

# REGIONS OF THE BALTIC-ADRIATIC AXIS

Emilia-Romagna, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Kärnten, Steiermark, Niederösterreich, Wien, Zlin Region, Jihomoravsky Kraj, Silesia Voivodeship, Lodzkie Voivodeship, Mazowieckie Voivodeship, Warminsko-Mazurkie Voivodeship, Pomorskie Voivodeship

Public consultation on the Future Trans-European Transport Network

## Position paper by the Regions of the Baltic Adriatic Axis

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In 2009, 14 European Regions from the Baltic Sea to the North Adriatic launched a bottom-up cooperation frame in the field of transport infrastructure. They jointly prepared and signed a Common Declaration, based on the Ministerial Letter of Intents signed on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006 by Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria and Italy. This Common Declaration was presented to national and European Institutions on October 6<sup>th</sup> 2009 in Brussels. Then, other Regions joined the Initiative and further actions have been realized, including surveys and studies so as to facilitate the realization of the railway Axis from the Baltic Sea to the Northern Adriatic as an extension of PP23 Axis.

Indeed, all the Regions along the Axis – directly representing around 40 million EU citizens – are convinced that the implementation of this project will allow EU Members States and their economic operators to choose shortest routes, efficiently connecting Central Europe to its partners in Africa and in the Middle and Far East. This will allow considerable savings in transit time and energy, as well as a tangible reduction in CO2 emissions in line with Europe2020 and transport de-carbonisation objectives.

Taking into consideration the process of revision for the TEN-T guidelines, the promoting Regions of the Baltic Adriatic Axis (BAA) welcome the dual layer **approach of the European Commission based on the concepts of "core network"** and priority projects.

In this perspective, all Regions of the Baltic Adriatic Axis expect the railway line from Gdansk/Gdynia - Warszawa - Katowice - Ostrava - Prerov - Otrokovice - Brno - (Katowice - Zilina - Bratislava) - Wien - Graz - Klagenfurt - Udine - Trieste/Venezia - Bologna/Ravenna to be part of the future core network.

The BAA is a short, direct railway axis, basically following the existing traffic flow between Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria and Italy, well connected to local, regional and transnational transport schemes and relevant intermodal terminals. By facilitating the moving of 50 million passengers and 100 million tonnes of freights a year, it addresses main bottlenecks of trans-national relevance and creates alone an inner network of gates, nodes and links of high European importance, including at the same time main seaports and airports and north-south and east-west routes.

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It reflects the main long-distance passengers and freights flows, both existing and potential, thus providing a tangible contribution to the enhancement of the internal market and the global competitiveness of the European Union. It also aims at supporting the shifting of heavy traffic from road to rail, contributing to general goals of EU transport and environmental policy, as well as the priorities of Europe 2020 strategy.

Therefore, this railway Axis performs a fundamental function in the course of multimodality, enhancing efficient and sustainable co-modal transport.

Actually, the BAA represents a missing link of the integrated main EU transport system, formed by the Motorways of the Sea (MoS) of Baltic and North Sea, on the one side, and of the Adriatic Sea towards the Mediterranean, Suez, Africa and Asia.

In addition, the Axis from Baltic to Northern Adriatic as the most eastern EU railway north-south line, could represent the connection of macro-regions of European importance, from the Baltic through the Danube Basin to Italy. As a key element within the EU transport networks it would further connect regions from Scandinavia and Finland, Eastern Germany, Poland, Kaliningrad, the Baltic States, Belarus and Russia with the highly industrialized regions of Piemonte, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Veneto and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia and the whole Apennine peninsula – a strategic linkage between Northern and Central Europe, the Mediterranean, the Balkans and the Black Sea. In a multimodal system, it interconnects ports, airports, inland waterway (Rhine-Main-Danube and river Po) with road and rail.

From the Baltic to the Adriatic, the Axis establishes the connection among industrial clusters and economic poles, thus providing a direct support to the development of Regions, local communities and enterprises. It allows the flows of freights and passengers between the largest industrial areas in Poland (Gdansk, Warszawa, Lodz, Katowice) and serves strategic centres in Moravia (Zlin-Holesov, Brno), Western Slovakia (Bratislava), Austria (Wien, Upper Styria, Graz, Klagenfurt) and Italy (Udine, Trieste, Monfalcone, Venezia-Mestre, Padua, Bologna and Ravenna). By connecting highly populated areas and economic basins generating high overall gross products with disadvantaged regions, BAA is thus an instrument of both the Transport and Cohesion common policies. Coherently with the shifting to east of the so-called **"Blue Banana"**, it offers to the European Union a modern connection to transport systems of Ukraine, Russia and Eastern neighbouring countries.

## **Conclusions**

As a conclusion, for the above-mentioned reasons, the 14 Regions of the Baltic Adriatic Axis - Emilia-Romagna, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Kärnten, Steiermark, Niederösterreich, Wien, Zlin Region, Jihomoravsky Kraj, Silesia Voivodeship, Lodzkie Voivodeship, Mazowieckie Voivodeship, Warminsko-Mazurkie Voivodeship, Pomorskie Voivodeship - on behalf of their communities of the more than 40 million citizens strongly consider that a TEN-T core network designed without the BAA would be weakened and incomplete. Thus, they strongly support the visions of a TEN-T core network including the Baltic Adriatic Axis as an essential component, strengthening the competitiveness and equilibrated development of the EU.