

Karlskrona 2010-09-08
Dnr 406-068-2010

European Commission

TEN-T Executive Agency

Brussels

Consultation on the future Trans-European Transport Network policy Response to the Commission working document, 4 may 2010

Background

In the beginning of May 2010, the European Commission (EC) issued a Commission Working Document calling for an open consultation on the future Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) policy. The Working Document presented the results of six different expert groups appointed to assist the Commission in the policy reviewing process, and called for an open consultation regarding these results. Stakeholders now have the possibility to share their views until the 15th of September 2010.

The EC encourages comments and suggestions on the ideas and questions put forward in the Working Document together with the expert group's reports and the TEN-T policy-Background Papers. Region Blekinge has decided not to answer these questions but rather formulate its perspective on the presented ideas based on the organization's experiences from leading and working with a handful of international infrastructural projects and initiatives such as Baltic Gateway, East West Transport Corridor, Baltic Master and SEBTranslink.

A World in change

In November last year, Europe celebrated the 20 year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a happening that has come to symbolize the unification of a divided Europe. Over almost a night, Blekinge, earlier considered as Sweden's backyard, regained its economical strategic importance. Since then and until the recent recession, several of the East European states such as Poland and the Baltic States have enjoyed a rapid economic growth. Blekinge and the ports of Karlshamn and Karlskrona became important links to these rising economies. The growth of transport in these ports during the two latest decades has been dramatically, a development that is expected to continue.

The fall of the Iron Curtain also moved the center of Europe eastwards. Goods to and from the South-East and the Adriatic Sea that earlier were transported through Western Europe increasingly find its way through Central and Eastern Europe and over the Baltic Sea. Blekinge and its ports have a strategic value in this transport chain.

During the 19th century, Western industrialization moved the economic centre of the World from the Far East to Europe. However, Asia is catching up and the industrialized countries China and India is two of the fastest growing economies in the World. The flow of goods between the Far East and Europe is increasing. Most goods from China are transported to Europe by sea through the Suez Channel. However, increased pressure on the Channel and piracy at the Horn of Africa raise the demand for alternative routes. The route around Africa is too long and the Arctic Passages are still far from navigable most of the year. Hence, the land-way from the Far East to Europe through Russia and the Black Sea Region is gaining importance. The planning of the future TEN-T should therefore acknowledge this and prepare strategic nodes and links for an increased flow of goods from the Far East via land-way connections.

The Baltic Sea is the key

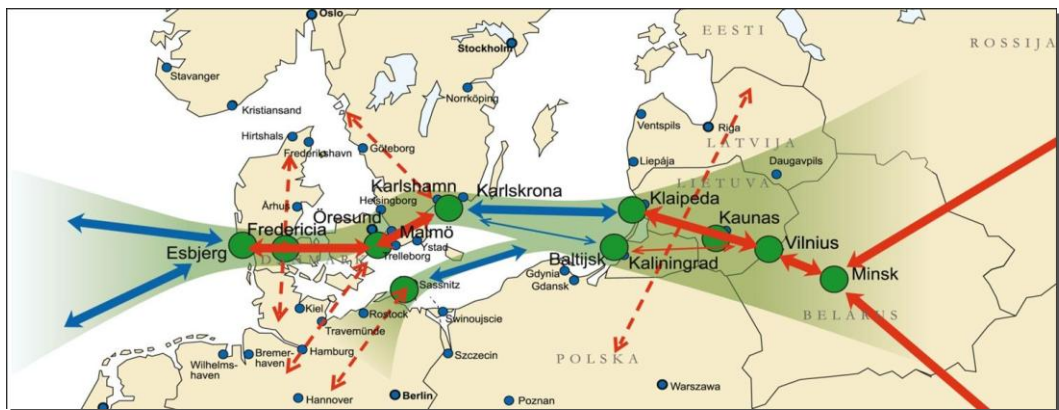
The Baltic Sea Region (BSR) has the potential to be an important Gateway between East and West. For a long time, the Baltic Sea worked as a defensive wall between the Baltic Sea Region states rather than as an important link between them as the situation is today. Regarding to this most TEN-T priority projects and axis to be implemented by 2015 was selected before the accession of new Member States in Eastern Europe. However, better use could be made of the Baltic Sea as a common resource instead of directing transports of goods around it. This is acknowledged in the Baltic Sea Region Strategy, so should also be done in the planning of the future TEN-T.

