



Connecting Authorities for Safer Heavy Goods Traffic in the Baltic Sea Region

COOPERATION BETWEEN AUTHORITIES FOR HEAVY GOODS TRAFFIC IN SOUTHEAST FINLAND

Findings in cooperation between National Traffic Police, Finnish Customs and Finnish Border Guard

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Regional Council of Kymenlaakso

Lappeenranta University of Technology



Publications

9:2012

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Published by
C.A.S.H.
Turku School of Economics, University of Turku
FI-20014 University of Turku, Finland
www.cash-project.eu

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ISBN 978-952-249-215-9 (PDF)
ISBN 978-952-249-099-5 (PRINT)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective of this study is to describe the current practices and cooperation between Finnish authorities, i.e. the National Traffic Police, the Finnish Customs and the Finnish Border Guard in South-Eastern Finland and especially in the areas of South Karelia and Kymenlaakso. The aim is to describe how the cooperation between the above-mentioned authorities is arranged for heavy goods traffic, and what are the benefits and challenges related to the cooperation. In addition, this study aims to find out the advantages and challenges of cooperation across the Finnish border, e.g. cooperation in Customs between Finnish and Russian border stations.

The data has been collected by interviewing Finnish authorities. The interviews were executed at three border crossing points in South-Eastern Finland, Imatra, Vaalimaa and Nuijamaa, as well as in offices located in the cities of Kotka, Kouvola and Imatra. For the interviews, the researches followed the heavy goods vehicle (HGV) transport e.g. from Germany through HaminaKotka harbor and a Southeastern border crossing point to Russia and vice versa. The aim was to find out how the prevailing practices in the cooperation between authorities are currently working, as well as what kind of challenges and forms of cooperation there are at this outer border of the EU.

According to the results, the cooperation between the National Traffic Police, the Finnish Customs and the Finnish Border Guard in the South-Eastern regions of Finland works well. Every counterpart has its own areas of responsibility, the information exchange is effortless, and help is offered when needed. The advantages include e.g. information exchange between the authorities, joint training, uniform practices and methods, as well as the use of joint technologies. There

are also some challenges, e.g. lack of resources, which are reflected in the reduction of joint training. The advantages of the cooperation between the Finnish and Russian authorities contain e.g. information exchange, as well as knowledge of the legislation in Russia. The disadvantages include for example different working cultures, language barriers, and the quickly changing legislation in Russia.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 C.A.S.H. - project

This study is part of the C.A.S.H. project – Connecting Authorities for Safer Heavy Goods Traffic in the Baltic Sea Region. The C.A.S.H. project aims to develop practical solutions to make international road freight transport safer, more predictable and affordable in the Baltic Sea region. The project aims to do this by:

- improving the cooperation between authorities
- harmonising the training of inspection officials
- testing the safety equipment and IT systems to be used by relevant authorities

The project brings together police officers and other authorities inspecting Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) in the Baltic Sea area. The project will benefit not only them through harmonized practices, but logistics business as a whole. The project is co-ordinated by Turku School of Economics in Finland, as part of the University of Turku. The C.A.S.H. project is part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund) through the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. (C.A.S.H., 2011)

1.2 Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to find out the current practices of cooperation between authorities and to enhance it within road freight transportation. The study is connected to the theme of the C.A.S.H. project: *“Advocating for better cooperation between traffic and border authorities using experiences from the statutory cooperation between*

Finnish police, Border guards and Customs that has been in effect for over 10 years”.

This study describes the cooperation between Finnish authorities, i.e. the National Traffic Police, the Finnish Border Guard and the Finnish Customs in South-Eastern Finland and especially in the areas of South Karelia and Kymenlaakso (see Figure 1). The objective is to describe how the cooperation between the above-mentioned authorities is arranged, and what are the benefits and challenges related to the cooperation. In addition, the aim of this study is to find out the advantages and challenges of cooperation across the Finnish border, e.g. cooperation in Customs between the Finnish and Russian border stations.



Figure 1. Southeast Finland (ELY Centres et al., 2011)

2 FINNISH TRAFFIC

2.1 Transit transportation via Finland

The rapid and strong growth of the Russian economy has had an important influence on the development of the transit transportation via Finland to Russia. Transit traffic is of significant importance especially for South-Eastern Finland. According to Ruutikainen and Tapaninen (2009), the main route for transporting valuable goods from the EU to Russia has been the transit route through Finland. In 2008, approximately 13% of the total value of Russian import was transported via Finland (ibid.). The route via *Finnish ports* (Kotka, Hamina, Hanko, Turku and Helsinki) with consequent *road transit* to Russia has become the main eastbound transit route through Finland (Posti et al., 2009). According to Inkinen et al. (2009), the volumes of *rail transit* towards east are rather small, mainly due to toll charges and related problems, and Posti et al. (2009) bring out shortcomings especially in the integration of rail transit services. To a lesser degree, goods are also transported by *air transport* to Finland, and then by *land transport* to Russia (Posti et al., 2009).

The development of *eastbound road transit* between 2007 and the second quarter of 2012 is presented in Figures 2 and 3, in tons and Euros. According to the statistics of the National Board of Customs (2012a), eastbound road transit decreased considerably in January 2009, measured both in tons and Euros. During the first quarter of 2010, the amount of eastbound transit in trucks was 409 million tons, which is almost 13% lower than during the first quarter of 2009. Respectively, the value of transit goods was 3.4 billion Euros during the first quarter of 2010, and the decrease was slightly over 13% compared

to the first quarter of 2009. However, the value of eastbound transit increased by 35% during the second quarter of 2010 compared to the second quarter in the previous year, and especially the number of transported machines, instruments and cars increased. In April 2010, transit transport was exceptionally high, due to a port strike in March 2010 (National Board of Customs, 2010). After the second quarter of 2010 until to the end of 2011, the amount of the eastbound road transit stayed quite stable. In the beginning of 2012, the amount of transit traffic decreased slightly, mainly because of a decrease in the number of cars (National Board of Customs, 2012a).

