



07102016

BARENTS REGIONAL WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

MEETING IN HELSINKI 28.09.2016

Place: Ministry of Transport and Communications, Helsinki, Finland.
Time: 09:00-14.00

Present:

Bo-Erik Ekblom
Mikael Bergström
Mårten Edberg
Eirik Selmer
Marius Chrømer
Hannu Heikkinen
Tuija Maanoja
Jaakko Ylinampa
Roman Gokkoev
Pasi Pitkänen
Jarkko Rantala

Agenda

1. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was approved.

2. Approval of the Protocol of the meeting held in Ylläs 26.4.2016

The Protocol was approved.

3. Chairman's Overview (Hannu Heikkinen)

Last working group meeting was held in Ylläs. After that there was a workshop and joint meeting in Kajaani on the 30th and 31st of May. The joint meeting was held with the working groups of Tourism and Culture. The joint meeting was very appreciated by the participants and it was decided that the working groups on Tourism and Culture and the working group on Transport and Logistics shall have a joint meeting at least once a year to discuss common

questions. Roads, ferry lines and flight routes are important for the tourism industry and issues to discuss further.

BEATA has had a meeting in Arkhangelsk on the 20th of June in connection with the ministerial meeting of Transport. Some of the members of the working group participated. The Joint Transport Plan was discussed and the Russian corrections presented. There are quite a lot of corrections which led to the discussion to have the expert group to look into the new version before taking a decision. Another issue discussed on the BEATA meeting was the Joint Declaration of the BEAC Transport Ministerial Meeting.

4. Partners' Overview

Mårten Edberg, Västerbotten, informed about the proposal to form new regions in Sweden. The idea is to have 5 regions in Sweden, today there are 21 counties. In the north this would mean to merge the four northernmost regions into one. A decision has to be taken quite quickly in order to have the regions in place 2019. A lot of practical issues still needs to be considered for example in the north only half of the area of the proposed region is a part of the Barents cooperation.

A new transport planning process is starting up right now. A mutual system analysis for Västerbotten and Norrbotten is now conducted as a first step towards making a new transport plan. New regional and national transport plans shall be made during next year and be valid from 2019. It is about prioritising new investments, not maintenance of existing infrastructure. The railway North Bothnia Link between Umeå and Luleå is the most important project for northern Sweden.

Pasi Pitkänen, North Karelia, informed the group that North Karelia is applying for full membership of the Barents Cooperation. North Karelia is located south of Kajaani, bordering to Russian Karelia and has a lot of connections to the Barents Region. Pasi will leave his position for working as a project coordination in North Korea for two years.

Marius Chramer, Troms, informed that a regional process is also taking place in Norway but the outcome is not visible yet. In the north the regions will be merged into one. The government is looking at what policy areas that are possible to move. The new region is likely to be in place 2020-2021.

The Norwegian National Transport Plan that was presented in the beginning of this year is now open for comments and a proposal will be made to parliament next year. It is a twelve year plan, 2018-2029

National action plans for 2018-2021 is now being set up for aviation, road, etc.

There is a cooperation between the cities of Arctic Air link, Troms, Lulea and Oulu called Arctic Europe. Marius recommends everyone to try the flight route.

In the regional process there is discussion on transferring more national roads to the regions. Also flight routes and fishing harbours are under discussion for the same reason. This may happen in 3-4 years. The idea is to transfer the money to the region but it does not have to be used for transport infrastructure, if the regions so decide it can allocate the money for education or some other area of interest.

Jarkko Ylinampa, Lapland informed about the idea of a state owned infrastructure company in Finland. The suggestion is that a state owned company could own the whole transport network road, rail and sea. This will be financed by user charges. There will be a political decision next year. One argument for this model is that with one company handling all infrastructures, financed with user charges, means more money to the network than today's system with tax financed infrastructure. Today the investments in infrastructure have to compete with other public investments which have meant that the infrastructure network is decreasing.

Also Finland is looking into the structure of local governance, Today 18 counties with autonomous decision making but 9 transport regions, how will this be organised in the future? Not a problem for Lapland as the transport region and the region is covering the same area. There is a suggestion, if the national infrastructure company is not established, that the main roads would be national and smaller roads will be regional. From the local transport sector the view is that the road network shall not be divided into regional and national. How will maintenance be arranged in the future if there are different levels?

There is an autonomous driving test area now under establishment in northern Finland that will have Volvo as a part.

Reindeer watch, 1000 professional drivers recruited. When they see a reindeer they give a warning by smartphone and other users are warned. The drivers are very satisfied with this service. The app will be publicly launched next year.

