



Government Offices of Sweden



Declaration of the Transport Ministerial Meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)

Umeå 12 September 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Ministers of Transport and Infrastructure

Affirm the validity of the principles and objectives of the Barents cooperation as expressed in the Kirkenes Declaration of January 1993 and reaffirmed in the Summit Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation in Kirkenes in June 2013.

Confirm their commitment to the Joint Declarations adopted at the BEAC Transport Ministerial Meetings in Narvik 24 September 2013 and in Arkhangelsk 21 June 2016.

Recognize the significant role of the Barents Regional Council and note that interregional cooperation and close interaction between national and regional levels are fundamental elements of the Barents cooperation in the transport area. The Ministers especially emphasize the cooperation regarding the revision of the Draft Joint Barents Transport Plan.

Confirm their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as other international treaties to which member countries are parties, and to promote the sustainability of all modes of transport.

Express gratitude to the outgoing Swedish chairmanship of BEATA Steering Committee and its Expert Working Group on the Draft Joint Barents Transport Plan.

Agree that the draft Joint Barents Transport Plan will form a solid base for the work in BEATA the coming years. Future transport planning in the Barents region, on national as well as regional level, may consider the recommendations from the Draft Joint Barents Transport Plan.

TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TRANSPORT

The Ministers of Transport and Infrastructure

Recognize the need to properly and resolutely address climate change. Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden have the ambition to develop an efficient transport system in the Barents Region in order to reduce carbon footprint.

Encourage the initiatives of the Barents Regional Working Group for Transport and Logistics in their analysis and promotion of sustainable transport and connectivity in the Barents area and underlining the need for cooperation with BEATA. This includes applications for telecommunications, real-time information systems, digital traceability of goods and vehicles, electrification and other measures.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY BY EFFICIENT TRANSPORT

The Ministers of Transport and Infrastructure

Affirm the need of further exploring the possibilities in the area of digitalization and intelligent transport systems, towards a connected and automated mobility without borders through the Barents area.

Encourage further development of *sustainable communication links* at the regional and local levels, as a key factor in ensuring sustainable mobility of population of the Barents region countries.

Encourage stakeholders to take actions to remove cross-border hurdles in the transport system with appropriate methods and possible harmonization, especially for promoting efficient transportation of goods on rail.

Continue finding synergies between stakeholders' activities towards improved logistics and information as well as high-quality, reliable, inclusive, safe and cost-effective transportation services for tourism and other sectors, within the Barents region and with good external links to world markets.

Acknowledge the importance of continued work towards developing efficient and sustainable transport corridors, for example by increasing joint long-term planning for cross-border transports and continuing bilateral dialogues for the benefit of all parties in the Barents area.

DEVELOPING SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Ministers of Transport and Infrastructure

Underline that in all aspects of the transport system and in all planning of transport infrastructure, social aspects, such as accessibility, local populations and indigenous peoples, should be taken into account.

Emphasises that the transport system should meet the needs of both women and men.

Stress the need for further work on simplification of administrative routines and visa procedures.

Reminding of the fact that road accidents are one of the major causes of death amongst children and young people globally.

Agree on the importance of working towards target 3.6 within Sustainable Development Goal 3 «By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents» and to exchange best practices to improve road safety in the Barents area.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The Ministers of Transport and Infrastructure

Stress the importance of continued synergy and cooperation with other working groups within the Barents cooperation, Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics, Arctic Council, Council of the Baltic Sea States and other multilateral formats.

Welcome further cooperation if suitable with EU initiatives and programmes, in particular Interreg, including Baltic Sea Region programme, co-funded by Russia and Norway, transeuropean transport networks (TEN-T), Horizon 2020/ Horizon Europe, EU-China Connectivity platform, Kolarctic and Karelia cross border cooperation, as well as such projects as Visit Arctic Europe.

Encourage work based on the draft Joint Barents Transport Plan and additional studies for example regarding improvement of freight flows; exchange of information on transport infrastructure development projects in the region as well as, information on changes and additions to legislation.

The Ministers of Transport and Infrastructure emphasize the importance of developing international cooperation in the field of science and education in the region.

CONCLUSION

The Ministers of Transport and Infrastructure

Welcome the incoming chair, Norway, and its priorities for the chairmanship 2019-2021.