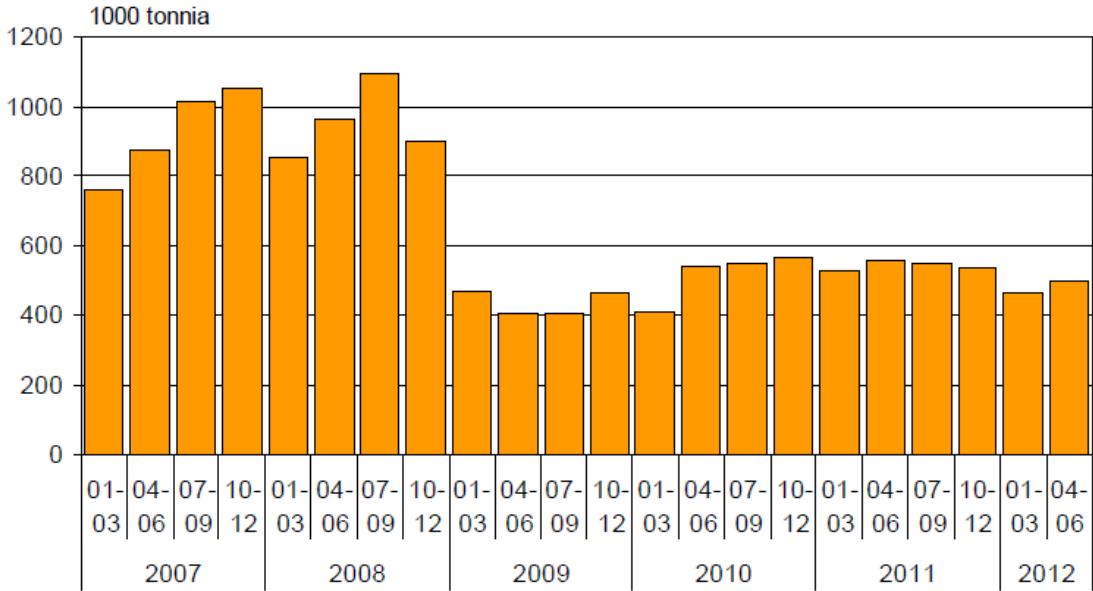


Figure 2. Eastbound road transit quarterly in 2007-2012 (1000 tons) (National Board of Customs, 2012a)

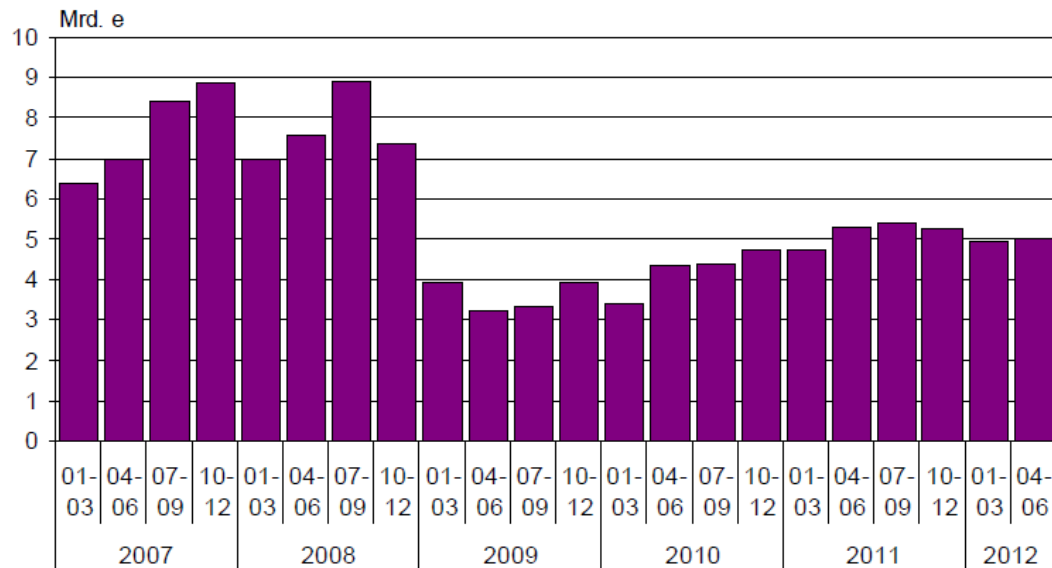


Figure 3. Eastbound road transit quarterly in 2007-2012 (billion euros)
(National Board of Customs, 2012a)

Westbound transit contains mainly bulk products and items with a low refinement level. Due to the high value profile of eastbound transit, it is more significant to the Finnish logistics industry than westbound transit (Inkinen et al., 2009). Westbound transit through Finland is mainly rail transport from various production plants in Russia to Finnish ports, where they are shipped to third countries (Ruutikainen and Tapaninen, 2009). The economic regression did not seem to have any influence on the value of westbound transit in 2009, which was the case in eastbound transit. The biggest volumes in westbound transit are ores, concentrates, and chemicals, with the shared value of circa 3.9 billion Euros, i.e. 87 % of the total value of westbound transit. The volumes of oil products and single consignments have decreased since 2003.

2.2 The border crossing points in Southeast Finland

The main border crossing points located in Southeast Finland are Imatra, Nuijamaa, Vainikkala and Vaalimaa, as depicted in Figure 4. Vaalimaa is the primary customs and border crossing between the EU

and Russia (Vaalimaa, 2012). In 2009, over 70 % of the transit goods to the east via Finland crossed the border at Vaalimaa, through which 1.3 billion tons of transit goods were transported. In 2009, the volumes of transit transport decreased by 43 % through Vaalimaa, by 68 % through Nuijamaa, and by 75 % through Imatra, compared to the year 2008 (National Board of Customs, 2010). However, traffic is increasing on the border traffic highways. The value of transit export through Finland in 2010 was around 17 billion euros, which means a 19 % increase from 2009 (ELY Centres et al., 2011). In 2011, the value of transit transport to Russia was 20.7 billion euros (National Board of Customs, 2012b)

