

**Protocol no 6
Steering Committee of
the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area
Date: February 5, 2002
Place: Umeå, Sweden**

Members present: Tomas Brolin, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications in Sweden, Juha Parantainen, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Finland, Kjell Rosanoff, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Norway, Vyascheslav Parfenov, Ministry of Transport in Russia and Ioannis Gheivelis, European Commission DG TREN.

Other participants: Marjukka Vihavainen-Pitkänen, Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ulla Isaksson, Swedish Foreign Ministry, Bo-Erik Ekblom, Norrbotten County Administration and Martti Miettinen, Secretary of BEATA Steering Committee.

§1 Opening of the Meeting

Mr Brolin opened the meeting, which was held immediately after a joint seminar on regional transport questions with the Economic Cooperation Working Group of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

The meeting agenda (Appendix 1) was adopted.

§2 Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the Steering Committee (Protocol no 5)

The minutes of the fifth meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Pan-European Transport Area (BEATA) Steering Committee in Haparanda/Torneå, Sweden/Finland, September 26, 2001 were approved (Appendix 2) with some minor comments. The secretariat will revise the minutes accordingly, which then will become final.

§3 Duration of Chairmanship

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Regional Council have extended the term of their chairmen from one to two years. The change will take effect in 2002 so that the current chairman (Sweden) will continue through the year 2002. Date for change of chairmanship will be decided later.

The Rules of Procedure of the BEATA Steering Committee imply that the BEATA chairmanship will follow the rotation of the BEAC. Therefore, the similar extension of the BEATA chairmanship is also called for.

Mr Brolin, chairman, proposed that the BEATA Steering Committee adopts the new two-year term. The members, representing all the signatories of the MoU, accepted the proposal.

§4 Barents Transport Project

Mr Bo-Erik Ekblom told that the members of the Communications Group of the Barents Regional Council had prepared the Barents Transport Project and applied for funding from the EU's Interreg III B program in October 2001. The application was rejected in December due to incomplete financial commitments, mainly from the Norwegian partners.

The BEATA Steering Committee supports the Barents Transport Project, as it helps the Committee's work by ensuring considerable resources for any preparatory work in the development of regional transport. Furthermore, the Steering Committee will be assigned an advisory role in the Project's implementation in the years 2002-2004.

Mr Ekblom said that the Communications Group will apply again for Interreg funding this spring. The deadline for the second application round is March 28.

The BEATA Steering Committee requested that a new application will be made and that the Norwegian regions should inform about their intentions by March 5. At that time, also the working group for preparing the applications should meet. Mr Ekblom is responsible for coordination between the parties.

For supporting any Interreg project in the Russian side a Tacis CBC application to Small Project Facility is necessary. As the deadline of applications is already March 22, it was considered that the Tacis application is filed only in the next round. The Tacis application will need cooperation between the Russian regions. In order to facilitate this cooperation the Russian Ministry of Transport was asked to intervene and discuss with the parties concerned. Mr Ekblom and the BEATA secretary will send Mr Parfenov such material that these discussions can be carried out, namely the previous Interreg III B Application and Letters of Commitment from the Russian regions.

5. Specific Projects

§5.1 BEATA GIS

Mr Miettinen informed the meeting that the BEATA GIS database project has been completed at the end of 2001. The development work has been carried out with the financial support from the Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications. The Ministry does not plan to continue the financing of any further development of the system. The proposal is that the BEATA database and homepages will be integrated in and carried further in the proposed Barents Transport Project.

§5.2 Planned infrastructure projects

The list of planned infrastructure projects in Finland, Norway and Sweden had been received already in Haparanda. Similar project information was expected from Russia. Therefore, Mr Parfenov had compiled a project list covering the Russian regions. The list is based on the Russian national investment budget accepted at the end of 2001. The list was handed over to Mr Brolin, which will do the translation and distribution of the list to the BEATA members at a later date.

In the meeting of the Communications Group in Archangelsk in January, a different list of preferred projects was presented. It was decided that the two lists are to be compared by the parties, particularly the Russian Ministry of Transport.

§ 5.3 Study of traffic evaluation and forecasts

Norway has prepared a report, which evaluates the results of different transport studies in the Barents area. Mr Rosanoff distributed an updated report in the meeting. The report was decided final, as no comments had been received.

§6 Reports of the BEATA members and other participants

EU Commission (DG TREN): Mr Gheivelis informed that a secretariat had been established now also for the Black Sea PETrA, the second such transport area secretariat after BEATA. A meeting of the transport corridor and area chairmen and secretaries will be held in Brussels in April, although the exact date is not yet confirmed. (The meeting has later been confirmed to be held on April 19th). In the meeting DG TREN will have recommendations for further work in the pan-European corridors and areas. By that time, DG TREN also will ask for reports and other contributions from the Steering Committees.

Finland: Mr Parantainen noted that there had been such a short time since the last meeting so that there is not much to report from the Finnish side. However, it might be of interest that Finland has allocated new money for railway electrification in the region.

Norway: Mr Rosanoff referred to the Norwegian National Transport Plan, which he has presented in earlier meetings. The first budget under the Plan has now been allocated for 2002 amounting to 100 MUSD. The sum is a bit lower than anticipated due to the high level of economic activity in Norway.

Russia: Mr. Parfenov pointed out that year 2001 has been very active in Russia. There has been big scale projects underway and additional ones being discussed with the financial institutions. The new National Transport Program was finalised and approved by the Parliament in 2001. The Plan will be coordinated with the national budget, although a substantial share of investments is expected from external sources.

There has also been a considerable activity of meetings and conferences concerning transport infrastructure development. The third Euro-Asian Transport Conference is again planned to be held in St. Petersburg next year. Preparations joining the WTO are also underway.

Sweden: Mr Brolin briefly informed of the Government's bill to the Parliament on Infrastructural Improvements for Sustainable Development in the period 2004-2015. The bill was approved by the Parliament in December 201. Now a process preparing investment plans will take place nationally and in the regions. New investment plans will be valid from January 2004 onward. Mr. Brolin will send leaflets with information on the governmental bill to members in the Steering committee, as soon as they are available in English.

Barents Regional Council: Mr Ekblom informed the meeting that the BEAR Communications Group has a new chairman. He is Mr. Maximow from the Archangelsk regional administration. The Group had a meeting on January 18 in Archangelsk. The protocol has been distributed to the BEATA Steering Committee members.

Mr Ekblom also informed the participants that the Archangelsk Airlines (AVL) flies again after a brief pause when the anti-collision devices were installed in two planes. AVL flies on three days to Troms (Norway) and on two days to Rovaniemi (Finland) and Luleå (Sweden).

§7 Future Work

7.1 Progress Report 2001

The Secretariat had prepared the Progress Report 2001 of the BEATA Steering Committee. It was decided that any comments should be sent to the Secretary by February 15.

7.2 Work Program of the Chair 2002

The chairman presented his Work Program for 2002 (Document dated Feb 1, 2002). It was decided that any comments should be received to the Chairman or the Secretary by March 1 the latest, after which the Program becomes effective.

§8 Closing of the meeting

The chair's new Work Program proposes that the next Steering Committee meeting will be held in October or November 2002. The dates and location will be announced later.

Martti Miettinen

Tomas Brolin

APPENDICES:

1. Agenda
2. Protocol no. 5