

Rīga, 31.03.2005
Nr.4/1- 41

European Commission
Directorate General for Energy and Transport

Dear Sir or Madam,

Responding to European Commission's announced public consultations on the extension of the major Trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions, Society "Latvian Transit Business Association" (LTBA) would like to express its opinion and give proposals regarding the priorities mentioned in the European Community initiative "Trans European network development". The aim of our proposals is to promote the development of transit transportation from Russian and Asian regions to Latvia's ports and to increase freight traffic volume through Latvia's transit corridors. It also aims to develop the contacts among EU neighborhood regions including countries like Russia, Byelorussia, (also the Nordic regions of Ukraine) and to make unified and effective transport connections with Trans – European transport axes.

Referring to public consultations questionnaire for the stakeholders, LTBA would like to indicate, that we do not have sufficient resources to answer fully to the questions, therefore LTBA has prepared suggestions regarding the extension of Trans – European transport axes from Latvian transit business sectors view.

Latvian Transit Business association has identified several priorities and proposes to the European Commission the following:

a) to develop the 1st and the 9th European transport corridor connections towards West and East. (In Latvia: Liepāja – Rīga – Jekabpils – Russia's border and Ventspils – Rīga – Jekabpils – Daugavpils – Byelorussia `s border; Liepaja - Rīga – Jekabpils – Daugavpils – Byelorussia `s border (Pāternieki));

b) to include the Pan- European transport corridors in the Ten- T initiative's priority projects lists;

c) we propose to use TEN – T funding for transport corridors through Latvia towards East and to support creation of connections with those potential sea routes, which will be included in the concept of the motorways of the sea. As a result the European II transport corridor could be relieved and the length of the transportation route will be considerably shortened;

d) we also believe that it is necessary to revise Pan – European transport corridor initiative as such, which after Latvia's accession to the EU on the 1st of



May 2004 corresponds to the territory included in TEN – T initiative, but does not include potential connection with Russia, Byelorussia and Asian countries.

f) we believe, that the main measures to improve infrastructure to remove the bottlenecks is the reconstruction of all kind transport infrastructure.

g) we support the opinion, that the improvement of safety is very important and requires to be solved along with transport axes development projects.

LTBA believes that within the framework of the ignition motorways of the sea it is necessary to give the priority status to the sea rout connections from West towards East trough Latvia's ports (Ventspils, Riga, Liepaja). Such motorways of the sea will ensure safe, efficient and quick connection with Moscow and Byelorussia. By combining sea, rail and road transport exploitations facilities and by shifting the freight traffic from road to rail and to motorways of sea, the connection with East will be made safe, efficient and quick. Simultaneously it is necessary to appoint and specify strategically important new motorways of the sea and also define concrete motorways of the sea which will receive support from the EU initiatives.

We believe that is necessary to make the additional revision of the TEN-T guidelines, because it is necessary to evaluate the possibility to define Pan – European transport corridors in the territory of EU as priority projects and to include them into TEN – T guidelines. Considering the fact, that the priority of the next period is rail connections, it is not acceptable, that regional motorways which are created for above mentioned railway connections will be considered as less important.

Our argumentation on below marked proposals is following: First, railway latitude compatibility from East (China, Russia, etc.) until Latvian ports; second, ice-free harbors (Ventspils, Liepaja); third, several centuries used and supported transport infrastructure; fourth, also private capital is invested for development of transport infrastructure and also harbour infrastructure. fifth, freight traffic intensity on roads from/to Russia create bottlenecks on Latvia's border with Russia, we believe that in such situation rail traffic could be solution; sixth, competitive freight transit tariffs; seventh, Latvia has a free land in port areas, where is possible to develop specialised freight transshipment terminals, to attend below mentioned transport corridors using Latvian ice-free harbours.

We hope that our proposals will help to complement reviewed TEN – T guidelines and to develop appropriate Trans – European transport networks.

Sincerely,
Latvian Transit business association

Executive director



G. Verners