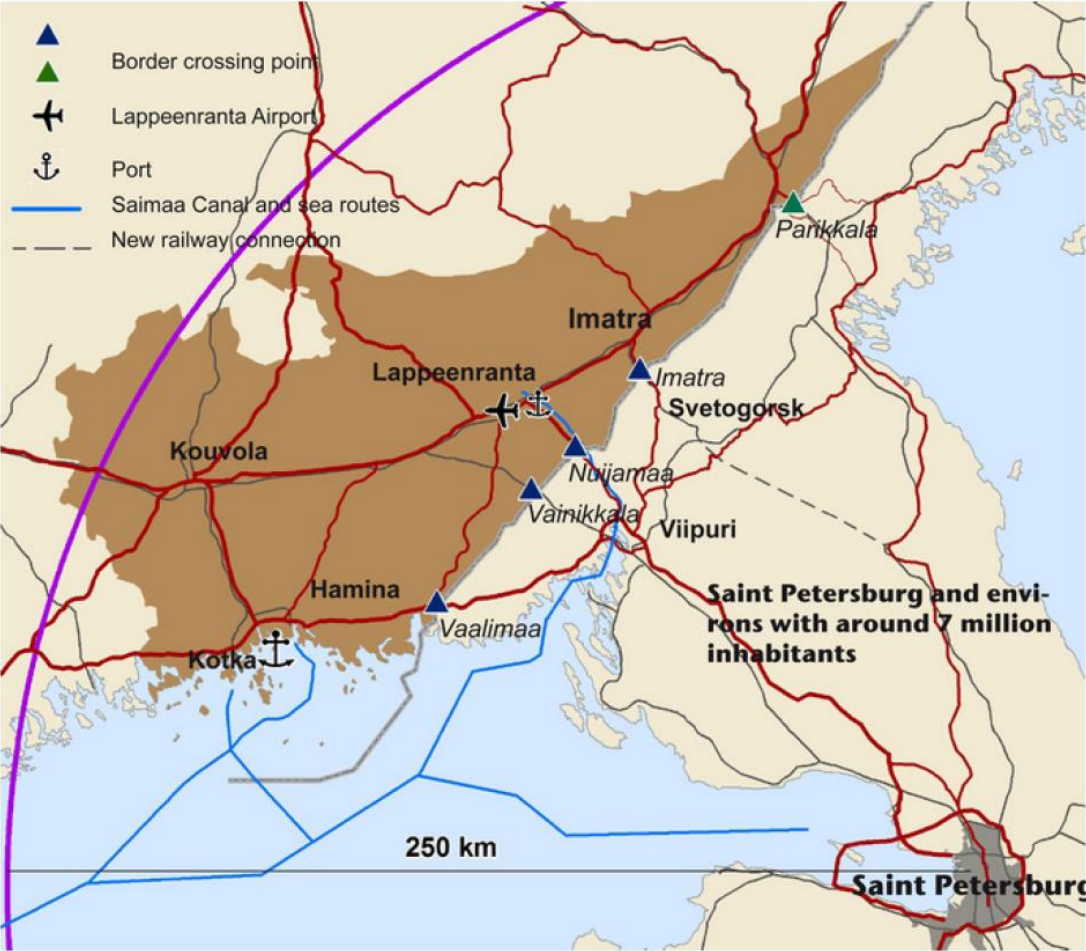


Figure 4. Southeast Finland and its main border crossing points and routes (ELY Centres et al., 2011)

The development of heavy traffic at the border crossing points in Southeastern Finland between 1992 and 2010 is presented in Figure 5. In addition, the forecasts for 2011-2020 with estimates of 4 and 7 % annual growth are depicted in Figure 5. The estimates predict that the amount of vehicle traffic will also grow in the near future (ELY Centres et al., 2011). The amount of heavy goods transit traffic to Russia in the most important border crossing points in Southeast Finland between 2005 and 2011 is depicted in Table 1. The table indicates that the amount of heavy vehicle traffic increased by 17 % in Imatra in 2011, whereas in Niirala it decreased by 5 % in 2011, compared to the previous year (National Board of Customs, 2012b).

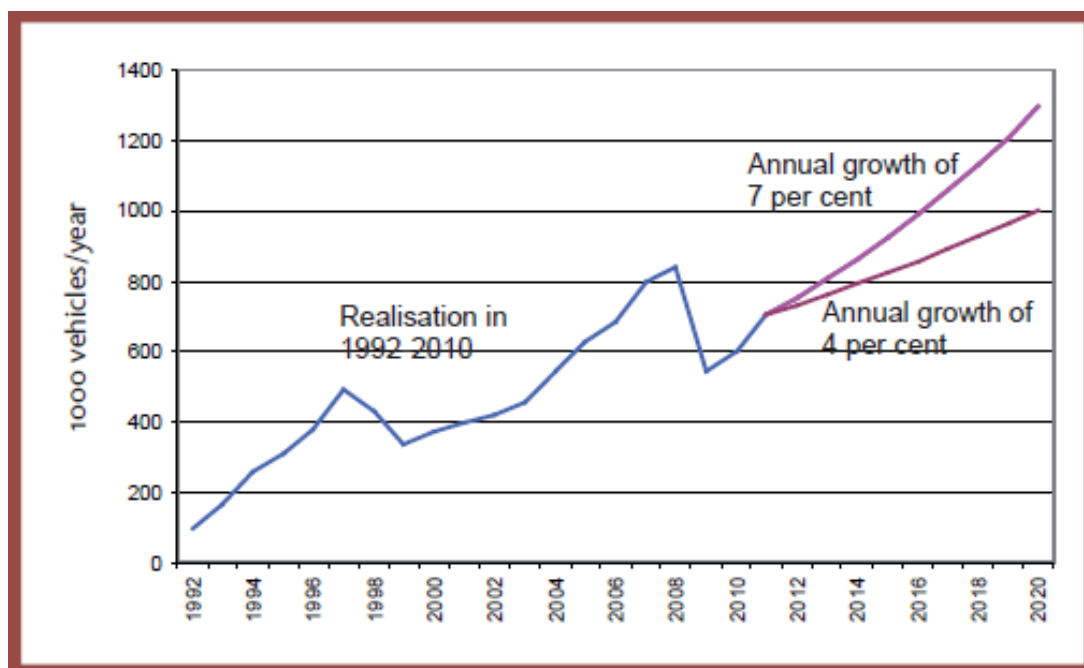


Figure 5. Heavy vehicle traffic at the border crossing points of Southeast Finland in 1992-2010 and the forecast for 2020 (ELY Centres et al., 2011)

Table 1. Heavy vehicle traffic from Finland to Russia at the main border crossing points in 2005-2011, the number of trucks has been rounded to the nearest one hundred (National Board of Customs, 2012b)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Change (%) 2010-2011
Imatra	52 900	64 700	101 300	110 200	42 500	56 900	66 800	17
Nuijamaa	118 000	118 600	137 500	153 500	68 200	91 600	91 600	0
Vaalimaa	177 200	238 000	221 700	230 200	175 500	161 100	172 900	7
Niirala	32 900	30 700	24 500	26 400	23 000	23 900	22 800	-5
In total	381 000	452 000	485 000	520 300	309 200	333 800	354 100	6

3 FINNISH AUTHORITIES

3.1 Finnish Police

The Finnish Police is guided and supervised by the Ministry of the Interior. The police service has a two-tier organization. The National Police Board, which operates under the Ministry of the Interior, directs and guides operational police activities. Within its direct purview are the local police departments, the national police units, the Police College of Finland, and the Police Technical Centre. The National Police Board is responsible for the performance guidance of these units. The national units of the police comprise the National Bureau of Investigation, the National Traffic Police and the Finnish Security Intelligence Service. (Finnish Police, 2012)

The National Bureau of Investigation specializes in combating organized and professional crime, the Finnish Security Intelligence Service in combating crime and other activity that endangers internal and external security, and the National Traffic Police in the surveillance of traffic. The National Traffic Police is a national police unit specializing in traffic enforcement. It promotes traffic safety through traffic enforcement especially on the main roads and by meeting the surveillance obligations set by the European Union. (Finnish Police, 2012)

The Police College of Finland is responsible for recruitment for police training, student selection, diploma and advanced studies, leadership training, further training, and research and development in the police field. The Police Technical Centre specializes in the acquisition of equipment and supplies for the police. The local police service is made up of 24 police departments, each of which has a

central police station, one or more other police stations, police service points and citizen offices. The police employ about 10,900 people, of whom 7,800 are police officers. This means that there is one police officer per 681 citizens in Finland. (Finnish Police, 2012)

3.2 Finnish Border Guard

The Finnish Border Guard, subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior, is a modern government agency that has won international recognition for its capabilities. The main duties of the Border Guard include border surveillance, border checks, crime prevention, security of the territorial waters, international cooperation, and national defense. (Finnish Border Guard, 2012)

The purpose of border surveillance is to maintain order and security at Finnish borders and prevent and investigate unauthorized border crossings. There is a particular focus on the outer border of the Schengen area to prevent unauthorized persons from crossing it in areas between border crossing points. The Border Guard is responsible for border checks on persons at border crossing points. Border checks are performed with the aim of maintaining border security. They are checks on persons - including their means of transport and the objects in their possession - and interviews of persons, carried out on those crossing or intending to cross the border. (Finnish Border Guard, 2012)