Comments on the Commission Working Document

Based on above statements Region Blekinge has the following comments on the Commission Working Document and the overall planning of the future TEN-T system:

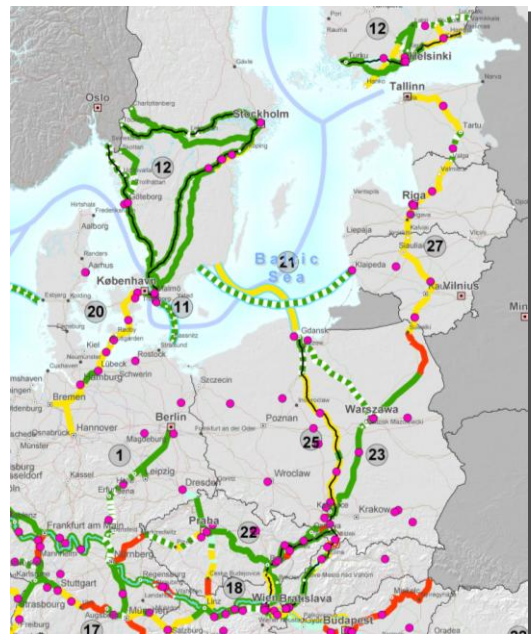
- Region Blekinge endorse the idea of a two layer network system as described in the Commission Working Document. However, Region Blekinge have some comments in the case of the planning of both the comprehensive network and the core network;
- It is important to take the current and, if possible, future changes in the World into account in the planning of the core network and in the defining of main and intermediate nodes, not the current size of transport flows alone. History shows that forecasts have had difficulties adapting such changes to their predictions. It stresses the importance of the revision of the TEN-T takes a broad perspective on upcoming cargo flows and transport corridors;

- Transports of goods to and from Russia and the Far East are growing tremendously, a trend that is forecasted to continue. Therefore, Region Blekinge supports the idea to give connections between East and West high priority. The East West Transport Corridor, a transport corridor between Minsk in Belarus and Esbjerg in Denmark via Vilnius and the Klaipeda/Karlskhamn motorway of the sea ferry link, is an important link between main nodes in China, Russia and Belarus with main nodes in Central and Western Europe. The East West Transport Corridor II project is currently involving 70 partners from Sweden, Lithuania, Germany, Russia, Italy, China and Denmark to develop a more sustainable and environmental friendly transport flow through ITS-development, transport planning and Green Corridor activities.



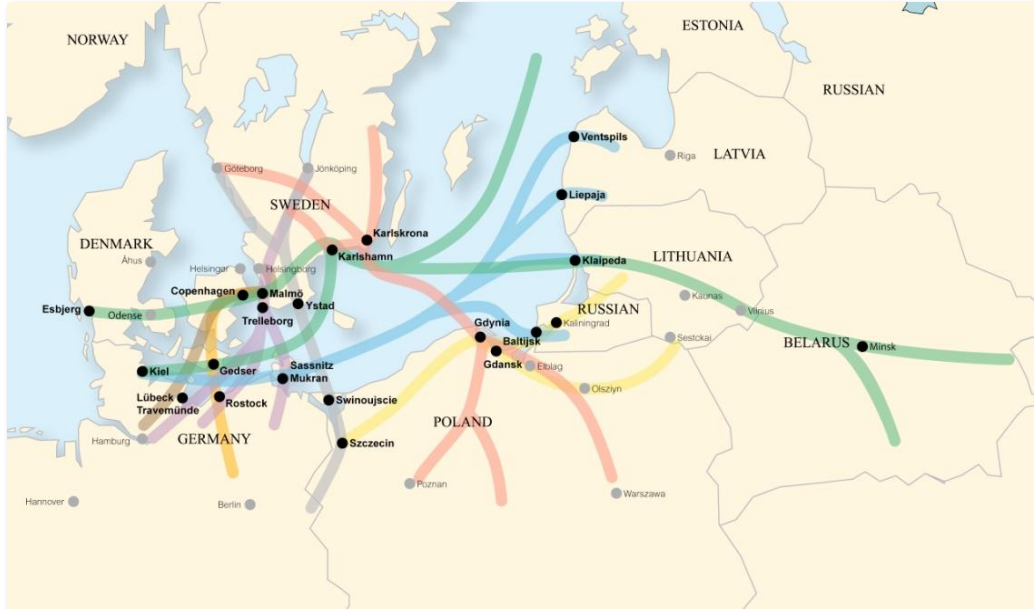
The East West Transport Corridor stretches from Minsk in Belarus and Esbjerg in Denmark via Vilnius and the Klaipeda/Karlskhamn motorway of the sea ferry link.

