

BEATA High Level Meeting JOINT DECLARATION

Rovaniemi 30th September 2015

On September 30th 2015, the High Level Representatives of the Transport Ministries of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia discussed the challenges of the Barents region transport system in the High Level Meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA) in Rovaniemi.

We, the High Level Representatives of the Transport Ministries:

Recognize the role of cross-border transport connections and services for the economic development of the Barents region and agree to promote a well-functioning, efficient, safe, sustainable and coherent transport network, the development of new approaches to the transport and logistics services and of intelligent transport systems and solutions

Confirm the intention to continue work on the proposal for a Joint Barents Transport Plan in accordance with the BEATA Transport Ministers Declaration (Narvik 2013) to provide guidelines and recommendations for the development of all modes of transport in the border-crossing corridors of the Barents region.

Welcome as part of this ongoing work on developing the transport system the document prepared by the expert working group on the Cross-Border Road Corridors in the Barents Region and express gratitude to the expert working group for preparing valuable proposals within a tight time schedule, noting that further consultation are needed among the respective countries on this document.

Recognize the need for a coordinated development of the transport infrastructure and therefore underline the importance of joint documents, such as the Joint Barents Transport Plan and the current Cross-Border Road Corridors in the Barents Region reports prepared by the expert groups.

Regard the Kirkenes Declaration of June 4th 2013, approved by the four countries' Prime Ministers marking 20 years of the Barents Cooperation, as an important statement to accelerate the development of the transport system in the region.

Underline the importance of reducing the barriers to crossing of borders, both of practical and legal nature, by adopting intelligent transport system (ITS) applications, such as road,

traffic and weather information systems, for improving real-time driving conditions on international roads as well as by ensuring a smooth circulation of heavy goods vehicles (HGV).

Highlight the value of digitalization in achieving an interoperable, sustainable and efficient transport system.

Emphasize the significance of cooperation based on the bilateral agreements on cross-border transport corridors.

Agree that the approaches for the development of the Barents transport system provide a valuable input for cooperation in the future transport planning, on the national as well as the regional level, taking into consideration efficiency, environmental protection and safety.

Invite the respective parties to follow up the development of the international corridors in the Region and to continue the work on the proposal for a Joint Barents Transport Plan and to further update it on a regular basis.

Note the need for maintenance of existing transport infrastructure to reduce the number of accidents and to lead to a more robust and reliable transport system.

Underline the importance of connecting the transport networks in the Barents region to the international transport networks to ensure seamless transport and logistics chains.

Welcome supporting cooperation between the universities in areas of research and expertise development in transport sector in the Region.

Give recognition to the Barents Climate Action Plan so that environmental regulations and concerns shall be integrated in the planning and construction of transport infrastructure.

The BEATA High Level Meeting:

Regards BEATA as a unique arena for the development of this important region having specific transport challenges that must be addressed.

Emphasizes the need for close cooperation between the several regional arenas and institutions in Northern Europe.

Notes the significant potential of the Northern Sea Route, the development of which would benefit the Barents region and provide business opportunities and economic rewards to all member states in the region.