

Protocol no 9
Steering Committee of
the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area
Date: April 26, 2004
Place: Kirkenes, Norway

Members present: Kjell Rosanoff, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Norway; Tomas Brolin, Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications in Sweden; Marjukka Vihavainen-Pitkänen, Ministry of Transport and Communications in Finland; Vyascheslav Parfenov, Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Russian Federation.

Other participants: Jane Baekken, Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communications; Per Munkerud, Nordland County Council; Tom Mikalsen, Finnmark County Council; Bo-Erik Ekblom, Norrbotten County Administration; Mårten Edberg, Västerbotten County Administration; Alexander Djadik, Republic of Komi Administration; Petr Prinz, Murmansk Oblast Administration; and Martti Miettinen, Secretary of BEATA Steering Committee.

§1 Opening of the Meeting

Mr Rosanoff opened the meeting and welcomed the participants to Kirkenes and Norway.

The meeting agenda (Appendix 1) was adopted.

§2 Minutes of the Eight Meeting of the Steering Committee (Protocol no 8)

The minutes of the eight meeting of the Steering Committee in St. Petersburg, Russia, September 11, 2003, were approved (Appendix 2).

§3 Progress Report 2003

The Secretariat had prepared the Progress Report 2003 of the BEATA Steering Committee work. The Progress Report was approved and will be submitted to BEAC and EU Commission in due time.

§4 Action Programme 2004-2008

The Task Force (Tomas Brolin, Jane Baekken, Martti Miettinen) nominated by the Steering Committee had drafted the Second Action Programme for the BEATA Steering Committee in spring 2003. The Action Programme was approved with minor changes in the St.

Petersburg meeting in September 2003. The proposed changes have been made and the Action Programme can be considered now effective.

As there was some uncertainty with the numbering of the Action Program, it was decided that the document is called "Action Programme 2004-2008".

§5 Programme of the Norwegian Chair for 2004

Mr Rosanoff and Ms Baekken presented the Programme of the Norwegian Chair for 2004 (Appendix 3). The Chair's Programme was approved.

The Chair had tentatively proposed the next Steering Committee meeting to be held in Narvik in September. After some discussion it was noted that this time could be too early and a new date will be considered.

§6 Status reports for the Interreg project STBR and Tacis application

STBR. Mr Bo-Erik Ekblom (Norrbotten County), the project leader, gave the status report of the STBR project (Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region). The STBR project had started in summer 2003 with the hiring of a consultancy consortium as project secretary. The secretariat is divided so that the administrative functions are located in Luleå (Bergwall Analys) and the technical support in Oulu (Liidea).

The STBR project consists of four Work Packages. Work Package 1 was launched in autumn 2003 with freight and passenger flow studies covering the whole Barents area. In spring 2004, some parts of the Work Packages 2 and 3 were started with pre-studies focusing on regional aviation and logistics development.

Tacis. There had been an effort to draft Tacis CBC applications to support the STBR project on the Russian side. In November 2003, a meeting in Archangelsk was held and the projects were then identified. However, the applications could not be completed in time (April 2, 2004) mainly due to delays in agreeing on the project scopes as well as limited resources that were allocated for the preparations. Furthermore, the projects on the STBR side were not adequately advanced to provide a firm basis for a parallel project development in Russia.

A renewed effort to secure funding for the project components on the Russian side will be made still this year. Note was taken that Tacis CBC has been replaced with the New Neighbourhood Programme and the rules of application are not yet known.

§7 News from the EU

The EU member of the BEATA Steering Committee was not present. Instead, Mr Miettinen reported about the 6th annual meeting of the Corridors and Areas Coordinators Group, which was held in Brussels on March 15, 2004. Of interest to the BEATA region is that the EU Commission has completed the revision of the TEN-T guidelines and the final discussions are now underway between the Commission, Council and EU Parliament. In the revision, the

Commission has introduced new concepts, such as “Motorways of the Sea”, “Declaration of European Interest” and the “European Coordinator”. In September 2003 in St. Petersburg, Mrs de Palacio, Transport and Energy Commissioner, initiated a similar revision process with regard the pan-European corridors and areas concept. A seminar on launching the revision process will be organized in Spain early June aiming at the new definitions of the corridors and areas and identification of priority projects in them. In the Brussels meeting in March, DG TREN invited the corridors and areas chairmen to provide the Commission with views and opinions on the future development of the concept before April 15, 2004. BEATA has not responded to this invitation.

