

2010-09-15

The European Commission consultation on the future Trans-European transport network policy

Response from Region Västerbotten

Region Västerbotten is the responsible political body for regional development and transport planning in the county of Västerbotten. We are deeply engaged in matters dealing with transport issues and are pleased for the opportunity to give our response to the Commission. We have also been active in the discussion about the coming TEN T-network on regional and national level.

First of all we want to express our support to the answer given from the Swedish government. We think it is very well balanced and bringing up aspects on the coming TEN T core network that have to be taken seriously by the Commission if we will have an all-European transport network that responds to the areas different circumstances and offensive opportunities. We also give our support to essential parts of the answer given from the Bothnian Corridor Project.

Main issues

The main issues to be considered in modelling a structure for the TEN T Core network is by our concern:

- Sweden, and especially the northern part and the Barents region, including Norway, Finland and north western Russia, are all very rich on natural resources such as forests, ore, minerals and natural gas. There is also a great potential for sustainable energy production. This is an added value for all Europeans. To utilize these resources it is a need to have an infrastructure that meets the demands for transports to the European market, bringing added value to Europe.
- There need to be a strong balance between several criteria in the methodology for choosing nodes and links. Besides demography it is important to address cohesion, environmental concern, economic development and industrial growth potential in all parts of Europe.
- The different specificities of freight and passenger transports must be considered thoroughly. The same criteria for choosing nodes and links may not be used.
- Haparanda/Tornio should be a strategic geographic node, connecting the northernmost branch of Northern Axis to the Nordic Triangle, through the Bothnian Corridor both at the Swedish and Finnish side, on the main criteria of very large volumes of freight to central Europe.

A large number of the Swedish core industry is situated in all the regions of the northern Sweden. They are dependent on the Bothnian Corridor and well functional co-modal connections to ports all

along the coastline. Examples are paper pulp industries along the coastline, wood industry, car industry, steel industries and wooden product industries. These are all beneficiaries from improved infrastructure and co-modal transport systems. It also emphasizes the importance of intermodal freight terminals along the Bothnian Corridor and connecting infrastructure in east-west directions, such as the E12 highway from Umeå to Norway that also connect via ferry to Vasa in Finland and further transport-possibilities towards south-east Europe and Russia.

Already today large infrastructure investments are being made in northern Sweden and Finland. Recently the new railway Bothnian Line was inaugurated and planning is underway for investments in increased capacity at several lines and new lines at both the Swedish and Finnish side. Improvement in several ports and hinterland connections are also being made.

An obvious strategic node for the TEN-T core network would be the transnational connection between Finland and Sweden in Haparanda/Tornio. The appointment of Haparanda/Tornio as a main node in the core network is motivated because foreseen increase in using natural resources and the fact that it will be a strategic node in the Barents area – a cross point for four countries; Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia.

These arguments all leads to the conclusion that the revised TEN-T Core-network ought to be based on a model that makes it natural with a extension of the Northern Triangle with a branch in both Sweden and Finland; The Bothnian Corridor over the core node Haparanda/Tornio.

Complementary information

By this answer we also want to give supplementary information about the very interesting logistical situation that appears because of the new Bothnia Railroad that have its northern point in Umeå, Västerbotten, and the new modal freight terminal in Umeå, Nordic Logistic Centre, NLC.

The Bothnia Railroad is a new and modern railroad, which will both improve the conditions for freight transport between northern Sweden and northern Scandinavia to southern Europe. At the same time it strengthens the possibilities for personal transport along the north-east coast.

The new freight terminal, NLC, gives totally new possibilities for intermodal transport. The reason is that the design is one of the most modern in Europe and it is an “open terminal”, which encourages competition. The handler on the terminal, ISS Trafficare, has reduced the prices on some services with 40 % compared with the “normally price”. This will indeed have effects on the terminal prices in Sweden in general, which will increase the railroads possibilities to compete on the market. In the east, Ostrobothnia in Finland, there are also important logistical investments that will match the investments in Umeå.

The new terminal will also have impact for more local and regional companies. An example is Volvo Trucks, which will get a better logistical chain together with new roads that is built to connect the terminal.

Region Västerbotten has newly prioritised investment in the regional transport system. Strong focuses have been to support the system effects that come with the Bothnia railroad an NLC-

terminal. Together with other economical sources there will be investment of 50 million Euro in that purpose.

Important parts of this investments is prolonging of electrified railroad to the harbour of Umeå, investments in the railroad between Umeå and Storuman – the east-west railroad named Tvärbanan. In Storuman, there will be constructed a new multipurpose terminal. This will give new opportunities both for companies in the inland of Västerbotten, and companies in Nordland fylke, Norway.

