



PROTOCOL

Joint meeting between the BEATA Steering Committee and Barents Regional Working Group on Transport and Logistics (BRWGTL)

Time: 24 September 2014 at 9.30
Place: Rovaniemi (Hotel Santa Claus)
Participants: See attachment 1

1. Opening of the meeting and the programme of the Finnish Chair of BEATA in 2013 – 2015 (update)

Sabina Lindström, Finnish chairperson of BEATA, opened the meeting. She continued in brief with updated overview of the programme of the Finnish BEATA Chairmanship until September 2015 (attachment 2). The Programme stresses the finding of a common approach to the development of transport and logistics.

She informed further that the next meeting of the BEATA Steering Committee will be held in April-May 2015. The BEATA ministerial and Steering Committee meetings will be organised in September 2015.

In addition, a Joint seminar between the BEATA and Working Group on Economic Cooperation (TEM) will be held in March-April 2015.

2. Report of BEAC – the Barents Euro-Arctic Council

Ari Siren told about the developments at the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. An ad-hoc working group has been preparing modalities for the financial instrument, which should be shortly available to support initiatives for Barents cooperation.

The Climate Change Action Plan has now been approved and can be implemented.

3. Report of the Barents Regional Working Group on Transport and Logistics

The main activity of the BRWGTL has been the Barents Freeway project, which has, among others, produced four railway pilot projects and one air taxi study. In the future, the BRWGTL is willing to cooperate with the updating of the Joint

Barents Transport Plan and give its input when needed. For instance, The BRWGTL plans to prepare detailed descriptions of each transport corridor in the region in the form of project cards.

4. Reports of member countries

NORWAY: *Paal Iversen* told that Norway's new government will announce its budget in October, which will be quite ambitious when it comes to transport. The intention is to implement fully the 10-year National Transport Plan containing large investments in railways, roads, safety, etc. Plans also call for establishment of a specific road investment company.

The Government's High North Policy has a broad scope and includes transport and other infrastructure investments, including also the follow-up of JBTP. For sea transport the Barents WATCH system will be implemented.

Torbjörn Naimak wanted to complement the above by mentioning that in the North the focus has been on bilateral cooperation. Road directors cooperate and coordinate these developments in their regular meetings. For instance, the Murmansk – Kirkenes road has been improved markedly on the Russian side. Now, a new road will be built in Norway. Financial applications to the NDPTL fund have also been prepared for improving the Tornio-Skibotn-Alta road (FI/NO) and E12 road (NO/SE). Between Finland and Norway the road Ivalo/Kaamanen – Neiden/Kirkenes will be developed jointly.

SWEDEN: *Dharmesh Shah* noted that the Swedish government is being changed. It may have some impact on the major railway projects in northern Sweden. The National Transport Plan has been approved and the high-speed train study committee set up.

Krister Palo continued by saying that unfortunately the planned Norrbotnia railway is not in the National Transport Plan. However, the main transport problem of northern Sweden deals with the railroads and mining in particular. Malmbanan is a problem due to growing ore transport by rail which may eventually top 30 – 35 million tons per year. Also the port of Luleå needs more capacity. Planning to improve the Haparanda/Tornio railway is still underway with Finland. A bigger problem concerns the different maximum weights of heaviest trucks, which are 74 tons in Sweden and 76 tons in Finland.

RUSSIA: *Inga Yachenko* informed that new revisions have been made to the Russian Transport Strategy of 2000. At present, the focus of transport policy is on east-west transport, namely on the transport routes between the Baltic Sea and the Russian Far East. Unfortunately improvement of the transport system in the Barents Region is not among the priorities. Important new developments have been announced in a recent Shanghai meeting where the east-west road corridors were on agenda.

FINLAND: *Sabina Lindström* informed that Finland will have parliamentary elections in spring 2015. So, no major initiatives are anticipated for the time being.

5. Joint Barents Transport Plan and Barents Freeway projects

Martti Miettinen presented a comparison of the Barents Joint Transport Plan and the Barents Freeway projects using points of view that may prove relevant for the future BEATA work (attachment 3). A general observation was that the work approaches were quite different and further elaboration is needed in order to find any common resolution or recommendations for the next steps. Nevertheless, the reports complement each other, particularly the evaluation of the four railway pilot corridors. Also, the freight forecast produced by the Barents Freeway is quite useful for the future work.

6. NDPTL Working Group meeting

Oddgeir Danielsen gave, first, information about the NDPTL in general. Then he discussed the NDPTL transport network indicating that the network will be updated still this autumn. A first meeting about it will be held on 29 September.

Attachments:

1. List of participants
2. The programme of the Finnish Chair of BEATA in 2013 – 2015
3. Joint Barents Transport Plan and Barents Freeway projects