Simultaneously, The Baltic Link connection, a corridor from Gothenburg-Alvesta-Karlskrona (Swedish national road 27 and the coast to coast railway link) in Sweden, the Karlskrona-Gdynia/Gdansk motorway of the sea ferry link, to Lodz-Warsaw in Poland, effectively binds main nodes in the South-East with the North-West and connects the TEN-T priority axis 23 and 25 with the Nordic triangle, priority axis 12. The Baltic Link also connects Scandinavia and the Nordic triangle with the SoNorA project;



- Region Blekinge supports the idea to integrate candidate and neighboring countries since e.g. Belarus and Ukraine are important transit countries to the increasing amounts of goods from the East destined for Europe. Hence, it is very important to cooperate on transport policies to prevent “dead ends” and promote the harmonization of standards, regulations and procedures to increase effectiveness;
- As declared by the EC in the Working Document, linking the major cities and Member States’ (MS) capitals will be important. However, since the core network is to be constituted by the TEN-T priority projects, it is very important to identify missing links. Connections between the MS capitals Copenhagen-Vilnius and Oslo-Warsaw are missing among the current TEN-T priority projects that will constitute the core network. Both these corridors, the East West Transport Corridor and Baltic Link, as described earlier go through Blekinge;
- It is also important to divide between transport of people and freight. Freight transport has historically been under prioritized the earlier and is threatened to remain that way if the transport flows are compared together since freight do take other routes than people. Hence, importance in links and nodes may differ;
- Both the comprehensive network and the core network should be coherent. Important ports, roads, railways and shipping routes must be tied together to build an internationally coherent network. This approach was applied in Baltic Gateway, a project in which the starting point was that all important ports should be connected to a comprehensive road- and railway network. The Motorway of the Baltic Sea TEN-T priority project effectively connects the ports Karlshamn-Klaipeda and Karlskrona-Gdynia but the ports of Karlshamn, Karlskrona and Klaipeda are not in direct connection with any land based TEN-T priority projects and therefore become “dead ends”.

Increased transport flows in different corridors may also result in a need for better connection between two or more transport corridors. For example this could be the case in connection of road/rail between Karlshamn/East West Transport Corridor and Karlskrona/Baltic Link. TEN-T priority ports in the Baltic Sea and links to them should be integrated in the core network.



Complement to TEN-T with focus on ports. The map shows the need of land based TEN-T priority links to ports.

- It is essential that the future TEN-T network is an integrated one that includes all modes of transport and will thereby be more flexible and better suited for the demand for secure, efficient and sustainable transports. An integrated multimodal system would also prevent unnecessary detours negative to both the efficiency and the environmental footprint of the network;
- Region Blekinge support the emphasis on ITS services in the planning of the core network. Nevertheless, it is important to include the comprehensive network too to make the future TEN-T fully functional and interoperable;
- Region Blekinge also fully support the idea of a sustainable future TEN-T. However, the Green Corridor Concept is missing in the planning of the comprehensive and core network. The EWTC II project aim to become a best practice example of a Green Corridor. A better integration between the planning of the TEN-T and the development of Green Corridors would contribute to the EU 2020 goals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Region Blekinge endorse the emphasis on ITS and innovative solutions, sustainable and environmental transports, and East-West connections in the EC Working Document. However, Region Blekinge misses the Green Corridor concept and its important role in the work for more sustainable transports in Europe. Region Blekinge also would like to point out the importance of fully integrating Blekinge in the core network as an important international transport node in Europe's connection to Russia and the Far East. In consequence:

- The East West Transport Corridor from Esbjerg to Minsk via Blekinge, Klaipeda and Vilnius must be included to the priority projects that will constitute the core network.
- The Baltic Link from Gothenburg to Warsaw via Blekinge and Gdynia must be included to the priority projects that will constitute the core network.
- More focus must be put on the Green Corridor Concept to fulfill the EU 2020 goals.

REGION BLEKINGE

Anna-Lena Cederström
Chief Executive Officer

REGION BLEKINGE

Mats Johansson
Regional Council Commissioner