics companies and the industry employs almost 2,000 people here. In terms of rail freight, Kouvola is a key location in Finland, and we are the most significant centre for cargo traffic in Southern Finland. In addition to cargo traffic, our passenger traffic is also busy. The Kouvola railway cluster is strengthening our position as Finland's largest trainer of railway professionals.

As a result of the start of container train traffic, a new 'Silk Road' is opening up between Finland and Asia. Kouvola is a key hub in this corridor. We are already part of the TEN-T (Trans-European Transport Network) core network and we have the only core network rail-road terminal in Finland.

The City of Kouvola wants to invest in the logistics sector, particularly in the development of railway logistics. The infrastructure of Kouvola's logistics area is being strongly developed for the benefit of cargo traffic between Europe and Asia. Kouvola is also home to the ongoing partly EU-funded Rail-Road Terminal project, Kouvola RRT. Through this, the city's position as a significant player in logistics is being further strengthened.

Rail traffic will offer a genuinely competitive and fast alternative to Asian sea container traffic, and launch completely new opportunities for companies and operators in the sector.

My Dear Listeners,

You will soon hear more about all this from a range of different experts. Once again, I would like to warmly welcome you to Kouvola. Thank you!