

PROTOCOL

The Steering Committee Meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA) and Barents Regional Working Group on Transport and Logistics (BRWGTL)

Time: 29 September 2015 at 12.30
Place: Hotel Santa Claus, Rovaniemi

BEATA members present:

Laura Eiro	Chair of the BEATA Steering Committee, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland
Marja Liivala	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
Tuija Maanoja	Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland
Paal Iversen	Ministry of Transport and Communications, Norway
Dharmesh Shah	Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, Sweden
Torbjørn Naimak	Norwegian Public Roads Administration
Krister Palo	Swedish Transport Administration
Nadezhda Karkach	Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation

BRWGTL members present:

Hannu Heikkinen	Chair of the BRWGTL, Regional Council of Kainuu
Eirik Selmer	Finnmark County Council
Marius Chramer	Tromsø County Council
Mikael Bergström	County Administration Board of Västerbotten
Bo-Erik Ekblom	County Administrative Board of Norrbotten

Other participants:

Marko Sillanpää	Finnish Transport Safety Agency (Trafi)
Anne Herneoja	Finnish Transport Agency
Jorma Leskinen	Chair of the Road Map Expert Working Group, Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, Lapland, Finland
Sanna Kolomainen	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, Lapland, Finland
Ulla Alapeteri	Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, Lapland, Finland
Ine Hilling	Norwegian Public Roads Administration
Kari Karstensen	Norwegian Public Roads Administration
Rebecka Snefugli Sondell	International Barents Secretariat
Mona Mansour	North Sweden European Office
Alexander Levchenko	Embassy of the Russian Federation in Finland
Marko Zabaljac	Swedish Transport Administration (IAESTE student)
Martti Miettinen	Secretary of the Road Map Expert Working Group JBTP-consultant, Transys Ltd

Interpreters:

Lena Sharoff	Verbum Rossica
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Opening of the meeting

Laura Eiro, the Finnish chairperson of BEATA, opened the meeting.

The protocol of the BEATA Steering Committee and BRWGTL meeting 4 June 2015 in Helsinki was approved with changes in the reports from Sweden and Russia.

She continued with the presentation of the themes, activities and accomplishments of the BEATA Steering Committee during the Finnish chairmanship in the period October 2013 – September 2015. She also referred briefly to Finland's new transport implementation program, which focuses largely on the maintenance of transport infrastructure. The national budget of 2016 was issued just a couple of days ago containing additional funding for maintenance for the years 2016-2019. Other transport budget priorities include digitalization and deregulation.

1. BEAC – Barents Euro-Arctic Council

Marja-Leena Vuorenpää informed the meeting about the BEAC activities under the Finnish chairmanship, which is coming to an end. In October 14-15, there will be a ministerial meeting in Oulu. It will be the last meeting under the Finnish Chair after which Russia will take over. At the same time the Regional Committee will move to Archangelsk.

She also mentioned that a BEAC ad-hoc expert group has concluded an extensive study on financial mechanism, which gives an overview and analysis of the existing financing instruments as well as recommendations how to enhance the Barents co-operation

2. Reports of the member countries: Norway, Sweden and Russia

Paal Iversen told that the country report for Norway is practically the same as the one given in the BEATA SC meeting on June 4th. Important is that the Norwegian national budget 2016 will be announced in October and transport investments in the High North are expected to continue.

Of interest to the audience might be the fact that the transport minister of Norway will meet with transport ministers of Sweden and Finland separately this autumn.

Dharmesh Shah said the same than Paal Iversen. Developments in Sweden are largely the same as reported in June. The new transport budget was proposed two weeks ago containing e.g. new funding for the planning of the North Bothnian railway. It might also be added that in the preparation of the new transport plan Sweden's connections across its borders are considered for the first time.

Nadezhda Karkach regretted that the Russian comments concerning the cross-border road corridors came too late for inclusion in the final version of the report. Russia's main worry has been that the report does not reflect the national priorities accurately. The same concerns also the previous JBTP 2013 report. The Russian



Ministry of Transport is now ready to continue this work and update the reports accordingly by summer 2016.

Lastly, she informed the meeting that Russia can accept the Declaration with the recent revisions.

3. Report from the Barents Regional Working Group on Transport and Logistics (BRWGTL)

Hannu Heikkinen reported on behalf of the Barents Regional Working Group on Transport and Logistics, BRWGTL. The BRWGTL is now discussing actively the ways of improving regional aviation services and is also thinking of launching some studies to that effect.

4. Update of the Cross-Border Road Corridors in the Barents Region

Jorma Leskinen presented the final report of the expert working group titled "The Upgrade of the Cross-Border Road Corridors in the Barents Region". The report will be handed over to the High Level representatives of the Barents Region ministries of transport the next day, September 30th.

5. Last preparations before the High Level Meeting and Barents Transport Forum

Laura Eiro informed the meeting that the last remaining differences of opinion concerning the Declaration have just been sorted out. However, further work is needed especially with regard the Russian transport network in the two JBTP reports.

The Declaration can be adopted in the High Level Meeting the next day.

6. Russian takes over the chairmanship

Nadezhda Karkach noted that there are no technical problems regarding the Russian chairmanship of BEATA. Russia will take the task to update the two reports by the next meeting to be held in June or July 2016 in Archangelsk. For Russia the question remains whether the reports are strategic tools or not. They also would like to see that the expert working group could continue its work.

In response to the Russian questions the other countries replied that the BEATA reports cannot be binding, but rather provide guidance to national transport planning and decision making. Also, setting up an expert group is a good idea, but it needs a new mandate from the BEATA Steering Committee with clearly defined objectives.

7. Closing of the BEATA Steering Committee and the Barents Regional Working Group on Transport and Logistics (BRWGTL) meeting

Laura Eiro thanked the participants for their contributions, wished the new Chair Russia the best of luck and closed the meeting.