

Mrs. Sanna Marin, Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland
Mrs. Kaja Kallas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia

January 26th, 2021

Dear Prime Ministers,

We are writing on behalf of the largest business organizations in Estonia and in Finland - the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Finland Chamber of Commerce.

We have closely followed the efforts made in both countries to manage the health and economic crisis. The Chambers appreciate and support the efforts taken by our governments in the fight with the crisis and to keep cooperation strong between our two countries and for continuously looking for solutions to keep the borders open between Estonia and Finland. We strongly believe that the most relevant key factor in solving the problems and building future success is a cooperation between companies, business organizations, and also between governments and public institutions. As economies in Estonia and in Finland are today more tightly linked to each other than ever before and constitute almost one single economic area especially when we consider Tallinn and Helsinki and the neighboring areas, we also hope that decisions over the free movement of goods and people will be more discussed together and agreed in cooperation.

The most recent decision to restrict the movement of people from Estonia to Finland was a negative surprise for us and especially for the Estonian business community. We fully appreciate the challenges governments face, ensuring the pandemic spread is kept under control in Finland, however, the latest decision seems too severe and unjustified and has an extremely negative impact for companies and for many people, whose livelihoods depend on our borders staying open at least for workers, professionals, and entrepreneurs. We strongly believe that in tight cooperation between the governments and transportation companies less restrictive solutions could be developed.

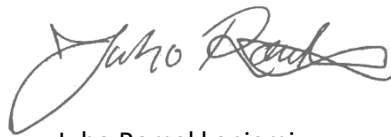
One solution that we would like to propose is to require all those who arrive in Finland to carry a recent (taken in the last 48 hours) negative PCR COVID-19 test result to show on arrival or even when boarding the respective vessel. As far as we have information all the largest transportation companies are willing to impose the rule that all passengers should have a recent negative test result and are willing to control this before boarding. We are certain that if such a requirement would be in place and it would be something that would allow people to continue to travel between the two countries, those who have to travel to Finland for work, would be more than willing to have the tests done before coming to Finland. Many other EU countries have opted successfully for this type of solution. We still propose that negative test requirements would not be applicable to those professionals being listed separately and being exempt from the new restrictions.

We have strong confidence that our countries can work together, and that cooperation will not only benefit our economies but our societies as a whole and lower the risks associated with COVID-19. Agreeing on an alternative solution to closing the border for thousands of people for a whole month or more, would help a lot of families and companies in Estonia and also in Finland. New restrictions as announced and enforced since 27.01 will certainly cause unnecessary distress at an already challenging time. Only together and in cooperation we can find the best solutions that would help our economies also grow faster after the pandemic is over.

Yours sincerely,



Mait Palts
Director general
Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry



Juho Romakkaniemi
CEO
Finland Chamber of Commerce