The core function of the Border Guard is cross-border crime prevention. The most serious types of cross-border crime include smuggling of and trafficking in persons, as well as the facilitation of unauthorized entry. The Border Guard is also the leading search and rescue (SAR) authority at sea and a maritime law enforcement authority with a variety of duties. In Finland, defending the nation has always been a key duty of the Border Guard, performed in cooperation with the Defence Forces. Border control – patrolling the land and sea

borders – also entails controlling the territorial integrity of the Border Guard. (Finnish Border Guard, 2012)

3.3 Finnish Customs

The Finnish Customs is a part of the customs system of the European Union. The Customs is central state agency supervised by the Ministry of Finance through management by results. The Finnish Customs cooperates with the trade community as well as with domestic and foreign authorities. The Finnish Customs has approximately 2 370 employees. (Finnish Customs, 2011)

The Finnish Customs is a service and law enforcement authority, and it

- contributes to ensuring an undisturbed operation of the internal market of the EU
- facilitates international goods trade and ensures compliance with provisions
- collects the duties, taxes and charges on foreign trade and on the production of goods correctly
- combats customs crime and threats to health and safety, as well as to the economic interests of Finland and the EU.

(Finnish Customs, 2011)

The Finnish Customs has responsibilities that extend to the sphere of authority not only of the Ministry of Finance but also of several other ministries. These are:

- In the administration of EU commercial policy, the Customs is an assisting partner to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and in this task has close connections also to the Ministry of Employment and the Economy (MEE), the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and business interest groups.

- On behalf of the Ministry of the Environment, the Customs collects oil damage duty.
- The Customs collect tens of millions of euros in fairway dues annually on behalf of the Finnish Maritime Administration, and similar amounts in supply security fees for the National Emergency Supply Agency.
- The Customs cooperates with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on many levels, for instance in the information services on exportation of agricultural products and in the monitoring of EU export regulations.
- The Customs cooperates with the Ministry of Transport and Communications in many areas, for example by inspecting the roadworthiness of heavy haulage vehicles at the eastern border of Finland.
- In the so-called **PCB cooperation (Police, Customs and Border Guard)**, the Customs has an essential role.
- The Customs cooperates with the Ministry of the Interior on the implementation of the Internal Security Programme.
- The Finnish Customs cooperates with the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK) in the implementation of the Internal Security Programme. (Finnish Customs, 2011)

The Finnish Customs participates in various committee and working group meetings within the European Commission and the Council of the EU. In these meetings, legislation and decisions are prepared to ensure that customs measures are as uniform as possible within the EU, and customs cooperation operations are agreed on. The decisions include for example decisions on which tariff heading to use for a certain item in the customs declaration. The tariff heading, in turn, defines the duty to be collected, as well as possible taxes and import restrictions to be imposed. (Finnish Customs, 2011)

The Finnish Customs also participates in the work of the World Customs Organization (WCO). The organization aims to harmonize the implementation of conventions under its administration and to simplify customs procedures globally. Further, Finland has signed bilateral customs cooperation agreements with various countries. The agreements enable international cooperation, for instance in customs control and in customs crime prevention. In addition, customs cooperation between the Nordic countries is close and successful. Finland has joint customs offices with both Sweden and Norway with customs officials from both countries. The administrative cooperation with the other neighboring areas - Russia and the Baltic countries- is also very significant. (Finnish Customs, 2011)

3.4 Police, Customs and Border Guard cooperation

The cooperation between Finnish authorities is set up in the Government Decree on Cooperation between the Police, Customs and Border Guard, decree1126/2009, which as such came to force on January 1st 2010. Section one of the decree states that for the purpose of managing nationwide cooperation between the Police, Customs and Border Guard (PCB cooperation), there is a national PCB management group, which is composed of the National Police Commissioner, the Director General of the Board Customs, the Chief of the Border Guard, and other cooperation members. In the national PCB management groups, the National Police Commissioner, the Director General of the National Board of Customs and the Chief of the Border Guard agree on joint strategies and the general principles governing the cooperation; coordination and steering of tasks, principal forms and structures of cooperation, and other important matters regarding cooperation. (Finlex, 2009)

For the purpose of organizing regional cooperation between the PCB authorities, there are regional PCB management groups. The

National Police commissioner, the Director General of the National Board of Customs and the Chief of the Border Guard decide on the number, composition and chairs of the regional PCB management groups. The tasks of the regional PCB management groups are: to implement the decisions of the national PCB management group, to discuss regional matters regarding cooperation and to make the necessary proposals to the national PCB management groups, to monitor regional cooperation and report on the cooperation to the national PCB management group, and to decide on cooperation matters together with the national PCB management groups. (Finlex, 2009)

The Finnish cooperation between the Police, Customs and Border Guard (PCB cooperation) is an internationally unique model of cooperation. The cooperation has taken place for years, but for the last ten years it has been expanded to cover also crime intelligence. Crime intelligence as a PCB joint effort focuses on serious and cross-border crimes. The PCB cooperation aims to promote cooperation between the authorities so that duties related to internal safety and security can be performed efficiently and flexibly. (Finnish Border Guard, 2012)

It is specified in the Government Decree on Cooperation between the Police, Customs and Border Guard that the national PCB decides on the establishment and dissolution of PCB criminal intelligence units in the national PCB management group. The heads of the PCB units which are responsible for carrying out the crime-combating measures decide on the establishment and dissolution of a joint criminal intelligence and investigation team. (Finlex, 2009)

4 RESEARCH PROCESS

The data for this study was collected by interviewing Finnish authorities, i.e. the National Traffic Police, the Finnish Border Guard and the Finnish Customs. The interviews were executed at three border crossing points in South-Eastern Finland; Imatra, Nuijamaa, and Vaalimaa, as well as in offices located in the cities of Kotka, Kouvola and Imatra. Altogether, there were 13 interviewees, as depicted in Table 2. The interviews with the Finnish Customs and Finnish Border Guard were conducted at the border-crossing points of Imatra, Nuijamaa and Vaalimaa, except for one which was conducted in the Customs in the port of HaminaKotka. The National Traffic Police officers were interviewed in their offices in Kouvola and Imatra. The interviews were conducted between October 2011 and March 2012. The interview questions are presented in Appendix. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Table 2. Interviewees with Finnish authorities between October 2011 and March 2012

	Imatra	Nuijamaa	Vaalimaa	Kotka	Kouvola
Finnish Customs	1 person	3 persons	1 person	1 person	
Finnish Border Guard	1 person	1 person	2 persons		
National Traffic Police	2 persons				1 person

The heavy road transportation was followed e.g. from Germany through the port of HaminaKotka and a Southeastern border crossing point to Russia and vice versa. The aim was to find out how the prevailing practices in the cooperation between the authorities are

currently working, as well as what kind of challenges and forms of cooperation there are at this external border of the EU. The selection of the interviewees was based on whether they were dealing with road freight transport and dangerous substances and goods. The interviewees worked in the particular route and/or they had influence on the heavy goods transportation and its surveillance.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Nuijamaa border crossing point

