

## Norwegian Chair BEATA SC 2012-14

### Preliminary reflections

The Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communications will take over the chairmanship for the Steering Committee in the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area BEATA for the same period as for BEAC.

The BEATA co-operation was established and guidelines for its work drawn up at a meeting in Copenhagen in May 1998 between the Ministers for Transport from Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden and representatives from the European Commission. A Steering Committee for the BEATA was set up. The main aim is to strengthen co-operation in order to create an efficient transport system in the Barents Region that integrates the different means of transport.

BEATA performed well for many years, the work with the Interreg projects STBR was a kind of “golden age” between 2003 and 2008.

During the last two years the SC has only assembled once, in Tornio in June 2010. It is definitely an ambition to double the activity, probably more than this. During the period with the Swedish chairmanship the NDPTL have been under construction. As you may be aware of, the NDPTL and its secretariat is fully operable as of September this year. NDPTL has ambitious objectives for improvements in infrastructure and border crossings and will be supported by the 11 partner countries, the EU COM and IFIs. We have clear indications from COM that NDPTL is regarded as an important instrument that will improve the transport connections in Northern Europe - and the partnership will be supported with financial resources to fulfill the objectives. The basic principles for a NDPTL support fund are agreed upon, at the HLM in Moscow in November. Norway and Finland have already committed themselves to contribute to this Fund. We expect other countries to follow up as well as COM. The environmental partnership is our lead star with funds that have granted hundreds of millions of Euros during the last ten years.

NDPTL will establish a complete transport network for the ND area and build upon an extension of the TEN-T. It will of course also cover the High North including the Northern Sea Route. The Barents cooperation in the field of transport must be adjusted to this large and ambitious initiative.

We want to avoid duplication of work and parallel structures. It is important to seek a fruitful distribution of work between BEATA and NDPTL. There are a lot of organisations and stakeholders dealing with transport issues, not only NDPTL and BEATA. NDPTL is now planning a stakeholder conference next year in order to get a better overview and understanding of the national and regional landscape. I hope this will inspire and inform the stakeholders and the different arenas to cooperate closer together and to coordinate their efforts.

Here are our preliminary reflections on the work and challenges for BEATA the coming period which we will present in a draft work plan early next year:

- At the BEAC meeting in Kiruna minister Støre underlined the role of the Barents cooperation can play to improve transport and logistics in the region when he presented

the incoming chairs priorities. To follow up this will be the task of BEATA. One concrete task is to organise a conference on transport and logistics during the periode with Norwegian Chair. We have not made any decisions on this task yet, but our goal is to arrange it sometime during 2013.

- Referring to the need of defining the roles and division of work between BEATA and NDPTL we want to keep BEATA as an important arena for information and dissemination of knowledge between national levels as well as the regional levels. The meetings will function as relevant meeting places for the participants informing each other on plans, projects and other relevant measures in the regional context.
- We want a close cooperation with the regional working group and value the work done from them in the previous period. It is important that regional and national level assembles to exchange views and inform each other. Here BEATA offers an unique arena that differs with NDPTL that consists of ministries only. We will elaborate this more in the draft wok plan.
- NDPTL covers a much broader area than the Barents area. BEATA is focusing on the High North, a region sparsely populated with enormous resources, vast distances as well as long winters. The four Barents countries do have many common challenges in the field of transport. We want BEATA to be a forum where the different transport administrations can join their efforts to make concrete plans for improving border crossing corriodors in the High North. This work must be in accordance and coordinated with NDPTL, but we believe BEATA gives the specific geographic focus that is tailored for this region.
- An interesting task for BEATA can be to follow up the further work when the administrations in Norway, Sweden and Finland have completed the work with strategic plans for high north next year.
- BEATA can by this be a forum both for concrete work and for preparing and promoting initiatives to be followed up by NDPTL later.