

Ingeniøren, 24 November

<http://ing.dk/artikel/finansministeriet-femern-tunnel-aabner-tidligst-i-2026-180368>

## **Ministry of Finance: Fehmarn tunnel does not open before 2026**

**The Ministry of Finance now openly states what has hitherto been impossible to get a clear answer to: A tunnel on Fehmarnbelt cannot open before 11 years have passed.**

The Ministry of Finance breaks authorities, Ministers and Femern A/S' silence about the opening of the tunnel between Rødby and Puttgarden. That appears from access to documents granted to Ingeniøren.

The Transport Ministry has requested the Ministry of Finance's comments to the temporary prognoses for the Fehmarn tunnel. The mail from the Ministry of Finance to the Transport Ministry is not itself subject to the Public Records Act, but an email from the Transport Ministry to Femern A/S is. In this email, the Ministry of Finance's comments are mentioned, even though one line has been blacked out, meaning that Ingeniøren cannot get access to this information.

A new German railway to Puttgarden is delayed and will not be completed before 2024. That has thus been the new so-called base year for the expected completion of the tunnel. But that is too pretty a picture, the Ministry of Finance emphasizes.

"It is a fact that the German authority approval cannot be ready before the end of 2017, and that the construction period will be 8.5 years following negotiations with tunnel contractors. Mathematically, then, the Fehmarn connection cannot open before mid-2025 at the earliest. A bit of cautiousness would imply that that the base scenario for the opening of the tunnel should be 2026," the Ministry of Finance writes.

"At least, it cannot be 2024, which would entail a hasty procedure and more expensive construction work as compared to what has been agreed," the Ministry adds.

The civil servants add that "the timeline for the project will be decisive" for the political treatment of the case.

The Ministry of Finance is also dissatisfied with the alternatives for not just construction start, but also financials, which have been calculated by Femern A/S in draft versions of which some can be seen in Ingeniøren's access to documents. They all calculate what the payback time for the tunnel will be if the development is better than predicted, but not if it is worse. The Ministry of Finance wants to change that.

"In the basis scenario, the EU aid is DKK 4.4 billion in 2016-2019. There should be an alternative where, for instance, DKK 1-2 billion is removed because of the late construction start," the Ministry of Finance writes and continues:

"Construction price: There is a lack of alternatives with, for instance, extra costs of DKK 3 billion and DKK 5 billion – even if you have already increased the reserves. Sensitivity calculations concerning traffic development are also lacking – especially when it comes to the traffic leap."

The lack of calculations concerning the financial risks related to the Fehmarn tunnel has been emphasized by Hans Schjær-Jacobsen, whom has prepared his own uncertainty calculations.

The email from the Transport Ministry to Femern A/S states that the Ministry of Finance's comments will be included "in our discussions of an updated financial analysis". It does not state in Ingeniøren's access to documents what has been the result of this.

This fall, contractors have handed in new tender bids for the Fehmarn tunnel following a DKK 8.9 billion budget overrun by earlier bids from February last year. The new tender bids and the new financial prognosis are still kept secret, and Ingeniøren has not been able to get access to these documents.