

Protocol no 7
Steering Committee of
the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area
Date: January 22, 2003
Place: Luleå, Sweden

Members present: Tomas Brolin, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications in Sweden; Marjukka Vihavainen-Pitkänen, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Finland; Kjell Rosanoff, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Norway; Vyascheslav Parfenov, Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation; Boris Sitkov, Ministry of Railways of the Russian Federation, and Elke Ording, European Commission DG TREN.

Other participants: Helena Ödmark and Ulla Isaksson, Swedish Foreign Ministry; Bo-Erik Ekblom, Norrbotten County Administration; Mårten Edberg, Västerbotten County Administration; Vladimir Belozarov, October Railway; Lev Bykov, Archangelsk Oblast Administration; Tuomo Palokangas, Oulu Regional Council; Voitto Tiensuu, Lappi Regional Council; Martti Juntunen, Kainuu Regional Council; Jane Baekken, Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communications; Per Munkerud, Nordland County Council and Martti Miettinen, Secretary of BEATA Steering Committee.

§1 Opening of the Meeting

Mr Brolin opened the meeting and welcomed all the participants to Luleå.

The meeting agenda (Appendix 1) was adopted.

§2 Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Steering Committee (Protocol no 6)

The minutes of the sixth meeting of the Steering Committee in Umeå, Sweden, February 5, 2002, were approved (Appendix 2).

§3 Situation in the BEATA cooperation

Marjukka Vihavainen-Pitkänen presented the Finnish points of view as follows:

- As reported earlier, the electrification of the railways in northern Finland is underway. The section Kontiomäki-Vartiuss (Russian border) will be completed in 2006 and the line Oulu-Rovaniemi by 2004. The second railway leading to Russian border to Kellosele (Salla) is under consideration for closure due to low traffic.
- A ten-year transport infrastructure investment program is under preparation with the main objective of securing the basic level of service throughout the country.

- Regional development considerations are becoming more important partly due to a new Act on Regional Development in Finland.

In addition, Marjukka Vihavainen-Pitkänen pointed to the more general EU –wide developments:

- TEN Guidelines are under revision. The Commission’s proposal is due at the end of 2003. This potentially has a significant effect on the further development of the European transport networks.
- The enlarged Union has also some bearing on how the transport corridors and areas will be seen in the EU in the future. The importance of the EU-Russia dialogue may be increased, as the EU-Russia border will be lengthened.

Mr Kjell Rosanoff told the meeting about the developments in Norway:

- One week ago the new Borisogleb/Storskog border station at the Norwegian-Russian border was opened to traffic.
- An Interreg project “Northern Maritime Corridor” was approved. The STBR project now being launched must be coordinated with the NMC project.
- The Norwegian road districts have been reorganised into 5 regional districts. Bodö (Nordland) has the headquarters of the most northern district.
- Preparation of the new transport plan in Norway has started. The plan will be presented in early 2004.
- There are no major transport investment projects in northern Norway in the programs. Road improvements will concentrate on E6. Tendering of regional aviation at smaller airports is planned for service providers.

Mr Vyascheslav Parfenov informed about Russia the following:

- The Russian Ministry of Transport is preparing for the first time an overall target program 2010, which covers all the modes of transport.
- The Russian Northern Sea Route program is currently being developed. A meeting will be held on Feb. 10.

Mr Vladimir Belozarov continued with the description of the railway development in NW Russia:

- Major investments are underway where one priority is the links with Finland.
- The main investment project is the electrification of the railway St. Petersburg - Murmansk. The works are underway south of Murmansk in section up to Louhi. Railway is practically electrified at the seaport of Murmansk. Electrification is currently underway also on the east-west railway from Belomorsk (at Murmansk railway) to Archangelsk.
- A great problem concerns currently the construction of the 132 km stretch between Ledmozero and Kotckoma, where the works have been stopped late last year due to lack of financing. No funding for the project has been allocated this year either and consequently no commercial traffic can start on the railway, as planned earlier.