§8 Recent events in the BEATA countries

Sweden. The Swedish government has approved the National Transport Plan 2004-2015 in March 2004, which amounts to 40 billion EUR in total. The Plan includes several projects in the BEATA region:

- Completion of the construction of the coastal railway Sundsvall-Umeå
- Construction of the coastal railway Umeå-Luleå by 2010.
- Upgrading and some new construction of the Haparanda railway, which includes railway gauge changing equipment at the Swedish-Finnish border.
- Improving the capacity of the Ore Line Kiruna-Narvik so as to allow longer ore trains.
- Increasing the passenger transport capacity of the Ore Line Kiruna-Luleå.

Norway. The new National Transport Plan 2006-2015 has just been approved also in Norway having a total budget of 192,5 billion NOK (23 billion EUR) for the period. In addition to the budget, the Plan defines transport policies and priorities, which focus on traffic safety, safety at sea including oil transport in the Barents Sea and new safety measures at seaports, sustainable transport in the cities, as well as transport between the regions. Funding will favour more populated areas and competition is stressed more than in earlier plans.

Finland. The Ministerial Working Group on Transport Infrastructure Policy completed its work in February 2004 after having drafted the document “Strategy for the Development and Maintenance of Finland’s Transport Infrastructure in 2004-2013. In 2005-2007 the Strategy calls for expenditures of 940 million EUR for major projects, and 340 million EUR for thematic projects, such as renewing railway superstructures, special support to growing regions and improving road safety. The projects in the BEATA region include:

- Dredging of ship fairways at Tornio and Raahen ports.
- Improving the railway Seinäjoki-Oulu
- Upgrading the main road nr 4 in Kemi

For the years 2008-2013 the Strategy proposes 1 930 million EUR to be spent on large investment projects and 23 million EUR for thematic projects.

Russia. In the end of 2003, Russian government approved tentatively the new Federal Transport Strategy 2025. The Strategy covers all areas and modes of transport including infrastructure and its use, legislation, structural and institutional modernization, pricing and financing. The Strategy is currently being discussed in relevant ministries.

In connection of the newly appointed government this spring, the transport sector has experienced major organizational changes. The previously separate ministries of transport, railways and communications have been condensed into a single Federal Ministry of Transport and Communications. The new Ministry has departments for each transport sector, but the operational functions are delegated to the so-called agencies including those for roads, railways, maritime transport and aviation.

Mr Djadik (Komi Republic) reported on the Belkomur Railway, which is included in the new Russian Transport Strategy. Nevertheless, external financial assistance is being sought. The road projects in Komi include the east-west Northern Road, which has been nearly completed in Komi excepting the short sections at the borders with Archangelsk and Perm. Also the road Syktyvkar-Narjan-Mar is under construction, which is interesting due to its proximity to oil and gas fields. The road might be interesting also for tourists.

Mr Prinz (Murmansk Oblast) mentioned that Murmansk has a General Transport Plan extending into the year 2016. Parts of it are also included in the federal programs. The following projects were mentioned:

- A new port is being planned in the Kola Bay (both shores), which will increase the Murmansk Port capacity 2½ times. Already an oil tanker (360 000 tons) has been anchored in the Bay for the purposes of trans-shipping crude oil to the western markets. Two other oil ports are underway.
- Construction of the bridge over the Kola Bay continues. Opening of the bridge to car traffic can be expected in 2005.
- The road Murmansk-Norwegian border (Borisoglebsk/Storskog) has been given the status of a federal road in January 2004. It means that the road will be maintained using federal funds. Last year, the oblast has used 40 million RUR for constructing the road Lotta-Nikel. Another 90 million RUR is still needed for the section Nickel-Borisoglebsk.
- On the Salla road, asphalt is missing. 130 million RUR is needed for paving the road. Several Tacis applications have been prepared for obtaining financial support but without success. In 2003, a new bus route was opened on this road between Kandalaksha-Rovaniemi.
- GSM coverage is being built along the Murmansk-Nikel road, where there is electricity service available. The Salla and Lotta roads to the Finnish border would need an adequate electricity supply before the mobile phone service can reasonably be built.
- Murmansk has just completed a road safety project with the Province of Lapland.
- Murmansk airport will receive funding from the federal budget for construction of the terminal in 2004 or 2005. Planning has been done in 2002-03. One of the first improvements include opening of a transit hall for foreign transit passengers.

