

**Progress Report on the Barents Euro-Arctic Pan-European
Transport Area (BEATA)**

Submitted by the Chairman of the BEATA Steering
Committee to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the G-24
Transport Group and the European Commission

Steering Committee:

Mrs. Rita Piirainen	Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland, Chairman
Mr. Kjell Rosanoff	Ministry of Transport and Communications, Norway
Ms. Leena Willberg	Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, Sweden
Mr. Vyacheslav Parfenov	Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation
Mr. Boris Sitkov	Ministry of Railway Transport of the Russian Federation
Ms. Kerstin Sterner	European Commission, Directorate-General for Transport and Energy

The Barents Euro-Arctic Pan-European Transport Area (BEATA) is a multi-modal transport area established in the Pan-European Transport Conference in Helsinki in 1997. The BEATA covers the northern provinces of Finland, Sweden and Norway, as well as the northwest part of the Russian Federation; the Republic of Karelia, the Oblasts of Murmansk and Archangelsk, and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug.

Progress Report

This is the first Progress Report on the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA) submitted to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the G-24 Transport Group and the European Commission.

Over one and a half years has passed since the Ministers of Transport of the BEATA countries and the Transport Commissioner of the EU Commission signed the Memorandum of Understanding in Copenhagen in May 1998. After the chairmanship held first by Norway, Finland assumed the BEATA chairmanship in spring 1999. In addition, the Finnish Ministry of Transport established a permanent secretariat in Helsinki to assist the Steering Committee.

The Finnish Chairmanship

The Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications has held the chairmanship of the Steering Committee of BEATA since spring 1999. The Action Programme for the first five years 1999-2003 was prepared by the permanent secretariat at the end of 1998, and the Programme was finally adopted in Helsinki on June 9, 1999.

Main objectives of the Finnish agenda for the BEATA chairmanship have been to implement the first year of the Action Programme, more specifically the following:

1. Creating the framework for co-operation in BEATA.

The Finnish chair and secretary have visited all the parties as well as given presentations in many meetings and events organised by several other interest groups in the Barents area. The main parties of co-operation are the BEAC Working Group on Economic co-operation and the Communications Group of the Barents Regional Council.

2. Defining the backbone network for transport in the Barents area.

The first version of the BEATA backbone network was put forward in the second Steering Committee meeting in Helsinki (Hanasaari) in June, 1999. Since then, the chairman and secretary have visited all the parties and discussed the proposed network more in detail. There have also been several regional meetings, where the backbone network has been presented. The current network reflects the comments received in these meetings. The BEATA network was accepted by the Steering Committee in Rovaniemi in November, 1999.

3. Creation of the BEATA database and collection of network data.

The Finnish secretariat, with the great help from the other Steering Committee members, has collected relevant data about the backbone network and stored them in the BEATA database. This work has now been completed and the backbone network along with the database is available on a CD-ROM. The diskette has been distributed to all the members of the Steering Committee as well as other interest groups.

Steering Committee Meetings

The BEATA Steering Committee has had two official meetings and several work meetings in 1999 after the first Steering Committee meeting held in Oslo in December 1998.

The second Steering Committee meeting took place in Helsinki (Hanasaari) on June 9, 1999. In this meeting the Action Programme 1999-2003 was adopted by the Steering Committee. Later on the same day, an expert meeting on the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area was conducted.

The third meeting of the Steering Committee was organised in Rovaniemi on November 26, 1999. In the meeting the Steering Committee accepted the first definition of the BEATA backbone network. Furthermore, the effort to collect network data was completed and these data provided to the members on CD-ROMs.

Co-operation with Other Interest Groups

The BEATA Steering Committee has the closest co-operation with the Working Group on Economic Co-operation of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Communications Group of the Barents regional Council. Either Chairman or Secretary has participated in the meetings of these groups. Furthermore, a joint meeting with the Working Group on Economic Co-operation of the BEA Council was organised on January 19, 2000.

Chairman has reported on the BEATA developments also three times to the Council of Senior Officials of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

In autumn 1999, regional meetings were arranged in Archangelsk, Murmansk and Petrozavodsk. A separate meeting was also held with the representatives of the Finnish regions.

Presentations of the BEATA project were given, inter alia, in two regional seminars: (i) Transport investment seminar organised by the Tacis North-West Russian Transport Project in St. Petersburg in November 1999, and (ii) Barents Area Transport Conference in Petrozavodsk also in November.

Future Work

The BEATA chairmanship will be handed over to Russia in March 2000. The fourth meeting of the Steering Committee will be held in Murmansk in the spring 2000.

Rita Piirainen Chairman
BEATA Steering
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March 2000