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Review of the TEN-T policy.

Background

In the beginning of February 2009, the Directorate-General for Transport and Energy (DG TREN) of the EU Commission has put forward a “Green Paper” on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). Stakeholders from all over Europe are invited to give their comments until the 30th of April 2009.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/consultations/2009_04_30_ten_t_green_paper_en.htm

The Green Paper calls for a fundamental review of the TEN-T policy, taking into account several flaws in current policies. Thirteen open questions are raised.

Region Blekinge has chosen not to answer all questions, instead Region Blekinge highlights below some key issues with focus on gained experiences from the latest decades of rapid changes that have occurred in the southern Baltic and which dramatically has changed Blekinges position. The new situation with fast growing ferry traffic from the ports of Blekinge calls for immediate action when it comes to infrastructure improvements and policy review.

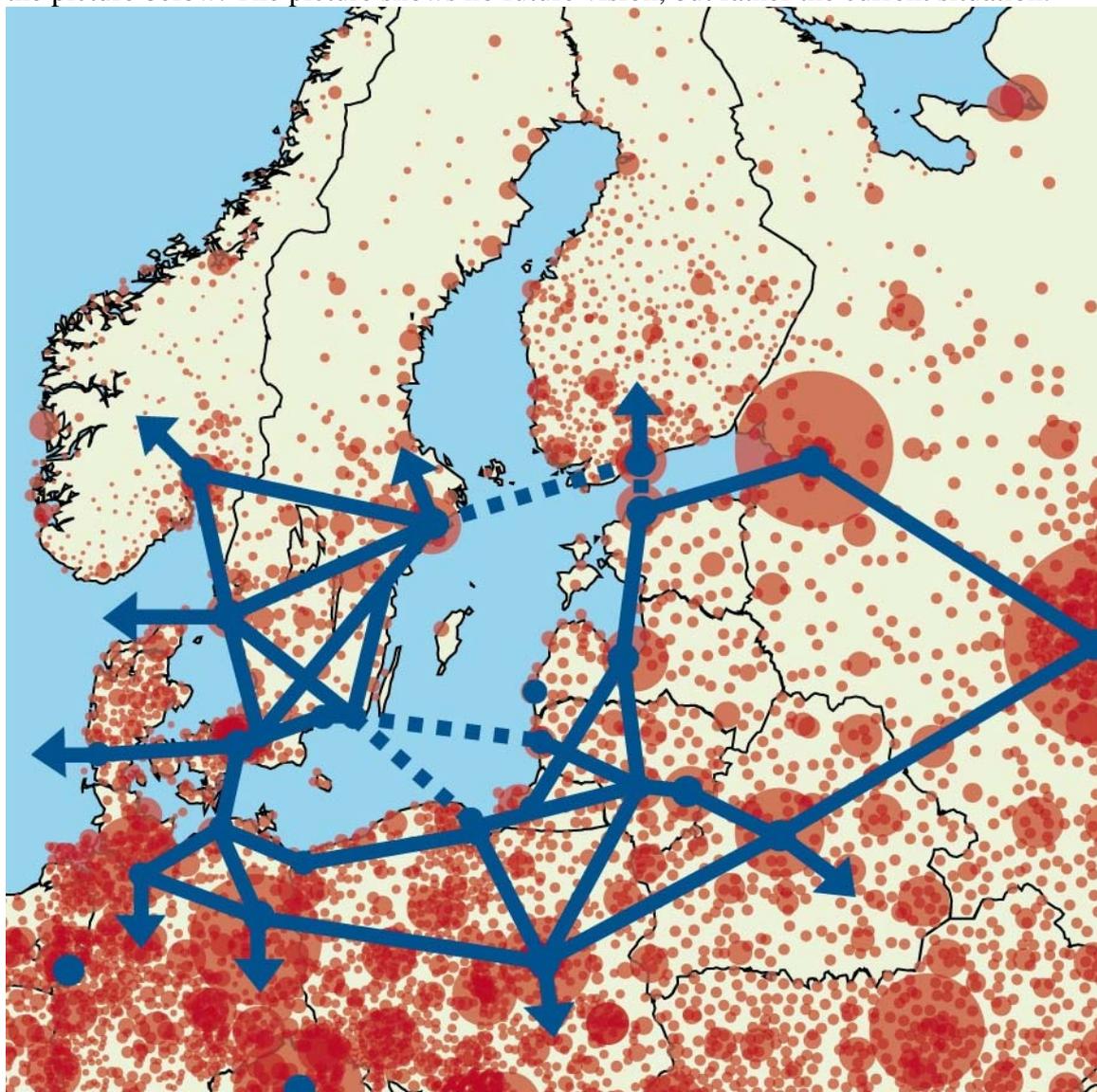
Region Blekinge will be happy to participate in future discussions with other stakeholders across Europe and with DG TREN if and when appropriate.

