

## **Comments from The Norrbotten Chamber of Commerce to the green paper COM(2009) 44, TEN-T: A Policy review**

### **"Towards a better integrated trans-European transport network at the service of the common transport policy"**

*The Norrbotten Chamber of Commerce works for a more favourable business climate in Norrbotten. We are the county's independent business organisation and the collective business community's advocate in Norrbotten County. We are owned, governed and financed by our member companies, which represent firms in all branches and of all sizes.*

*In the public opinion arena we function as a sounding board, and we also arrange seminars, conferences and calls for action to support our business community. We constantly monitor current business issues and work for regional growth.*

#### **Our main points are in summary:**

- Future TEN-T and the new EU transport policy must better reflect the growth and changes within the EU the past 20 years and better connect to neighbouring countries and the global market.
- The objective of TEN-T to create connections to peripheral regions must be maintained in order to manage raw material supply from northern Scandinavia.
- The future TEN-T policy should take special conditions of each country into account.
- The Northern axis and the Bothnian corridor are strategically important links for our industry and create a fundamental structure for the European transport system and should be integrated in the new transport policy.
- Of the options presented by the Commission, we prefer nr 3.

As a general comment, we would like to mention the importance of reflecting the fundamental changes within the European Union since the former transport policy was developed. Many new Member States with different needs and prerequisites has joined the EU and this must be better developed in the future EU transport policy.

## **Business in northern Scandinavia**

Northern Scandinavia represents an essential part of forest, ore and metal production in the EU. It is vital that these products reach production units and consumers in the rest of Europe through a functioning infrastructure.

Northern Sweden currently stands for 90 percent of the EU's extraction of iron ore. Significant parts of the European supply of copper, zinc, gold, silver and lead are extracted in the northern counties. Northern Sweden represents 40 percent of the Swedish forestry production. The forest-based industry annual production value is 5.5 billion Euros and more than 80 percent of Sweden's paper and pulp is exported to Europe. The forest-based industry represents 12 percent of Sweden's total export.

Being located far from Europe and other markets, one of the most crucial factors to continued expansion and growth of the region is access to good and cost-efficient infrastructure both on land and sea. Therefore the revision of the EU transport policy is of major importance for enterprise in northern Scandinavia.

## **Access to and from peripheral regions**

Linking peripheral regions with central Europe is of great importance for the supply of raw materials and energy and the objective of TEN-T to create connection to difficult-to-access and peripheral regions must be maintained. The importance of producing and keeping raw materials within the EU is also highlighted in the Commission communication COM(2008) 699, The Raw Materials Initiative — Meeting our critical needs for growth and jobs in Europe.

## **Freight in northern Europe**

The long distances and the remoteness from the major markets in Northern Europe put stringent demands on transport multimodality and flexible solutions. Furthermore, the cold climate leads to high investment and maintenance costs, e.g. due to frost damage and ice breaking. *It is very important that the future TEN-T policy take special conditions of each country into account.*

In many cases, transport by railway is the only economically sustainable option in northern Scandinavia. The Northern axis and the Bothnian corridor are strategically important links for industry and create a fundamental structure for the European transport system. However, today several factors limit the efficiency of transports along the Bothnian Corridor. Steep inclines limits the speed and weight of the trains, insufficient carrying capacity and lack of capacity in general create competition disadvantages and market obstacles for the raw



material supply of EU's industrial market. *Therefore we support the inclusion of the Bothnian Corridor in the future TEN-T policy.*

Further on, *we support the Northern Transport Axis to be integrated with EU Transport Policy.* And it should also be brought together with sea links and land transport axes. The current situation where NTA, Motorways of the Sea and TEN-T axes are different concepts is not satisfactory.

In this context we would like to underline that in extremely sparsely populated peripheral regions, like northern Scandinavia, one cannot expect the infrastructure investments to be completely market financed. However, these regions have strategically very important links e.g. for raw material supply and connections to third parties like Russia with strong business interest. We would also like to mention the potential in the east-west connection to Russia and Asia to serve as an alternative to congested areas on the continent.

### **Structural options**

Norrbotten Chamber of Commerce prefers structural option nr 3 since it would improve international freight transport connecting all parts of Europe helping to fulfil cohesion policy, environmental objectives and the function of the inner market. It has also great advantages to merge the TEN-T concept, the Railway freight corridor initiative and the Transnational axis.

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