Nuijamaa is an international border-crossing station in the city of Lappeenranta in Finland, in the Nuijamaa agglomeration. Nuijamaa is located between Lappeenranta and Vyborg, and is located in the immediate vicinity of the Saimaa canal. Nuijamaa border crossing point is located 25 km from Lappeenranta city center, 32 km from Vyborg, 250 km from Helsinki, and 175 km from St Petersburg. Nuijamaa border crossing station can be accessed along Highway 13 (Rajaliikenne, 2012). The border crossing station is depicted in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Nuijamaa border-crossing point (ELY Centres et al., 2011)

International traffic was opened in Nuijamaa on the 1st of June in 1975 between Finland and the then Soviet Union. The border checks were conducted by the police and were made on the old road leading to Vyborg until 1987. The border-crossing station in Nuijamaa was opened for border checks on the 16th of December in 1987. The station was located on the shore of Lake Nuijamaa (right by the Saimaa Canal, about 1 km east of the current station), and it required the construction of new road lanes for incoming and outgoing traffic. The responsibility for passenger transport in the border control was transferred to the Border Guard in the beginning of 1991. (Rajaliikenne, 2012)

In 1990, the number of passengers crossing the border in Nuijamaa was about 200 000, and in 1995 the threshold of one million passengers was exceeded. The development of traffic in the 2000s has been extremely rapid, and therefore the border crossing station located on the shore of Lake Nuijamaa was no longer adequate. The current border crossing point was opened in September 2006. In 2008, there were more than 2 million border crossers. (Rajaliikenne, 2012)

5.1.1 Assignments of Customs and Boarder Guards

In Table 3 below, the tasks related to heavy traffic conducted by the Customs and Border Guards at Nuijamaa border crossing point are introduced on the basis of the conducted interviews. It can be seen that the tasks of the Customs and Border Guards differ somewhat, but they also include many overlapping duties. Basically all the tasks are conducted at the border crossing point. The only exceptions are PCB shock controls when the actual vehicle and driver inspection can take place by the side of the road.

Table 3. List of the tasks of the Customs and Border Guards at Nuijamaa border crossing point

Finnish Customs -Nuijamaa	Finnish Border Guard - Nuijamaa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of goods • Roadworthiness of vehicles • Passport control (heavy traffic) • Vehicle weight and height measurements, brake control • Cargo inspection to ensure the content for customs clearance and tax purposes • Empty vehicle inspection to find hidden goods • Document inspection (insurance, registration certificates, visas, driving and rest periods, driving license, travel permission, waivers) • Breath testing of drivers , drivers' roadworthiness • Traffic control tasks (the Traffic Police) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic control (cars and busses) • Visa / residence permit inspection • Passport control (passengers) • Illegal entry control (search for hidden people in truck freight facilities, cabins or structures) • Inspection of vehicle condition (in cooperation with the customs, the customs having the main responsibility) • Driving and rest periods (in cooperation with the customs, the customs having the main responsibility) • PCB (police, customs, border guard) - shock control dates (jointly with representatives of the vehicle inspection centers), for example brake control tests • Checks with dogs

5.1.2 Cooperation between authorities

The cooperation between the authorities at Nuijamaa border crossing station is carried out for the most part according to so called Nuija-project. This project represents a cooperation model where the Customs officials and Border Guards perform their tasks alternately, with the Border Guards doing the tasks of the Customs and vice versa. Traffic regulation, custom control and border inspection at the lanes, drivers' driving license and passport control and heavy traffic control are activities included in the Nuija-project and thus performed alternately. The inspection of the condition of vehicles, in other words the roadworthiness of the vehicles is actually the task of the Customs but is usually performed in cooperation with the Border Guards and can

be done by one party or the other, although the main responsibility for this activity remains with the Customs. Cooperation between the Customs and the Border Guards also takes place in the form of a common shift start meeting where both parties are provided with the same information, and the planning of the starting shift is done together. The use of common databases and information systems by the Customs, Border Guards and Traffic Police represent a form of cooperation, as information entered by one party is available for everyone who is involved in cooperation between authorities. Additionally, communication between the officials by phone and email is effective and makes cooperation possible on a daily basis.

Cooperation between the authorities takes place also in the form of the so called PCB shock control days. These shock controls involve officials from the Traffic Police, Customs and Border Guards, and most of the time representatives of the vehicle inspection centers are also present. These control days are planned on a yearly basis when the dates of the control days for the next year are settled. The shock control days take place once every three weeks and are realized at Nuijamaa border crossing point. Additionally to the shock control days, the Traffic Police comes to Nuijamaa border crossing point at random and stay there for some hours doing checks in cooperation with the Customs and the Border Guards.

5.2 Imatra border crossing point

The border-crossing station of Imatra was opened in 1972 for the construction transportation for Svetogorsk, Russia. In 1990, the first tourist trips were arranged, and in 1995 the number of passengers increased to circa 400 000. The current border-crossing station was taken into use in 1998, and in 2002 it was opened for international transportation. In 2008, there were over one million passengers

grossing the border station (Rajaliikenne, 2012). The border-crossing point in Imatra is depicted in Figure 7.

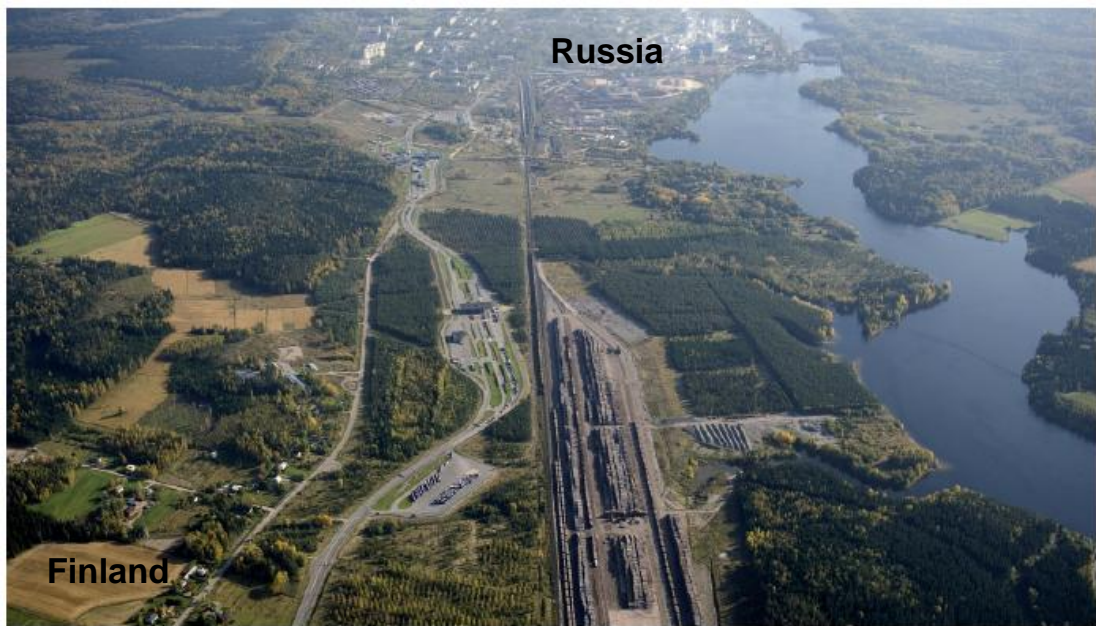


Figure 7. Imatra border-crossing point (ELY Centres et al., 2011)

5.2.1 Assignments of Finnish Customs and Boarder Guard

The tasks related to heavy traffic conducted by the Customs and Border Guards at Imatra border crossing point are listed in Table 4 below, based on the conducted interviews. The main responsibilities of the Customs in Imatra are inspections related to vehicles and their roadworthiness. The Customs are also responsible for customs clearance and document inspections of vehicles and their contents. Respectively, the main responsibilities of the Border Guards in Imatra are inspections related to the drivers and their roadworthiness. For example, the Border Guards do alcohol testing when needed. The Border Guards are also responsible for inspection of travel documents (e.g. passports and visas) and for revealing human smuggling in trucks. In addition, the Border Guards direct the departures to and the Customs the arrivals from Russia.

