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**COMMENTS OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FINLAND TO THE
DOCUMENT:
GREEN PAPER
TEN-T: A policy review
TOWARDS A BETTER INTEGRATED TRANSEUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK
AT THE SERVICE OF THE COMMON TRANSPORT POLICY**

The Baltic Sea separates Finland from the EU's key market areas. The development of land-sea-land transport chains is important for improving Finland's foreign trade transports. It is important to Finland that the EU's key market areas can be accessed cost-effectively. Finland's remote location and long distances to the principal market areas, small population, severe climate and considerable dependency on foreign trade carried by sea set challenges to the development of traffic infrastructure and the logistics system. In the definition and development of TEN-T the special conditions of each country should be taken into account in order to ensure competitiveness.

One of the objectives of the currently valid definition of TEN-T has been to create connections to difficult-to-access and peripheral regions, and to improve the social and regional cohesion. In the Regional Council of Southwest Finland's opinion, this objective needs to be retained while drawing up future TEN-T guidelines.

The Baltic Sea is a delicate ecosystem. On the other hand, the Baltic Sea has an important role in the transport system of the region, and it still has unused potential in the transport system of the region. The development of the transport system in the Baltic Sea region, however, places special emphasis on the environmental aspects. Similarly, increasing traffic volume presents challenges to the safety of maritime traffic.

Peripheral countries such as Finland will certainly have common interests to develop connections with third party countries. In case of Finland, connections to Russia play a key role. In the Baltic Sea region especially the east-west traffic corridors require further development. The Central Europe–Scandinavia–Stockholm–Southwest Finland–Russia–Asia traffic corridor is an excellent example of a smooth, reliable and

competitive transport chain (land-sea-land), whose existing connections should be improved and utilisation be enhanced.

The Russian economic growth is strong in the St Petersburg area, and its effects are visible in the Baltic Sea and the roads, railways and ports of Southern Finland, i.e. in the Nordic Triangle and the Motorway of the Baltic Sea.

Of the three structural options for the definition of TEN-T proposed by the Commission, options 1 and 3 correspond best with the views of the Regional Council of Southwest Finland. Option 1 is based on similar definition as the current structure. Option 3 includes a comprehensive network which has been complemented with a core network (priority network). The core network comprises of a geographical and conceptual pillar.

The Regional Council of Southwest Finland thinks that one potential structural option would be option 1 complemented with the conceptual pillar, which would result in a system like the current one with horizontal projects added, such as intelligent traffic, traffic control (rail and sea traffic), goods traffic tracking and control, ice breaking, and border crossing.

The abovementioned structural options are the best in terms of Finland's special conditions, accessibility and access to the joint market, and connections to third party countries, and create the best basis for figuring out the traffic networks and traffic system of Europe and neighbouring areas as a whole. The conceptual pillar opens up the opportunity to examine e.g. freight and passenger traffic as part of the TEN-T policy.

The effect of improving connections on the development of the European regional structure and especially the effect of St Petersburg on the development of the Baltic Sea region should be evaluated in more detail in the future.

The member states are mainly responsible for developing the TEN-T and for the implementation of principal projects, which is why the network projects should also serve the needs of the member states and implement national development objectives. When there is no major conflict between national and the EU's traffic priorities, the implementation of traffic projects is more scheduled and certain.

Linking peripheral areas closely to Central Europe through TEN-T and the connections to third party countries are important e.g. from the point of view of future raw material and energy supply.

The severe and exceptional conditions and special requirements for arranging traffic connections caused by the northern location emphasise the need for a sufficiently dense network. It will secure the service level of the network, allow for flexible and alternative transport routes and optimisation of costs according to the transport needs. Flexibility and optimisation mean energy efficiency and should be aimed at in terms of climate policy.

In order to strengthen the strategic position of the Baltic Sea region by means of traffic infrastructure, it is necessary to provide supranational organisation that covers the member states in the Baltic Sea region and promotes implementation, so that consistent implementation and necessary co-ordination of the use of different funding sources can be ensured.

The funding level for the implementation of TEN-T has to be sufficient so that the defined network can be implemented within the agreed schedule. Funding projects from several sources is justified and recommended. Private funding models should be developed.

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF SOUTHWEST FINLAND

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