



European Commission

Information about the assessment regarding the extension of the European track gauge to Finland

Under Article 17 of the TEN-T Regulation (EU) 2024/1679, Finland must carry out an assessment of migration to the European standard nominal track gauge and submit information to the European Commission.

In recent years, Finland has conducted several studies on the European track gauge. The findings of these studies will be summarised in a migration plan in 2027, when a long-term view will be formed on the migration of Finland's entire rail network of 1,524 mm track gauge to the European standard nominal track gauge.

Rail Nordica

Finland has already taken concrete steps towards extending the European track gauge to Finland. Planning is going on to extend the track gauge from Sweden to Finland, starting from the Haparanda–Tornio cross-border section towards Kemi and, in the near future, further north via Rovaniemi to Masi and south to Oulu. The ultimate long-term goal is to extend the European track gauge and rail connection to Kolari and create a connection via Sweden onwards to Narvik in Norway. These connections in Northern Finland are of utmost importance to military mobility.

So far, EUR 61 million has been allocated to planning the European track gauge in Northern Finland. Construction is estimated to start in phases from 2028 onwards in the Tornio region. The estimated construction costs from the Swedish–Finnish border to Kemi, Oulu and Rovaniemi are EUR 1,5 billion.

Planning for the European track gauge in Finland is being prioritised primarily from the perspective of military mobility and NATO's military-strategic needs. It has crucial importance for enabling the smooth movement of both troops and vehicles. The aim is to improve the transshipment capacity on the Finland–Sweden cross-border section, accelerate cross-border traffic and thereby improve access to the ports in Sweden and Norway. So far, the studies have assessed the potential commercial demand for a track gauge change to be relatively low. However, EU's growing demand for critical minerals and several prospective plans for new mines in the High North could change the commercial demand in the long run. According to the studies, the biggest commercial potential for the European track gauge is in the northern part of Finland.

The changed geopolitical and security environment has led to deeper cooperation on transport preparedness planning across the Nordic countries. The Joint Nordic Transport Preparedness



Strategy¹, signed in March by Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland, underscores the importance of strengthening cross-border connectivity and resilience across the Nordic transport system. The strategy includes a joint commitment to prepare for and promote critical projects. Among other initiatives, it identifies cross-border planning, EU funding opportunities for cross-border projects, and construction of the European-gauge railway connecting Haparanda, Tornio and Kemi, with subsequent extensions to Oulu and Rovaniemi.

Previous studies

Studies on the European standard nominal track gauge were conducted in Finland in 2023² and in 2025³. The 2023 study estimated that migrating the Helsinki–Tampere–Tornio section would cost EUR 10–14 billion (including, for example, the cost of the new Airport Line), while migrating the current TEN-T rail network would cost around EUR 15 billion.

The general conclusion was that neither option is economically viable. According to the study, migrating the current TEN-T rail network, or parts of it, would have severely negative impacts on the transport system as a whole. It would be difficult to create an isolated rail network within a network that is already isolated. However, the study did not take into account the security situation or military mobility needs. The extension of the European standard gauge network to Finland has been identified as a matter of strategic urgency.

Analyses of military mobility and logistical requirements in Northern Europe have highlighted the importance of improving rail connectivity across the region. Testing of military transport operations on the Narvik–Rovaniemi route in spring 2024 identified the Tornio–Haparanda border crossing as a critical bottleneck due to the break of gauge and limited transshipment capacity. These conclusions were made in the NATO's Steadfast Defender 2024 exercise and the part of the exercise in Finland, Nordic Response 24, focused on maritime reinforcements, transatlantic troop deployments, and amphibious assaults across the Atlantic and the High North. Similar military mobility and transport preparedness considerations were also addressed during NATO's Cold Response 2026 exercise.

In 2025, the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency studied the extension of the European track gauge to Northern Finland. According to this study as well, the extension would contribute to strengthening Finland's comprehensive security. It would be particularly important for military mobility between Finland, Sweden and Norway. The study was followed by the first Rail Nordica planning decision in spring 2025.

Steps ahead

While planning for the extension of the European track gauge is progressing in Northern Finland, Finland is also preparing a migration plan for the entire rail network.

Previous studies show that partial migration would not be possible if Finland is to ensure the functionality of the transport system and maintain the current logistics flows. This is also important from the perspective of military mobility, including safeguarding the mobility of NATO forces.

¹ [Joint Nordic Strategy for Transport System Preparedness](#)

² [Raideleveys selvitys](#)

³ [Eurooppalaiseen raideleveyteen siirtyminen Pohjois-Suomessa, pääselvitys, Transitioning to the European track gauge in Northern Finland, main report: Extending the European track gauge to Finland via Haparanda/Tornio](#)



Seamless and interoperable transport connections to ports from all parts of Finland are essential. The current planning of Rail Nordica also reflects this approach, as the European track gauge is envisaged primarily as a parallel track and, in certain sections, as overlapping with the existing railway infrastructure. For the same reason, the European track gauge cannot be implemented as an isolated solution in railway projects currently planned by project companies such as West Railway and the Airport Line.

Finland depends on functional maritime connections. GNSS interference and several incidents affecting subsea cables and other critical infrastructure have underscored the vulnerability of the Baltic Sea region. This highlights the importance of ensuring resilient and diversified transport connections, including alternative land-based routes, in situations where maritime transport routes and transshipment operations may be disrupted or restricted. However, transport by sea remains less expensive than transport by land, including from Northern Finland.

One of the potential benefits of migrating the rail network would be improved wagon availability. The cost of migrating the entire rail network has been estimated at EUR 15–31 billion. The transition phase would have significant implications for Finnish trade, industry and the transport system as a whole. While these challenges should not be underestimated, they also need to be considered in the context of the substantial long-term benefits that enhanced military mobility and connectivity would bring to Finland's comprehensive security and resilience. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, commercial demand could potentially increase in the future.

Finland strongly supports the European Commission's efforts to enhance military mobility across Europe. Owing to its geographical location on the EU's eastern flank and its role as a NATO frontline country, Finland's military mobility requirements are closely intertwined with the broader objectives of strengthening the EU's and NATO's collective mobility and preparedness. Extending the European standard nominal track gauge to Finland is one way of advancing these objectives.

Taking these considerations into account, Finland will assess the overall migration of its rail network and submit the plan by summer 2027.

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