



North of the Arctic Circle: Get Your Kicks on Route E6

OE Watch Commentary: European route E6 is the main north-south road through Norway, and the west coast of Sweden. It was initially 3,088 kilometers long and runs from the southern tip of Sweden at Trelleborg, into Norway and through almost all of the country north to the Arctic Circle to Kirkenes near the Russian border. E6 is now 17 kilometers shorter. Traffic had to originally drive along the southern shores of the Rombaken fjord to a shorter bridge and then continue back to the coast following the northern shores road. As the accompanying excerpted article reports, construction on the Chinese-built Hålogaland bridge started in February 2013 and was due to be finished in the Spring of 2018. It is truly an impressive mega-bridge and is part of the Chinese northern belt and road initiative using the Northern Sea Route through Russian Arctic Waters to Kirkenes. There, goods can travel on the Norwegian-Finnish rail system (see “The New Chinese Silk Road may run through the Arctic,” *OE Watch*, April 2018) or on the E6. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

“‘It’s been great to see Chinese participation in this project,’ Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg told reporters at the inauguration ceremony on the Hålogaland Bridge over the Rombaken fjord.”

Source: “Norway’s 2nd Largest Bridge Built by Chinese Firm Opens to Traffic,” *Xinhua*, 9 December 2018. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-12/10/c_137661984.htm

China’s Sichuan Road and Bridge Group (SRBG) delivered the steel construction and was responsible for the mounting of the bridge, which contributes to a significant shortcut on European route E6 -- the main north-south road through Norway and the west coast of Sweden. “It’s been great to see Chinese participation in this project,” Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg told reporters at the inauguration ceremony on the Hålogaland Bridge over the Rombaken fjord. “It is a very beautiful bridge that is very important for the local community,” she said.

Chinese Ambassador to Norway Wang Min, who was also present at the inauguration ceremony, said the bridge has shown Chinese companies’ efforts to carry out the Belt and Road Initiative. He stated that the project “is an important result of the mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Norway. It will set an important example to further promote economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.”

In 2013, the SRBG won the steel contract for the bridge in a tough competition with the world’s leading builders. The steel contract includes preproduction of all the parts -- cables and steel boxes and site construction. The production of the steel parts was carried out in four different factories in China



Construction of the Hålogaland Bridge, crossing Rombaksfjord between the town Narvik and the village Øyjord in Nordland, Norway (2014).

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