

DRAFT MINUTES Steering Committee meeting of BEATA in Tromsø May 22th – 23 rd 2012

Members present: Paal Iversen, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Norway, Grete Mathisrud, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Norway, Tuija Maanoja, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Finland, Kajsa Lindström, Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communication in Sweden

Other participants: Vladimir Isupov, Embassy of the Russian Federation to Norway, Hannu Heikkinen, Chair of BRWGTL, Jorma Leskinen, Centre for Economic Development, Transport and Environment, Thomas Gustavsson, Swedish Transport Agency, Ari Sirèn, International Barents Secretariat, Anna Lund, International Barents Secretariat, Sverre Stub, BEAC, Alf-Åge Hansen BEAC, Torbjørn Naimak, Norwegian Public Road Administration, Veronica Wiik, Norwegian Public Road Administration, Fred Olav Guthu, Norwegian Public Road Administration, Per Strømhaug, Nordland County, Bjørn Kavli, Troms County, Eirik Selmer, Finnmark County, Oddgeir Danielsen, NDPTL Secretariat

Wednesday 23rd May 2012

1. Opening of the meeting

Mr. Paal Iversen, Chair, opened the first meeting of the Norwegian Chairmanship of the Steering Committee of BEATA.

Colleagues from MINTRANS in Russia were unable to attend the Steering Committee meeting in Tromsø. In the absence of the Russian delegation, the distinguished representative Councilor Vladimir Isupov from the Embassy of the Russian Federation to Norway attended the meeting as an observer.

The Chair informed that together with the agreed minutes - colleagues in MINTRANS will be invited to give their views on the draft work plan and the proposals. If necessary the Chair can arrange an extra ordinary meeting of the Steering Committee on short term notice.

The meeting agenda was approved and adopted.

2. Chair's opening remarks

The Chair recalled that many things have happened in the region since the last meeting of BEATA in June 2010 and that the economic activity in the High North increases rapidly.

The Chair informed about the draft work plan for the Chairmanship period. The work plan outlines the fact that the Norwegian chair has great ambitions for the future work of BEATA. The Chair closed the opening remarks by referring to the aim of the work plan namely to fill the BEATA cooperation with a concrete task. Members of the Steering Committee were suggested to use the framework of the BEATA cooperation to develop a Joint Transport Plan as a follow up of the national strategic studies and plans for the High North.

4. BEAC – Barents Euro-Arctic Council

In order to grasp the whole Barents context the Chair had invited representatives from the Barents Council to give a brief presentation and update on the broader picture. Norway is chairing the Barents Council.

Ambassador Sverre Stub, from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs passed on greetings from the CSO Committee of senior Officials - a CSO meeting had just been taken place in Harstad, the neighboring city south of Tromsø.

Mr. Stub introduced the main points from the Norwegian Chairs priority, namely;

1. Sustainable economic and industrial development
2. Environmentally safe and climate-friendly development based on knowledge
3. The human dimension

Mr. Sverre Stub referred to the regions rich resources and opportunities as well as need to improve infrastructure. The region could also benefit from more cooperation. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Environment work together to finalize an Action Plan regarding adaptations to the climate change this year.

The Chair highlighted the fact that climate change will affect everyone and active involvement of the working group BEATA under the BEAC in the elaboration of an Action Plan is essential.

The general objective of BEATA cooperation is to improve transport connection in the region. Climate change challenges are faced in efforts to reduce CO2 emissions from the sector, land use planning, and public transport in cities. Extreme weather events with closure of roads and rail are posing problems. Safe sea transport is an additional element of the work. Possible input to the further work in the Action Plan will be discussed at the forthcoming meeting and possible included in the mandate to the appointed working group.

5. Barents Regional Working Group of Transport and Logistics (BRWGTL)

The Chair welcomed the new initiatives from the Regional Working Group in 2010 and 2011. A brief introduction to the work in BRWGTL was held and a presentation of the newly adopted project Barents Freeway was given. The Barents Freeway will contain an improved knowledge base and will as a result express a common view on the transport system in the Barents Region when finalized by the end of 2014. The Chair emphasized the importance of good cooperation and communication in order to create synergies between the two working groups in the field of transport under the Barents Council.