Highway 21/E8, tenders received in two weeks and next summer and the summer after the road will be maintained. There are permafrost problems every year making the road sloppy as the ice between 4-8 meters down melts. Now trying to find a permanent solution to this problem.

5. Barents Transport project for Kolarctic ENI application (includes both yesterdays and todays discussion)

At the previous meetings a project idea by the consultant Juha Hyvärinen has been discussed. The contract with Hyvärinen has not yet been agreed and we need to sign a contract with him if we need his assistance.

Today's meeting had a long discussion of the needs for the region. These needs can then be transferred into topics that could form the base for new projects.

The Barents region is a large region with various perspectives that needs to be considered. This means that we need to form a project that all regions feel has something for them in it.

Suggestions for topics i a new project:

- Northern sea route, how can we prepare ourselves if the route is fully operational? What are the challenges for the northern region if to be a part of the northern sea route? What are the possibilities for companies to use it? Why shall our companies use it, what is the conditions and the costs? Where is the logic of the logistics? Interesting vision or fantasy.
- Transport corridors, both north south and east west. Connecting Barents with Europe via TEN-T corridors. The arctic is a hot topic in Brussels and we need to develop our corridors that are connecting the region to the rest of Europe. For example the

cooperation around the Bothnian Corridor needs to be strengthened. East west corridors such as the railway corridor to Petrozavodsk and the Midway alignment between Sweden and Finland.

- Tourism and transports are closely connected and this link can be elaborated. Air routes, cruising lines, railway connections etc.
- Freight status of the region, how does the cargo flows look like, what is transported and how much. Transport system analysis of main transport flows.

We have to have a discussion with BEATA in order to have their view of the project. It is important to include Russian regions early in the process and hopefully they will attend the next meeting in Murmansk. The topics mentioned above are only examples and will be further elaborated after discussions with BEATA and Russian partners. In order to map the interest in Russia a consultant may be needed. It is important that both Russia, as the sitting chair of BEATA, and Sweden, as the coming chair, feels comfortable with the project. The joint declaration for the BEAC transport ministers from June mirrors most of the ideas of the project and thus in line with the aim of the Russian chairmanship of BEATA and hopefully will get a positive response. As the project goes along it is important to discuss proposals etc. with BEATA and maybe the Regional Council.

A new project shall be more market oriented, look at bottlenecks, example orientated and include lobbying towards our national governments and Brussels. The outcome is to be a driver, host activities, report to BEATA and other bodies. A report will be produced at the end of the project.

The project needs to be driven by a consultant in close connection with the working group. The group has the knowledge and ideas but needs someone to take the lead.

In order to set this up a lead partner has to be identified and probably a consultant has to be contracted to make the project idea and application. The first priority is to get Kolarctic financing, but if this is not possible we will find other means of financing. In order to get Kolarctic financing there have to be Russian partners in the project.

Several members of the meeting propose Lapland ELY Center as the lead partner. Jarkko, however explains that ELY Center has resource problem as there are less experts today than it used to be. Once the project is approved this will not be a problem as cost for project leading will be reimbursed. A proposal to collect money among the regions to provide such an expert is discussed.

Decision: The regions will together fund an expert to write an application for Kolarctic.

The ideas put forward today needs to be written down and presented for BEATA in November. A draft that can be discussed by the members of the working group needs to be produced as soon as possible. In the draft we need to identify the common objectives. After this process the draft may be sent to the Russian regions and BEATA. It is important to stress that we present examples of work packages and not a proposal. We also need to talk with each BEATA member in order to inform them beforehand the meeting.

Decision: Hannu and Jarkko puts a paper together consisting of the objectives of the project. The paper may be based on the todays protocol and to be discussed with Mikael and Marius.

6. Other Issues

It is very important to have close connections with BEATA. This is especially valid if there will be a new transport project. In the past regional representatives were always invited to BEATA meetings. This is a good way to keep good contacts between the regional and national level.

Decision: At least once a year we will have joint meetings with BEATA. BEATA is asked to invite one regional member from each country to every meeting. Hannu and Tuija contacts the chair of BEATA to discuss these topics.

7. Next meeting

BEATA will have a meeting in connection with the Murmansk Business week that takes place 14th-18th of November. We try to arrange a working group meeting back to back with BEATA and at the BEATA meeting our new project idea will be presented.

Decision: When BEATA has decided a date for their meeting Hannu will arrange a meeting with the working group back to back.

Secretary, Mikael Bergström, Västerbotten