Tomas Brolin provided some notes from Sweden:

- In Sweden proposals of new infrastructure investment plans for years 2004-2015 are under preparation. Two proposals concerns national investment plans for both rail and road respectively. Besides of them regional investment plans are prepared in each region. The plans are subjected for consideration until August. Involved in the considerations are the concerned national authorities, local municipalities, regional organisations and

NGO:s. The plan contains three levels of potential investments for regions. Government will, after consideration, finally decide the level of investments for each region. The allocation of investment for railways will be twice as much as before. Road investments stay the same. The investment plans for 2004-2015 will be valid from January 2004.

- The costal railway in northern Sweden progresses despite of considerable environmental obstacles. The railway is divided into three implementation segments with a total price tag of 1.2 billion euros.

The final notes concerning the issues of the EU Commission and DG TREN were given by Ms Elke Ording:

- TEN-T revision is currently underway. Preparation of a EU priority project list is a sub-task due to be finished already in January-February this year. Finland and Sweden have proposed only a few projects for the priority list, such as the Nordic Triangle and Motorways of the Seas. This work has been delegated to a High-level Group with members from the ministries of transport of the EU countries. The Group's work should be finalised by summer 2003.
- TINA corridors of the new member states will become parts of TEN-T. An ambitious schedule calls for the submission of the TEN-T proposal to the European Parliament in 2004.
- Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment will be implemented in the EU area. Starting in 2003 impact assessing must be used in all the programs and new measures. The work on the methodology is still underway. A manual should be published still this year presenting the criteria and indicators for impacts and their estimation.

§4 Modalities of BEATA

4.1 Change of Chairmanship

The 6th meeting of the BEATA Steering Committee decided to extend the term of chairmanship to two years so as to match the rotation of the BEAC chairmanship. The chair of the BEAC will change in the ministerial meeting held in Skellefteå, Sweden, October 2-3, 2003. It was decided that this was the date when the chair of BEATA Steering Committee will be transferred to Norway as well.

4.2 Komi participation

The BEAC has extended its membership with the Republic of Komi, Russia. As the geographic coverage of BEATA should be the same as that of BEAC, it was decided that the Komi Republic becomes also member of BEATA and be invited to participate in the Steering Committee.

Unfortunately no participation from Komi was present in this meeting. However, they had sent material to the chair about the transport system in the republic.

5. BSR Interreg III B project (STBR)

In December 2002, the BSR Interreg III B Steering Committee had made the decision to grant financial support for the Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region (STBR) project, which was proposed by the regions, the transport ministries and other relevant parties of the BEATA

area. Mr Bo-Erik Ekblom and Martti Miettinen explained the project and how it was envisioned to proceed. The main points are:

- The BSR Interreg III B Steering Committee has put five questions and conditions to the project, which must be answered before financing can be obtained and the project start. The main condition concerns how the activities dealing with transport connections inside Russia can or cannot be covered financially. In principle, Interreg funds can be used within the borders of the EU countries and Norway only.
- Establishing a permanent secretariat in Luleå. An open call for the position of the STBR project secretary will be made right after the final project approval.
- Organising the project including the project steering committee, management group, reference groups and advisory board. The membership in each group must yet be decided and the roles defined.
- Tacis applications are an essential component of the whole STBR project package. The present Tacis CBC round of applications will end on March 21, 2003. This was considered to be too close for making any reasonable application. Therefore, it was decided that the Tacis applications are submitted in the following round, possibly in spring 2004. The preparatory responsibility was delegated to the Communications Working Group of the BEAR, which is planning to have its next meeting in Petrozavodsk this spring. Tacis applications could be on the agenda of this meeting, the date of which is to be determined by the host, Mr Maximov of the Archangelsk Regional Administration.

The BEATA Steering Committee will become Advisory Board (AB) of the STBR project. It was discussed what that might mean and the conclusion was:

- AB brings to the project the current and proposed views and requirements embodied in the national transport policies.
- The members of AB will be in position to inform and advice national policy making and investment programming about the developments and desires emerging in the STBR process.
- The AB members will coordinate and direct other, possibly parallel, projects to seek cooperation with the STBR project as well as eliminate any double work at national level.
- AB can also lend political support for the activities, particularly between Russia and the Nordic Countries.