§9 Presentation of on-going transport projects in the Barents region

On the second day, representatives of several on-going transport projects in the Barents region presented their projects. They included the following:

1. **STBR (Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region)** was presented by Mr Petri Mononen (Liidea Ltd). This presentation complemented the earlier overview of Mr Bo-Erik Ekblom. Mr Mononen explained more in detail the on-going freight and passenger flow studies, which will be completed in June. Two other pre-studies should

also be completed in June, after which the more comprehensive studies and measures can be launched. The pre-studies concern the current situation of regional aviation and logistics system in the Barents region. STBR will terminate at the end of 2005.

2. **Northern East-West Freight Corridor** was presented by Mr Ingvar Mathisen (Transportutvikling AS). This is a UIC supported project between the Nordic Country Railway Administrations. The partners include also representatives throughout the route from North America (Boston) to Russia, Japan and China. As the project has this global dimension, it is not particularly focused on the Barents region, even if the region provides the route's key link. Test runs on a container train are planned to take place in the next 6 to 12 months' time.
3. **Barents 2010** project was presented by Mr Mårten Edberg (Västerbotten County). Along with promoting industrial development, environmental analysis, research and higher education, the project aims at improving transport system coordination. In this regard Barents 2010 cooperates closely with the STBR project. It has been agreed that the focus of Barents 2010 will be in the telecommunications side of the logistics development. Barents 2010 will end in 2005.
A proposal to start **the Barents Railroad** project has been raised in the Barents 2010 steering committee. Barents 2010 is proposing that the STBR project should launch a pilot study on railway cooperation in the Barents Region. An outline of such a project was handed out, which the STBR secretariat will develop further.
4. **Northern Maritime Corridor (NMC)**, presented by Mr Olav Hauge (Rogland County), is composed of two projects: one financed by the Interreg III B North Sea program and the second by the Interreg III B Northern Periphery program. The aim is to connect coastal areas and enhance regional development in a sustainable way in the vast maritime region stretching from UK along the Norwegian coastline to the Russian shores of the Barents Sea. NMC will also end at the end of 2005.
5. **Kirkenes Rail Port** proposal was presented by Port Captain Per Pettersen (Kirkenes Municipality). The project entails building a railway across the Norwegian-Russian border, where a 40 km section is missing today. The railway would link the Kirkenes Port with the Russian railway system and could provide deep-sea services for Russian foreign export companies. The Port has also plans for expansion, which include berth improvements as well as providing oil trans-shipment facilities as soon as the necessary permit from the environmental authorities is secured.

Mr Miettinen summarized the presentations with the following main observations:

- In the Barents Region there are several parallel transport projects, which seem to develop in relative isolation. Cooperation between them is uneven and dependent mainly on the same individuals participating in various projects.
- From the point of view of STBR, the Barents 2010 project could prove to be useful if the project's broader socio-economic scope could be brought to benefit also STBR. Similarly the Northern East-West Freight Corridor project could provide the more global view of the transport demand in the region. Information exchange, of course, is a two-way street and both BEATA and STBR could provide a stronger institutional base for the other transport projects as well as supply the projects with better data, which is more often than not lacking.
- NMC appears to cover much of the intended work of the STBR in the maritime sector. The remaining questions relate to how to cooperate and how to include also the Bothnian Bay ports of Sweden and Finland in the same framework of cooperation. NMC clearly has interest in data sharing, better involvement of decision makers, and

participation in the development of projects for national investment plans, which are possibly better handled in the BEATA and STBR processes.

- Many of the presentations have a railway focus, which is not yet adequately developed in BEATA or STBR. The potential for improved railway cooperation should be explored in both fora.
- The issue of lacking or poor data was raised in many presentations. Mr Miettinen mentioned that it has been a concern also in many other instances. Therefore, a meeting has been called in Rovaniemi on May 6 to discuss the ways and means of better data collaboration in the Barents region. All parties are welcome to join in the discussions.
- Russian involvement is also a concern for many projects not least due to the strict rules of the EU financing mechanisms. Furthermore, there are instances of some overlapping of the project proposals in Russia. This is clearly an area where the parallel transport projects could cooperate better in the future, as well as share the scarce resources.
- STBR plans a transport seminar for Rovaniemi on August 24, 2004. The issues that were raised in this meeting should have a bearing on the seminar focus and agenda.

§10 Next meeting

The next meeting will be held in the BEATA region in Norway. The meeting date will be announced in due time.

§11 Closing of the meeting

Chairman closed the meeting.

Martti Miettinen

Kjell Rosanoff

APPENDICES:

1. Agenda no. 9
2. Protocol no. 8
3. Programme of the Norwegian Chairmanship in 2004