Table 4. List of the tasks of the Customs and Border Guards at Imatra border crossing point

Finnish Customs - Imatra	Finnish Border Guard - Imatra
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadworthiness of vehicles • Inspection the validity of loadings and bindings • Controlling the reliability of customs • Inspection of smuggling • Inspection of the condition of vehicle sealing • Customs clearance • Traffic control of arrivals • Document inspection (e.g. driving licence, work permission, residence permission) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of travel documents (e.g. passports and visas) • Driver's roadworthiness (e.g. breath testing) • Revealing human smuggling (e.g. with the help of technical equipment and dogs) • Traffic control of departures • Inspections of heavy vehicle traffic (main responsibility with the Customs) • Dividing resources for the inspection of heavy vehicle traffic according to the prevailing situation

5.2.2 Cooperation between authorities

The cooperation between the authorities (i.e. Customs and Border Guards) at Imatra border crossing point is mainly based on working in pairs. When inspecting a truck, a Customs officer is responsible for the inspection of the vehicle and a Border guard is responsible for the inspection of the driver. The Border guards are also used for ensuring safety when doing inspections of trucks. The collaboration between the authorities is done according to the need or available resources. The cooperation between the authorities can be seen as mutual helping and guidance on a daily basis.

The Traffic Police, Customs and Border Guard in Imatra work in close cooperation as well. They have theme days about once a year when they inspect vehicles in the main motorway E6. They also have joint training in heavy goods traffic arranged by the Customs a couple of times per year. In addition, the Traffic Police and Customs make

cooperation when inspecting the roadworthiness of vehicles on the main roads and at the border crossing points.

5.3 Vaalimaa border crossing point

The border-crossing station of Vaalimaa was opened in 1958, and it was the first border-crossing point for road transportation between Finland and the Soviet Union. The heavy goods traffic between Finland and the Soviet Union via Vaalimaa began in May 1961, and for international transit transportation the border-crossing point was opened in July 1962. The current border-crossing station was built in 1996. Currently, about 2.7 million passengers cross the border in Vaalimaa every year (Rajaliikenne, 2012). The border-crossing point in Vaalimaa is depicted in Figure 8.



Figure 8. Vaalimaa border-crossing point (ELY Centres et al., 2011)

5.3.1 Assignments of Customs and Boarder Guards

The tasks related to heavy traffic conducted by the Customs and Border Guards at Vaalimaa border crossing point are listed below in Table 5, based on the conducted interviews. The responsibilities for the main tasks are divided in the same way as at the Imatra border crossing point. In other words, the main responsibilities of the Customs in Vaalimaa are inspections related to vehicles, their roadworthiness, and the customs clearance and document inspection of vehicles and their contents. Respectively, the main responsibilities of the Border Guards are inspections related to the drivers and their roadworthiness, inspection of travel documents and revealing human smuggling from trucks. In addition, the Border Guards direct the departures to and the Customs the arrivals from Russia.

Table 5. List of the tasks of the Customs and Border Guards at Vaalimaa border crossing point

Finnish Customs - Vaalimaa	Finnish Border Guard - Vaalimaa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadworthiness of vehicles • Inspection of cargo and its validity • Customs clearance • Controlling the reability of customs • Collection of custom duties and taxes • Controlling driving and rest periods • Measuring vehicle weight and height • ADR-permissions (cooperation with the Traffic Police) • Traffic control of arrivals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of travel documents (e.g. passports and visas) • Driver's roadworthiness (e.g. breath testing) • Revealing human smuggling • Inspection of cars • Traffic control of departures

5.3.2 Cooperation between authorities

Cooperation between the Customs and Border Guards at Vaalimaa border crossing point is carried out on a daily basis almost in any situation when needed. The cooperation is mainly based on the agreements of cooperation (PCB cooperation), as in all other border crossing points in Finland. Also in Vaalimaa, the Customs and Border Guards arrange common shift start meetings, where they are provided with the same information and plan the starting shift together.

The Customs and Traffic Police have common inspections of vehicle roadworthiness, where they control, among other things, the driving and rest periods, vehicle weights and heights and ADR-permissions (European Agreement concerning the international carriage of Dangerous goods by Road). The PCB cooperation in Vaalimaa is also seen in information campaigns related to e.g. to safety belts or winter tires. In exceptional situations, e.g. the turn of the year or long traffic chains, there is more cooperation than usual between the Traffic Police and the authorities of Vaalimaa.

5.4 Customs at the Port of HaminaKotka

The Port of HaminaKotka, located in the area of the towns of Hamina and Kotka is very important to South-East Finland, as it represents an important Customs and border crossing point between the European Union and Russia. The Ports of Hamina and Kotka used to be separate private entities until merging in 2011 to HaminaKotka Ltd. The port has been operating as it is now since 2011 after going through some major reorganizational changes and restructuring. (Port of HaminaKotka, 2012)

As the largest full-service universal port in Finland, HaminaKotka serves all kinds of cargo: container, RORO, liquid bulk, dry bulk, LOLO, project cargo, and passengers, in addition to a full range of value

added services. The location of the port of HaminaKotka serves the Finnish imports and exports as well as the traffic to and from St Petersburg and Moscow. The logistics, stevedoring companies and port-related industry located in the port makes it a unique set by the Baltic Sea. Connections to the most important economic regions in Finland and Russia and the 15-metre-deep fairway enable excellent connections to the world. (Port of HaminaKotka, 2012)

The customs offices are located in both ports, in Kotka and in Hamina. The interviews for this study were conducted with a representative of the port of HaminaKotka located in Mussalo, Kotka. The picture of Mussalo harbor at the port of HaminaKotka is depicted in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Mussalo harbor at the port of HaminaKotka (Steveco, 2012)

5.4.1 Assignments of Customs

Even though the Mussalo harbour in Kotka is a border crossing point between the EU and Russia, there are no Border Guard activities at this crossing point. This is due to the fact that there is no passenger traffic in this harbour at the moment. The tasks related to heavy traffic

control conducted by the Customs at Mussalo harbour are listed in Table 6 below, based on the conducted interview.

