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The European Commission has started the preparation of the revision of the TEN-guidelines. The Commission has published a Green Paper on 4.2.2009, in which it seeks answers for the foundation of the future Trans-European transport network.

In the meeting of the Nordic-Baltic transport ministers in May 2008 there was an informal understanding between the participants of the need to establish a common Nordic-Baltic working group to exchange views on the TEN-T process. The task of the Working Group is also to discuss on a common statement regarding the Green Paper. Please find attached a non-paper of the Nordic-Baltic TEN-T Working Group prepared by civil servants of respective countries.

Director-General

Juhani Tervala

Green Paper

Trans-European transport network: A policy review

Towards a better integrated Trans-European transport network at the service of the common transport policy

Views and opinions of the Nordic-Baltic TEN-T Working Group

1. Background

The European Commission has started the preparation for the revision of the TEN guidelines. The Commission has published a Green Paper on 4.2.2009, in which it seeks answers for the foundation of the future development of the Trans-European transport network. The content of the Green Paper will be analyzed with the Member States during the year 2009 and a proposal for the revised guidelines and financial regulations will be published by the Commission in the year 2010.

In the Nordic-Baltic transport ministers meeting in May 2008 there was an informal understanding between the participants of the need to establish a common Nordic-Baltic working group to exchange views on the TEN-T process. The task of the Working Group is also to discuss on a common statement regarding the Green Paper.

The revision of the TEN-T guidelines is of direct relevance to Iceland and Norway in the same way as it is to the Nordic and Baltic EU Member States, since the guidelines are incorporated in the EEA Agreement.

2. Possible options for further TEN-T development

The fundamental objectives set for the development of the Trans-European transport network have not been fully achieved mainly due to the long-term nature and considerable delays in the completion of the projects. Consequently, it is not only time to examine why the objectives have only been partially achieved, but to discuss, if these objectives will still be sufficient to meet future challenges, and what will be the ways and methods for achieving the TEN-T policy objectives in forthcoming years. This justifies the undertaking of a fundamental review of the TEN-T policy rather than just reviewing and possibly updating outline plans and priority projects.

The most essential question of the Green paper concerns the possible options for the development of the Trans-European transport network. The Commission considers three options for further development of the TEN-T network:

- **Option 1** has a dual layer structure consisting of the comprehensive network and priority projects approach maintained in current form.
- **Option 2** has a single layer consisting of priority projects in current forms which are possibly connected into a priority network.

- **Option 3** has a dual layer consisting of the comprehensive network and core network which comprises of a geographically defined priority network and a conceptual pillar.

3. Views and opinions of the Nordic-Baltic TEN-T Working Group

The EU Commission has presented three alternative options for further development of the TEN-T transport network. The opinions of the Nordic-Baltic Working Group are best supported by **option 3** with certain clarifications described below. These clarifications concern the specification of objectives in the review of the TEN-T policy with regard to the definition and goals of the comprehensive network, identification principles of the priority network and clarification of the "conceptual pillar".

Comprehensive network

Layer 1 in option 3 includes the comprehensive network which still has an essential role in fulfilling the access function. The comprehensive network also considers best the exceptional circumstances and special requirements for developing transport connections in the Nordic and Baltic countries. Focus on improving accessibility to common markets as well as to peripheral areas has been emphasized in all countries. Therefore, no major revisions are needed, if the goals and criteria behind the comprehensive network remain unchanged. The key issue for further development is to solve the current bottlenecks of transport and improve accessibility especially for freight transport. This is significant for foreign trade operations in the Nordic and Baltic Sea area and supplying the European industry with raw material and energy from the Nordic and Baltic countries.

In addition to the essential task of the comprehensive network to fulfil the access function, the contribution of the network to improving territorial and social cohesion is also relevant and should be considered in the revision of the TEN guidelines.

Priority network

Not only the significance of projects from the European perspective, but also sufficient scale of the network with regard to overall impacts on the transport system should be taken into consideration in the discussions on the extent of the TEN-T network and priority projects as well as in the identification of the priority network.

However, the identification principles of projects of common interest evolving towards a European-wide priority network should be elaborated in order to ensure a geographically balanced approach. From our perspective, there is a risk that the priority network approach may excessively focus on solving transport problems in geographically defined core areas, while other objectives behind the European-wide transport network can easily be ignored. This includes a risk for the Nordic and Baltic countries that main part of the transport system in this area may be excluded from the priority network and financial support. Furthermore, the selection and designation of nodes and connecting points included in the priority network would be both difficult and questionable.

The arguments behind priority projects and the priority network approach should clearly consider the special circumstances of the Nordic and Baltic countries and primary goals of projects, such as accessibility, seamless connections to third countries, utilization of natural resources in the northern areas of the EU and connections from these areas to the existing priority projects and further on to the EU markets. This will also emphasize the significance and completion of the existing priority projects in the area, the Nordic Triangle, the Motorway of the Baltic Sea, the Fehmarn Belt -axis and Rail Baltica.

The development of transport connections to third countries and especially to Russia and Norway is considered very important in the Nordic and Baltic EU Member States, as the East-West transport flows are growing. Thus, cross-border connections can be considered a key element for further development in the region. The priority network should also supplement existing networks and secure the development of European-wide transport corridors, which also extend out to neighbouring countries of the EU. The forthcoming partnership of transport and logistics within the Northern Dimension will be the platform for developing these corridors.

The Baltic Sea Strategy, which will be adopted later this year, should be an important input to the future discussions about infrastructure development in this region. To summarize the opinion of the Nordic-Baltic TEN-T Working Group, the priority network should consist of priority axes and selected priority projects within these priority axes.

As the Member States are still mostly responsible for the development, financing and implementation of the network, the prioritization of the transport network should be based on national decision-making. However, the opportunities for combining and optimizing public and private sector partnerships and investments are encouraged.

Conceptual pillar

The presentation of the conceptual pillar, which is included in option 3, is not easily understood. Therefore, the basis, content and added value of the conceptual pillar should be clarified. The goal is to introduce flexibility and future orientation to transport network development through the conceptual pillar, which may otherwise have a minor role in infrastructure decisions of the Member States. For example, the need for addressing and mitigating climate change has been accepted in all Nordic and Baltic countries and this approach should have a strong emphasis in the future goals of transport policies on a European scale. Furthermore, intelligent transport systems provide new opportunities for the prevention of climate change as well as potential alternatives to extensive transport infrastructure investments for responding to the growth in traffic demand.

Rapid technological development provides a possibility to develop new types of services as well as influence and manage traffic demand. Encouragement to new innovations aims at continuously developing modern, more influential and more economical measures to meet the challenges of the transport system.

Horizontal measures are considered significant in all Nordic and Baltic countries especially from the viewpoint of climate change and mobility management, and thus these measures should be included in the concept of the conceptual pillar. However, it should be recognized that meeting the basic needs of sustainable accessibility requires a reasonable combination of infrastructure investments and horizontal measures. Horizontal measures, such as intelligent transport solutions, traffic management systems, monitoring and management of cargo shipments as well as border crossing formalities promote the control and management of travel and transport chains, which provide benefits to all actors.