6. Presentation of strategic studies, long term planning in the region

A. Norwegian report

Torbjørn Naimak, Regional Director of the Norwegian Public roads Administration presented the Norwegian report “New infrastructure in the north – strategic studies and long term planning”.

The objective of the study was to provide the Government with a better knowledge base future decision regarding infrastructure development in the North. The study were carried out by the Norwegian National Administrations for Roads, Rail, Aviation and Coastal Affairs. The plan also serves as an input for the National Transport Plan 2014-2023; a white paper that will be presented for the Norwegian Parliament in the spring 2013. In conclusion, Mr. Naimak pointed out that business and industry in Northern Norway can expect considerable growth and development. Growth is expected in the seafood industry, the mining and metallurgical industry and the petroleum industry. Tourism also shows a positive trend. Therefore the

transport system must be adapted to support industrial development. With reference to the report several key measures to be taken were pointed out.

B. Swedish report

Mr. Thomas Gustavsson from the Swedish Transport Agency presented an overview of the Swedish report “Raw materials and communications in Barents” and the report ” Capacity and congestion analyses 2012 ” .

Mr. Gustavsson highlighted the objective and gave an overview of the present situation in Sweden and result of the studies. He emphasized that capacity problems cannot be solved solely by infrastructure investments.

Existing infrastructure is key to short term solutions and also important for long term sustainability; use existing infrastructure more efficient, focus on maintenance, regulatory measures, taxes, peak pricing to influence transport solutions and choice of transport mode. To reach climate targets concentration of investments to areas with congestion problems should be addressed to urban areas, passenger transports/commuting and freight corridors.

C. Finland

The Finnish representative Tuija Maanoja informed the group that the Finnish Plan will not be published before the end of 2013. The Finnish national plan for the High North will have focus on both short term and long term plans and investments. The document will put special emphasis on the future transport needs of the mining industry.

7. Joint Barents Transport Plan, working group and draft mandate

The Chair stated that to make a Joint Barents Transport Plan- with the purpose to develop border crossing connections - is by no means an innovative measure between the neighbouring countries in the North.

The INTERREG project STBR, involving the Steering Committee of BEATA during 2003-2006, prepared a better knowledge base for cross border connections when transport flows in the Barents region were mapped. In 2007 a working group with representatives from Russia and Norway also made a planning document. In 2008, a similar exercise between Norway and Sweden was carried out and there have been several initiatives on a bilateral scale.

The Chair expressed the need to follow up the national studies. With reference to cross border connections it is obvious that both sides of a border should be involved to ensure a coordinated development of the infrastructure. This highlights the well suited task for BEATA to make such a plan/document bridging together the newly published planning documents.

Discussion

There were discussions in the group on how to follow up these studies and proposal to aspire a Joint Barents Transport Plan and a Ministerial Declaration.

Sweden - Kaisa Lindström, Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications welcomed the proposal for a common approach on the different national plans. Her main concern was the Chairs ambitious timeframe. In Sweden the Government will propose their national transport plan this autumn. A possible Joint Transport Barents Plan for the High North could serve as an interesting input to the national plan.

Lindstøm proposed to implement the Swedish four step principle into the Joint Transport Barents Plan.

Swedish four stage principle is;

1. Measures that influence the need of transport and the choice of transport mode
[Regulatory measures]
2. Measures that makes the use of existing infrastructure and vehicles more effective
[Maintenance, Reinvestments]
3. Limited rebuilding measures [Efficiency measures]
4. New investments and larger rebuilding measures

Finland – Tuija Maanoja, Ministry of Transport and Communications and Mr. Jorma Leskinen, Department of Transport and Environment were also positive to the proposals. It was stated that BEATA could serve as a common forum about strategy and Region Barents plans. Finland agreed upon including the four steps principle in the long term studies but was concerned about the demanding timeframe.