Table 6. List of the tasks performed by Kotka Customs

Finnish Customs - Kotka
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of vehicles for the reliability of customs • Inspection of vehicles for roadworthiness • Inspection of drivers for roadworthiness • Heavy traffic shock controls for drivers' roadworthiness • ADR inspections • Sealing of vehicles and cargo units

5.4.2 Cooperation between authorities

The PCB cooperation at Kotka Customs is limited, as there is no passenger traffic. Due to this fact, cooperation with the Border Guard is absent. However, Kotka Customs has cooperation with the local police of Kotka, the Traffic Police of nearby town Kouvola and representatives of vehicle inspection centers. There is no cooperation between Kotka Customs and international authorities abroad.

The main activity where the local police and Customs cooperate is the inspection of drivers for roadworthiness. This is usually done in the form of inspection shocks, which are conducted about two times a year. The activity takes place inside the harbour area, behind the gates. This is actually the only way to realize this kind of inspections, as outside the harbour area, for example in the parking areas for trucks it is considered to be disturbance of the driver's private time and life. These kinds of inspections are done on a random basis and are not usually scheduled beforehand.

Shock controls conducted in cooperation with the Traffic Police and representatives of vehicle inspection offices include, in addition to the driver's roadworthiness control, also the inspection of the vehicle for roadworthiness. This is mainly done by checking the condition of the brakes with a special brake control measurement device that the representatives of the vehicle inspection centers bring along. This activity is usually done twice a year.

5.5 National Traffic Police

The National Traffic Police is a national police unit in Finland specializing in traffic enforcement. It promotes traffic safety through traffic enforcement, especially on main roads, and by meeting the surveillance obligations set by the European Union. The National Traffic Police is also involved in dealing with emergencies and it provides support for the local police in maintaining public order and in tackling crime. Surveillance of heavy goods vehicles, off-road and waterborne traffic is also part of the unit's special expertise. Other duties of the National Traffic Police include development of traffic enforcement equipment and methods and improving the quality of surveillance. (Finnish Police, 2012)

The need for heavy vehicle enforcement has increased substantially in recent years. The main reasons for this are the increase of eastbound traffic and the increase of registered trucks and articulated vehicles. In addition, the EU has set control obligations concerning heavy vehicle traffic. (Finnish Police, 2012)

5.5.1 Kouvola and Imatra offices

The offices of the Kouvola unit in Southeast Finland are located in Kouvola and Imatra. The Kouvola office is mainly responsible for the

Kymenlaakso area, and Imatra for South Karelia. The main tasks related to heavy vehicle traffic conducted by the National Traffic Police in Kouvola and Imatra are listed in Table 7 below. The basic duty of the Traffic Police is to check the overall condition of the vehicle and also the condition of the driver. It includes checking all related documents, such as the driving license, operation permissions, and driving and resting times. In addition, the Traffic Police checks the overloads, cargo securing and cargo bindings of vehicles, among other things.

Table 7. List of the tasks performed by the National Traffic Police related to the heavy goods traffic in Kouvola and Imatra

National Traffic Police
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of the vehicle for roadworthiness (e.g. brakes, weight, height) • Inspection of drivers for roadworthiness (e.g. alcohol tests) • Driving and resting times • Document inspection (driving license, permissions) • Overloads and cargo securing • Cargo binding inspections • Supervision of special transportation • ADR inspections • Heavy traffic shock controls for drivers' roadworthiness

The Traffic Police performs these tasks mainly on the road. In Imatra, one or two days a week these tasks are performed also at the border crossing point. Once in a month or once in two months these tasks are performed at the border crossing point in cooperation with other PCB parties and examiners from the transport inspection office. The tasks performed by the Traffic Police are quite multidisciplinary by nature and are performed according to the situation and in accordance

with obligations. For example a vehicle can be inspected in closer detail if it is an interesting heavy vehicle combination.

5.5.2 Cooperation between authorities

The Traffic Police in *Imatra* does most of its cooperation with authorities with the Customs in Pelkola, Nuijamaa and Parikkala. The cooperation done with Customs is mainly related to the inspection of vehicles for roadworthiness and inspection of cargo and its validity. The inspection of cargo does not take place on the road, it is done at the border crossing point together with the Customs. The cargo binding inspection is easier to do at the border because the original seals can be removed, the inspection tasks done, and then the Customs officers can reseal the cargo. Illegal immigration to the country and off-road traffic is controlled in cooperation with the Border Guards. Water traffic control is done in cooperation with the Customs.

Common controls days are planned in meetings in advance, but if the Customs or Border Guards need the advice, opinion or presence of the Traffic Police, it is possible to just give a call to the Traffic Police and ask them to come to the border crossing point. These actions do not require official authorization. However, if the same kind of help is required by the Traffic Police from the Customs or Border Guards it has to be authorized by officials.

In *Kouvola*, the cooperation with the Customs is mainly done with Vaalimaa, but also with the Customs in Kouvola, Kotka and Hamina. The cooperation with the Customs works extremely well, as e.g. that visits to the border station of Vaalimaa, or to other Customs, do not have to be planned in advance, and the Traffic Police can go there whenever necessary.

The Traffic Police has also close cooperation with the Border Guard and Customs in Southeastern Finland. Especially in South Karelia, they have a local planning group (PCB) once in every three weeks, where

they plan e.g. the days when the Traffic Police will come to the border station and cooperation will be arranged. PCB cooperation is usually done related to the roadworthiness of vehicles and drivers, the entry qualification of foreigners, fuel inspections, cargo binding inspection, and sealing of vehicles. In addition to these local PBC meetings, also national PBC meetings are arranged. In addition, PBC authorities have common training events which the authorities can attend.

In general, the PCB cooperation works well, and different kinds of shock controls are easy to arrange. E.g. the National Traffic Police in Kouvola is always welcome to the border station of Vaalimaa without any pre-planning.

5.6 Cooperation between authorities in Finland

5.6.1 Advantages of national cooperation

All the interviewed parties recognized that due to the PCB cooperation, job management is easier and more efficient at the same time. For example, the inspection of vehicles is conducted by the Traffic Police but can be done by the Customs as well.

One of the main advantages arising from this kind of cooperation is the exchange of information. Due to an efficient and continuous flow of information between the parties involved in the cooperation, the tasks are completed in a more efficient and comprehensive way. The use of common databases, applications and IT systems also enhance the exchange of information.

Cooperation and performing job tasks alternately also results in wider areas of expertise for each party. Consequently, this also results in a consistency of policies and procedures applied over activities. The participation of PCB cooperation representatives in same training and seminars also facilitates the consistency of policies, procedures and

actions. It was stated by most of the respondents that the direct result of cooperation between the authorities is cost savings.

The shared utilization of devices, for example in the case of vehicle inspection for roadworthiness and the use of the break control measurement device, enables cost savings once again. It can be summarized that the cooperation between the PBC results in better road safety, in more efficient work management, and cost savings.

5.6.2 Challenges of national cooperation

Everything has two sides, and so does the cooperation between authorities at some level. Sometimes it may happen that when the same inspection, for example the roadworthiness of vehicles is conducted by different parties, it may result in a situation where the sanctions may differ depending on the authorities involved.