Region Västerbotten is convinced that our region is and will be even more a “crossroad” for intermodal transports and logistical solutions.

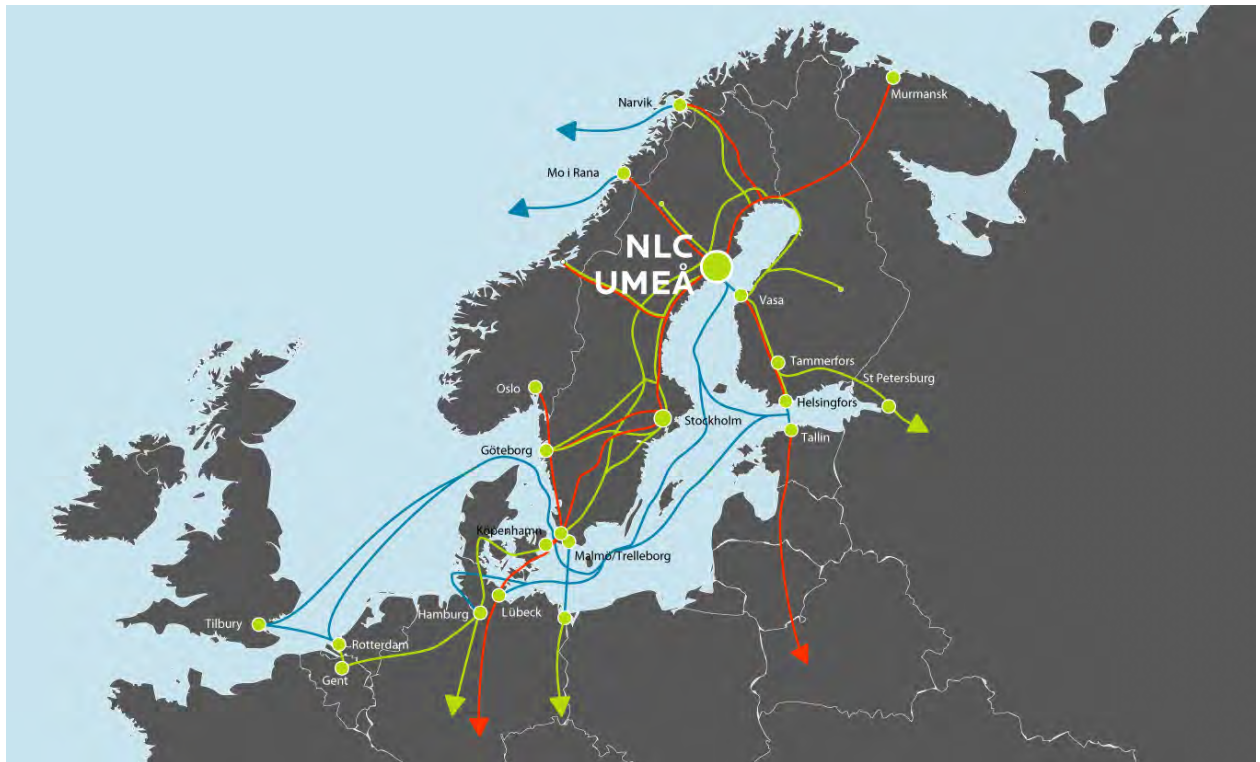
In the north-south direction, with the Bothnian Corridor as an important part, is a key question to utilise more of the resources in northern Europe. A natural investment in the Bothnian Corridor will be the North Bothnian railroad, which will solve a lot of today’s capacity problems on the existing railroad northwards, but also to connect the cities along the coast that today can not cooperate enough because of the distances.

In east-west, with the ferry connection between Umeå and Vasa in Finland we can foresee that the Nordic Logistic Centre will be an important “driver” to more intermodal freight transport east-west direction. Region Västerbotten has taken initiative to strongly support the cooperation between both manufacturing companies and transport-companies in Norway, Sweden and Finland. The NLC-company has already today serious discussions with potential partners in Finland and Norway about the possibilities to use a common brand for logistical services. If these plans will be fulfilled it will be a very interesting example of interregional cooperation in Europe. In this respect the improved railroad towards Storuman and the existing highway E12 are also important factors. Region Västerbotten finds it natural that the new comprehensive TEN T-network will include highway E12 – today this is a fact in Finland. With this there will be an elimination of dead-ends and a complete TEN T-corridor between Finland, Sweden connected to EU neighbouring country Norway.

To give a clear picture of the location of Västerbotten and the geographical context the Nordic Logistic Centre is operating in, we include a map.

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The Nordic Logistic Centre in Umeå, Västerbotten, has got a strategic position in the northern Europe's logistical system.

