



Joint political statement of Euroregion Baltic Council regarding the ongoing revision of the TEN transport corridors in Europe

On 5th March 2010 the Council of Euroregion Baltic unanimously adopted this political statement with reference to the ongoing revision of the TEN transport corridors in Europe. Euroregion Baltic (ERB) was established in February 1998 and is a politically solid and well-anchored cooperation in the south-east of the Baltic Sea region, consisting of eight regions of Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden. It was the first Euroregion to have formally included a partner from the Russian Federation. Since its early days ERB has been pursuing the goals of improving life conditions for its inhabitants, promoting bonds and contacts among local communities, and providing measures for a more sustainable development within the region. Comprising the regions from both old and new EU Member States, and the Russian Kaliningrad Oblast, ERB constitutes the operational network of substantial and effective links across the borders, facilitating the promotion of political dialogue and reform, as well as sustainable, economic, social and environmental development, and thus strengthening local democracy and fostering people-to-people contacts between civil societies. The co-operation actively involves both local and regional authorities, private and public sectors, and NGOs. Within the framework of the INTERREG III B BSR financed Seagull Project, in 2005 ERB partners elaborated a long-term development strategy based on four strategic priorities, including economic and social development, implementation of the EU policies regarding environmental protection and promotion of renewable energy sources, as well as improving the infrastructures in order to provide better access to the Trans European transport networks, all corresponding with the revised Lisbon Strategy and the development of Four Common Spaces between the European Union and Russia.

The Directorate-General for transport and Energy (DG TREN) of the EU Commission invited stakeholders from all over Europe to give their comments on the Green paper on the TEN-T policy review until the 30th of April 2009. The Commission has announced that they will send out a message on the strategy for the future TEN-T policy first quarter 2010.

With regards to this and to the process of the ongoing revision of the TEN transport corridors in Europe the Council of Euroregion Baltic would like to take political actions in order to highlight new facts (that were not known at the time for commenting the Green Paper) that should be considered within the review of the TEN-T policy.

Since 30th April 2009 several key conditions have changed and ERB would highlight these new facts to the Commission and the national authorities concerned. All said herein is in accordance with the Euroregion Baltic Joint Development Program.

Upgrading the TEN-T structure will mean that the main transport infrastructure in Euroregion Baltic will be able to add considerable value to the development of a sustainable European transport system in the Baltic Sea and Europe. TEN-T ports in the ERB region - Karlshamn, Karlskrona, Oskarshamn, Bornholm, Klaipeda, Gdansk and Gdynia, as well as the ports of Baltijsk / Kaliningrad in the Kaliningrad region (RU) have a central role in linking the main TEN corridors on both sides of the Baltic countries, the Nordic Triangle, and Via / Rail Baltica.

Within the ERB area two Motorways of the Sea projects have recently been approved. This means that the two links Karlshamn – Klaipeda and Karlskrona– Gdynia are envisaged as high priority links within the TEN-T network. However both the Swedish ports, as well as Klaipeda and Gdynia have missing links with the priority corridors in the TEN-T network (Nordic Triangle, Rail Baltica and Railway/Road axis no.23 and 25).

From a European point of view it is of utmost importance that Euroregion Baltic area will be a fully integrated part in the European multimodal transport network. In consequence of the approval of the new Motorways of the Sea projects, the Council of Euroregion Baltic strongly supports the upgrading of following transport corridors:

- E22 as part of the TEN-T system although not in the category A. Referring to the fact that the E22 encompasses 3 Swedish category A TEN-T ports (Karlshamn, Karlskrona, Oskarshamn) with direct links to the Nordic Triangle and the Via/Rail Baltica, E22 is accordingly a transport route of strategic importance which should be upgraded in the TEN-T system;
- Baltic Link railway/road axis from Gothenburg to Karlskrona in Sweden and from Gdynia to Warszawa in Poland must be included in the prioritised TEN-T network; in other words, connection to the Nordic Triangle no. 12 in Sweden and railway/road axis no. 23 and 25 in Poland;
- East West Transport Corridor from Denmark to Vilnius via Karlshamn / Karlskrona and Klaipeda and Baltijsk / Kaliningrad must be included in the prioritised TEN-T network, in other words connection to the Nordic Triangle and Rail Baltica.
- Northern Corridor (so-called Coastal Corridor) must be included in the prioritised TEN-T network. It integrates the South coast of the Baltic Sea from Germany via Szczecin, Gdańsk, Olsztyn and Ełk to Lithuania (encompassing roads as well as complementary railways) and constitutes an important missing link of the area to Rail Baltica.

In addition:

Apart from the above, but well in accordance with the Euroregion Baltic Joint Development Program, the Council of Euroregion Baltic would like to take this opportunity to still argue for and give support to the upgrading of the transport routes described below.

The railway connection: Klaipeda port - Siaulai must be linked to the priority project no. 27 in order to secure its accession to the Baltic Sea.

The island of Bornholm should be connected to the Northern Corridor, which will then create a transport connection from the northern Poland via Bornholm to Ystad / Skåne Region and thus the Öresund Region.

Another ongoing initiative in the area that remains of interest is the Baltic Tangent transport infrastructure network connecting Jönköping / Nässjö in the Nordic link via Oskarshamn - Ventspils to Riga with the link to Moscow. The initiative involves close cooperation of the TEN-T ports in Oskarshamn and Ventspils with the dry ports of the Nordic triangle, respectively Rail Baltica. The initiative is developing a coherent east west link between the two main TEN corridors with direct rail/road connections to Moscow.

Summary:

In line with the above, the Council of Euroregion Baltic strongly supports the upgrading of the connections between the Swedish ports of Karlshamn and Karlskrona to the Nordic Triangle, and the connection between the Lithuania port of Klaipeda to Rail Baltica. In consequence, these corridors should also include the attention of European Road 22 (E22) in its entire Swedish alignment and the Northern Corridor via Gdańsk to Lithuania. Furthermore, Euroregion Baltic will highlight the importance of the Polish routes from the ports of Gdynia / Gdansk down to Brno / Bratislava – Vienna, Priority Project no. 23 and 25.

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