The physical distance between the authorities may sometimes result in challenging situations. For example if there is a situation at the Customs and the Custom authorities would like to know the point of view of the police regarding the case and the police is not physically present at the border crossing point, this might result in a challenging situation. In these kinds of cases, pictures of the situation are taken and forwarded to the police for their evaluation and opinion.

Most of the interviewees expressed that they thought that the cooperation would be even better and efficient if there were more joint shock inspections, where representatives of the PCB would be present. At the moment this is not possible due to a lack of resources. It was also mentioned several times that at the moment there is a rather limited number of common training sessions and seminars where the representatives of each party of the PCB would be present. These are clearly needed as per the general opinion of the interviewees.

As in any organization, the different organizational cultures in the cooperation parties, in this case the Traffic Police, Customs and Border

Guards may sometimes challenge the cooperation. However, this issue was seldom brought up, actually only two times. A greater concern were the continuously growing traffic flows and continuously reduced resources, which were considered to challenge the well-established cooperation between the authorities.

5.7 International cooperation between authorities

5.7.1 Advantages of international cooperation

The main advantage of cooperation between international authorities, in this case mainly with Russian authorities, is the utilization of the knowledge and skills of Russian Customs and Boarder Guards. For example the Russian authorities are more skilled and knowledgeable when it comes to recognition of fake documents, and thus in the cases where there is a suspicion in the Finnish side that a particular document is fake, cooperation and working together on the issue takes place.

The use of common IT systems makes for example electronic clearance possible. As well as in cooperation between Finnish authorities, the cooperation with Russian authorities makes information exchange by means of telephone, personal meetings, fax and email correspondence very valuable, resulting in a wide pool of knowledge, which in turn makes problem solving and task management more efficient. Another very valuable result of cooperation between the Russian and Finnish authorities and information exchange is cooperation in solving economic crimes.

The cooperation makes it possible to know Russian legislation and thus act in a more structured way in some cases. For example having radar detectors in vehicles is not forbidden by Russian law, but it is forbidden in Finland. Knowing this, the Finnish authorities can inform

the Russian authorities that they could advise the drivers already on the Russian side of the border crossing point that these kinds of devices are forbidden in Finland. Additionally, this cooperation makes the Finnish authorities familiar with the Russian bureaucracy, which can be extremely helpful in some cases and result in timesaving and thus increase efficiency.

As both parties are involved in radiation monitoring of vehicles entering the country, this results in very efficient radiation monitoring of vehicles entering and exiting the EU. Also, as both parties do traffic regulation at the border, border crossing is more organized and controlled, eliminating difficult bottlenecks in the border crossing point and thus increasing road and traffic safety.

5.7.2 Challenges of international cooperation

A majority of the respondents indicated that the language barrier, followed by dissimilar practices were the essential issues that challenge the cooperation with Russian authorities. Different legislation in the countries was considered to be a challenging issue, even though it is understandable that each country has its own legislation. The continuously changing legislation in Russia was considered to be even more crucial in this matter.

The fact that the cooperation with Russian authorities is more official than cooperation in Finland, and decision-making at the local level is difficult and cannot always be done (for example sometimes a permission for doing something is needed from St Petersburg or even from Moscow), makes the cooperation sometimes difficult.

It was also considered by the respondents that the importance of personal contacts in Russia can be sometimes crucial and thus limit the development of cooperation at some level. For example, if a person knows the Customs and Border Guard executives in Russia, it is easier

to organize knowledge exchange visits to Russia and to get the Russians to come to Finland for practice exchange.

Sometimes the cooperation between the officials in the two countries can be challenging due to the fact that cargo transported by vehicles from Finland is export or transit for Finland and import for Russia and vice versa, thus resulting in different interests in control points from the official point of view.

6 CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the results of this study, the cooperation between the National Traffic Police, Customs and Border Guard in the South-Eastern regions of Finland works well. Every counterpart has its own areas of responsibility, the information exchange is effortless, and help is offered when needed. The advantages include e.g. information exchange between the authorities, joint training, uniform practices and methods, as well as the use of joint technologies. There are also some challenges, e.g. a lack of resources, which is reflected in reduction of joint training. The advantages of the cooperation between the Finnish and Russian authorities contain e.g. information exchange, as well as knowledge of the legislation in Russia. The disadvantages include for example different working cultures, language barriers and quickly changing legislation in Russia.

The results of this study are based on individual views or opinions of the interviewees. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized. Further research is needed especially concerning the international cooperation between Finland and Russia, and interviews with Russian authorities on the advantages, challenges, and improvement areas of international cooperation are needed. In addition, the opinions and views of other authorities (e.g. the local police, emergency staff) about the cooperation between authorities for heavy goods traffic would be valuable.

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APPENDIX

C.A.S.H. - Connecting Authorities for Safer Heavy Goods Traffic in the Baltic Sea Region

Interview questions in Southeast Finland:

Finnish Customs, Finnish Border Guard and National Traffic Police

Tasks and cooperation between authorities:

1. What are the tasks associated with heavy goods road traffic?
2. Do you collaborate with the Customs/Border Guard/ Police?
3. In which tasks do you collaborate with other authorities?
4. What are the forms of cooperation between the authorities?
Phone? Email? Information systems? Meetings? Common units?
Common services? Others?
5. How does the cooperation between authorities go? What works well?
6. What are the benefits of the cooperation between authorities?
7. What are the challenges or problems associated with cooperation between authorities?
8. In what matters do you wish for improvement in authority cooperation? What should be improved?
9. How does the content of heavy goods traffic influence the cooperation between authorities? For example the transport of dangerous goods, valuable goods, bulk?
10. How does the direction of transportation influence the cooperation between authorities?

11. Does the cooperation differ depending on whether the goods are transported from Finland to Russia or from Russia to Finland or other countries in the EU? How does it differ?

International cooperation:

1. Is there cooperation between foreign authorities? With whom?
2. What are the tasks associated with international cooperation between authorities?
3. What are the forms of international cooperation between authorities? Phone? Email? Information systems? Meetings? Common units? Common services? Others?
4. How does the cooperation with foreign authorities differ from the cooperation done with Finnish authorities?
5. How does the cooperation between authorities go? What works well?
6. What are the benefits of the international cooperation between authorities?
7. What are the challenges or problems associated with international cooperation between authorities?
8. In what matters you wish for improvement in international authority cooperation? What should be improved?
9. How does the content of heavy goods traffic influence the cooperation between authorities? For example transport of dangerous goods, valuable goods, bulk?
10. How does the direction of transportation influence the cooperation between foreign authorities?
11. Does the cooperation differ depending on whether the goods are transported from Finland to Russia or from Russia to Finland or other countries in the EU? How does it differ?

This study is part of the C.A.S.H. project - Connecting Authorities for Safer Heavy Goods Traffic in the Baltic Sea Region - running from September 2009 to September 2012.

C.A.S.H. project aims to develop practical solutions to make international road freight transport safer, more predictable and affordable in the Baltic Sea region. The project intends to do this by:

- improving co-operation between authorities**
- harmonising training of inspection officials**
- testing safety equipment and IT systems to be used by relevant authorities**

The project is part-financed by the European Union (European Regional Development Fund) through the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013.



Published by:

C.A.S.H.

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www.cash-project.eu