Region Blekinge comments

A review of the TEN-T guidelines, from a Blekinge point of view, is welcome. In no other place in Sweden have the changes in the world in the last two decades had such a strong impact on a region as they have in Blekinge. Once being considered Swedens backyard, Blekinge has now regained a strategic position in Swedens front yard. The changes happened very fast, especially when it comes to the amount/flow of transport from the ports of Blekinge. The growth of transport in the ports of Blekinge has been rising dramatically and Karlshamn and Karlskrona have become important links to Poland, Lithuania, Russia/Kaliningrad and Latvia. This development is expected to continue, thus increasing the importance of the ports in Blekinge.

As to the above mentioned development a Swedish port inquiry was made and it was proposed that Karlshamn, in collaboration with Karlskrona, will constitute one of Sweden's strategic ports. This port is today considered to be the third largest port in Sweden.

Blekinges strategy as to what a future TEN-T system should look like can best be explained in the picture below. The picture shows no future vision, but rather the current situation.



Blekinge realized several years ago that the transport highways/thoroughfares were developing rapidly, as seen in the above picture. Because of such a development we have taken the initiative in planning/developing several international transport projects to increase awareness and come up with a plan on how to meet the current changes. Through this work contacts have evolved into strong, broad, international networks with a vast amount of knowledge. The following are examples of such transport projects; Baltic Gateway, East West Transport Corridor, Baltic Master and SEBTranslink. In addition, recently DGTREN approved to finance the Motorways of the Sea project Karlshamn-Klaipeda with funds from the TEN-T budget.

Criteria for a future TEN-T system.

There are several starting points and criteria for what a future TEN-T system should look like. Below is a list of some points that Region Blekinge would like to point out before DGTRENs continuing work.

- ***A coherent transport system must be created*** where important ports, roads, railways and shipping routes are tied together to build an internationally coherent network. This approach was applied in 'Baltic Gateway' a project in which the starting point was that all important ports should be connected to a comprehensive road- and railway network in the Baltic Sea Region. This approach has become the object of success and has influenced the "Motorways of the Seas" concept applied in the Baltic Sea Region. In this context it is important to see larger ferry connections (the sea links) as part of a coherent land infrastructure. In having this kind of thinking the ports become important hubs where different supporting transport services can be made available.
- ***The amount of transport flows today and in the future.*** In Sweden forecasters have had difficulties adapting their predictions to the rapid changes. This has been rather obvious in Blekinge. Because of the slow process existing when trying to adapt policies and investment plans, the improvement of transport highways/thoroughfares that were overlooked earlier (before the Berlin wall came down) are now trailing far behind. It is also important to point out that the only starting point for a future TEN-T system shouldn't only be based on the size of transport flows, but also other aspects such as availability for peripheral regions.
- ***Functionality.*** Those transport highways/thoroughfares that are pointed out as being important highways/thoroughfares must have good conditions for developing multimodal systems and supporting ITS solutions (ITS Action Plan).
- ***Southern Baltic Sea as a global growth area.*** In order for the southern Baltic Sea area to evolve into a global growth area it is eminent that this region must be connected to other growth areas such as Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Poland and further east. The Northern Transport Axis is a good example how the member countries can be tied to Russia. Nevertheless must the question on how to tie the Northern Transport Axis to the Nordic Triangle be solved. When it comes to the transport corridors like Klaipeda/Kaliningrad-Minsk- Moscow and Gdynia –central Europe- Mediterranean Sea no connections to Sweden can be found in the existing TEN-T network. This has to be corrected by including the entire **East West Transport Corridor** (Danmark-Skåne-Blekinge- Klaipeda/Kaliningrad-Minsk-Moscow) and the entire **Baltic Link Transport Corridor** (Olso- Gothenburg-Karlskrona-Gdynia-Central Europe- Mediterranean Sea) in the TEN-T network.
- ***Major cities must be connected to each other*** in a coherent network. Today the links between the capitals Copenhagen- Vilnius and Oslo-Warsaw are missing in the overall transport network. Both corridors go through Blekinge.
- ***Environmental issues have to be taken seriously.*** One idea could be the development of a certified green corridor concept, which means that there are certain demands on how passenger – and cargo transports are handled/accepted from an environmental point of view.
- ***Financial resources*** are limited for infrastructure improvements which calls for complementary actions as described in the ITS Action Plan.

Conclusions

In conclusion, Region Blekinge would like to point out the importance of adjusting the TEN-T guidelines to the fast paced changes in the world around us happening as we speak. It will undoubtedly be a challenge to safeguard growth possibilities and at the same time take environmental questions into consideration all the while financial resources are limited. From a European point of view it is of utmost importance that Blekinge, as an international transport node, will be a fully integrated part in the European multimodal transport network. In consequence:

- The Nordic Triangle must be connected via “sea legs” to the Member States in the southern Baltic Sea area which include:
 - the East West Transport Corridor from Denmark to Vilnius via Blekinge and Klaipeda/Kaliningrad
 - the Baltic Link from Oslo/Gothenburg to Warsaw and Central Europe via Blekinge and Gdynia
- More focus must be put on innovative solutions such as ITS to fulfil the aims of the European transport policies.



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