

Your Excellencies, Mr. Minister, Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come a long way from the initial idea of regular container train connection between Finland and China some 4 years ago to the actual opening of the route today.

Establishing the route happened pretty much as the train goes starting today from west to east.

Most of the footwork here was done by our Director of Logistics Mr. Simo Päivinen, using his relations from a 35-year career particularly in Russian logistics.

We started with Russia and established contacts with the Russian authorities, RZD and the Kaluga intermodal terminal which became our cooperation partner in the chain of 4 intermodal terminals that are cooperating in keeping up and promoting the route.

Then we visited Kazakstan first time in the spring of 2016 and met the KTZ Express leaders and visited the Khorgos terminal and realized its huge future potential in the Europe – China logistics as the container volumes grow almost exponentially as we have seen. KTZ Express proved to be a very agile and active organization with plenty of experience in running countless container trains between Europe and China already, and we are happy to have them as the first operator of the container trains. We have met KTZ express many times during the last 18 months and have become, besides partners in business, also good friends. In this context I would like to specially recognize Mr. Almat Karimov, who has never spared himself in working this route: day or night, official bank holidays, whatever, Almat has always been there.

In China we selected three candidates for the potential end location and considered back and forth which one to choose, with great help from Mrs. Nancy Li who is in the audience here. Finally Xi'an International Inland Port proved to be the most active and effective marketer of their services and had an established relation with KTZ Express. In this context would like to also recognize KTZ Express China's Director Mr. Timur Temirkhanov who helped us open many doors in China.

In the second half of 2016 we started talking to the industry first in Finland and then in the Nordic countries and found a very big demand for a faster land route: today the Nordic industries lose by 1-2 weeks to their central European competitors in delivery times to China. This route has potential of turning that into up to one week advantage=shorter delivery time. Finland and Nordic countries are exporting a lot to

China: machines, raw materials, timber etc., therefore we expect the trains to be full in both directions.

This summer KTZ Express signed up Unytrade company to represent them with Mr. Jari Grönlund being the go-to person for the freight forwarders to actually buy the capacity of the train.

And finally, to our great satisfaction a local, agile and flexible SME Company Kouvola Cargo Handling is doing the actual loading of the containers and trains here at the Railgate Finland Kouvola terminal.

The City of Kouvola and its City council have provided 100% support to our actions in building this route and are undertaking a major investment program, the Kouvola RRT Terminal project, which will build an open access (upto 1100m long train capacity) modern train terminal and provision of 300ha of land for the expansion of companies' terminals in the coming years. We have practically limitless potential for expansion of traffic, as there is huge amount space available from here to 25km east of here on both sides of the railroad, and the same rail gauge with Russia takes away the need for transshipment, which have proven to be the bottleneck of the more southern routes as the container volumes have grown.

So, now we have come to the moment of opening.

I would like to invite the representatives of Kouvola, State of Finland, Russia, Kazakstan and China to cut the ribbon and send the first Railgate Finland Kouvola – China Express train towards China!

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