§6 Other contributions

Mr Parfenov went through the reports from the Russian BEATA regions. In Karelia progress has been made in the construction of east-west road connection east of Lake Onega. In Murmansk and Archangelsk the priorities are the development of the arctic sea route and regional aviation. Mr Sitkov continued by stressing the importance of Russia - Nordic Country railway connections for Russia and explaining the proposed reorganisation of the Russian Railways.

Mr Brolin informed the meeting about the status of the railway gauge change project at Haparanda - Tornio (Finnish-Swedish border). Regional representatives Mårten Edberg, Tuomo Palokangas, Voitto Tiensuu and Marti Juntunen, and some others with shorter comments, described the recent progress and plans concerning transport infrastructure development in their respective regions. The presentations complemented the previous reports about the situation in each country.

§7 Future Work

7.1 Revision of Action Programme

The current Action Program 1999-2003 runs out in 2003. The chairman had prepared a proposal how to proceed in the preparation of the second Action Programme for the years 2004-2007. It was decided that the Steering Committee launches the Program preparation as the chair had proposed. The preparation work was delegated to a task force with the following members: Tomas Brodin, Jane Baekken and Martti Miettinen. Timetable is as follows:

- April 15 - members can submit their proposals for the future work until this time
- 8th Steering Committee meeting (June 2003) – first draft of the Action Program is presented and discussed. Task force revises the Action Program as decided in the meeting.
- 9th Steering Committee meeting (late 2003) – final draft is discussed and approved with possible comments. Task force makes the proposed revisions, after which the Action Program is considered as final.

The task force was asked to review also the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of 1998, which may require some updating as well.

The new MoU and a possible BEATA declaration can possibly be drawn up, discussed and signed by the transport ministers or their high-level representatives during the 3rd Euro-Asian Transport Conference to be held in St. Petersburg in September 2003. Mr Parfenov informed that Russian Ministry of Transport is responsible for the preparation of the St. Petersburg Conference.

7.2 Backbone network

The current BEATA backbone network was approved in the 3rd Steering Committee meeting in Rovaniemi, November 26, 1999. At that time it was also decided that the backbone network is to be reviewed at certain intervals, first time in 2003. The chairman had prepared a plan for updating the backbone network according to which the updating should be done only limitedly. The main task should be the creation of a valid backbone network for the Republic of Komi. It was decided that the backbone network updating is carried out as the chair had proposed and the work is delegated to the task force mentioned above. Timetable is the same as in the revision of the Action Program (item 7.1).

It was further decided that the network proposals from non-members, such as regions, must be channelled through respective national representatives and be included in the proposal of each country.

7.3 Project list

The projects, decided or programmed in some way in the Nordic Countries, have been collected and listed already earlier. Listing of similar projects in Russia is underway. The work has been delayed due to some technical problems.

7.4 Progress Report 2002

The Secretariat had prepared the Progress Report 2002 of the BEATA Steering Committee. Any comments from the members were requested by January 31. Based on the received comments the Report will be revised and then submitted to the BEAC and DG TREN so that they can take note of the BEATA progress in their respective meetings this spring.

7.5 Work Program 2003 of the Chair

The chairman presented the Work Program until October 2003 (Document dated Jan 20, 2003). It was decided that any comments about it should be received by January 31, after which the Program becomes effective.

7.6 BEATA GIS and website

Mr Miettinen informed the meeting about the BEATA website which has been operational this year. Nearly 11 000 visits have been recorded at the site in all of 2002.

There has been very little updating of the website in 2002, as the intention has been that the website will be used and further developed in the STBR project.

§8 Next meeting

According to the chair's Work Program 2003 the next Steering Committee meeting will be held in June 2003, preferably week 23 (2-6.6.2003). The exact date and location will be announced later.

§9 Closing of the meeting

Chairman closed the meeting.

Martti Miettinen

Tomas Brolin

APPENDICES:

1. Agenda no. 7
2. Protocol no. 6