Norway – Torbjørn Naimak, Regional Director of the Norwegian Public Roads Administration supported the proposed work plan, Joint Transport Plan and the set up of a working Group. He underlined the need for such a plan and that the key was to identify the plan at a political level. The timeframe and possible outcome depends however on the Russian response to the Chairs proposals.

NDPTL - Mr. Oddgeir Danielsen gave his support from the Partnership. It seems that everyone is calling for coordination – national experts should look to their neighbouring countries as for planning and financing infrastructure – cooperation could also increase the speed of planning.

BEAC – Alf-Åge Hansen, supported the proposed joint transport plan. The Norwegian Chair of BEAC supports this effort and regards BEATA as one of the most important working groups under BEAC

The Chair welcomed the support from the members present - but refrained that a final conclusion could not be drawn at this stage and it also remain to be seen if a working group can be established before the summer. The chair expressed that a possible Joint Barents Transport Plan also could be used as an input to the national plans.

The Swedish proposal to adapt the four steps principle in BEATAs work plan and mandate for the working group was agreed by the members present.

As for practical information the Chair confirmed that the working group participants will have to cover their own expenses. The BEATA Chair will send a request to the parties to appoint representatives from the transport administrations to establish the working group.

8. BEATA Draft Work Plan

The Chair underlined all the different cooperation with partly overlapping membership and partly overlapping mandates – Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers, Northern Dimension, and Council of the Baltic Sea States.

This is strength for the region and an illustration of the vibrant regional cooperation. But we need to ensure that there is synergy between the various committees to avoid overlap. The overall objective for BEATA is to promote international transport of goods and passengers. In the light of the new institutional landscape (in particular the establishment of the Northern Dimension Partnership for Transport and Logistics) BEATA could also be an arena for information exchange between the Ministries of transport and between the national and regional level – focusing on the northernmost areas. Furthermore the specific geographical scope of BEATA provides a unified platform to discuss and promote projects of mutual interest.

NDPTL – Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics

Mr. Oddgeir Danielsen, Chair of NDPTL gave an overview of the NDPTL objectives.

The aim of the Partnership is to improve the major transport connections between the ND Partners, accelerate the implementation of transport and logistics infrastructure projects, removal of non-infrastructure related bottlenecks and to set up effective structure to monitor the implementation of projects and measures.

An important task for NDPTL is to facilitate financing of projects by making them "bankable" or "financeable". NDPTL Support fund will be used for bridging projects with the National and International Financial Institutions. Well prepared projects are a key factor for success. The presentation is enclosed.

Evaluation

The Chair proposed to carry out a brief evaluation of the future role of BEATA cooperation. An evaluation could also be a useful tool for the parties when a new five year period is under consideration and for the possible draft Joint Ministerial Declaration.

The meeting approved the proposal. The Chair will send out a simple questionnaire to the members of the Steering Committee and the regional working groups before the next meeting in February 2013.

International Conference and Ministerial meeting

Ms. Grete Mathisrud, Ministry of Transport and Communications gave a short presentation of the plans for an International Conference on Transport and Logistics in the High North during the Norwegian Chairmanship period.

An International Conference “Arctic Ports in Narvik” with focus on resources, trade flows, ports, shipping, logistics, environment and industrial development in the High North will be organized in Narvik on the 9-11th April 2013. BEATA will have one day exclusively during these conference days. The Norwegian Minister of Transport and Communications will formally invite the other Ministers to the opening of the Conference and a Ministerial session.

It was recommended to put more emphasis on the ministerial session and possible identify this in the formal title of the Conference as well as the invitations. This will be taken under consideration. The Chair encouraged Steering Committee members to put forward proposals for the Ministerial session of the Conference.

9. Other Business

No other matters were raised. The Chairman closed the meeting.

PowerPoint presentations will be sent to the participants by e-mail.
