



FREEPORT OF RIGA AUTHORITY

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European Commission
Directorate General for Energy and Transport
Unit B2 – Trans-European Network policies
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Public consultation Questions to the stakeholders

Freeport of Riga welcomes and highly appreciates the initiative of the Commission to organize public consultations with the stakeholders on extension of the major Trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions.

Freeport of Riga as one of the Latvia's key ports is a part of the transport chain along the coast of the Baltic Sea. Therefore Freeport of Riga has a particular interest in further development of the Baltic Sea maritime corridors, as well as appropriate hinterland logistic connections, in particular, those that provide the opportunity to connect maritime corridors with road and railway corridors of the West – East direction.

Recent enlargement of the European Community and accession of four Baltic countries – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland – the Baltic Sea has become the internal sea of the EU and particularly the arterial route for logistical communication among 8 from 25 Member States.¹ On the one hand, the Baltic Sea area, after the extension of the European Union, might be regarded as very perspective in terms of future economic growth based on the possibility to establish good business connections between the main centres of population in the area and on the possibility to facilitate development of current and prospective business links with neighbouring regions in the East, Russia particularly. Thus it provides possibility to establish transit gateway to the East for the whole Community through the Baltic Sea states.

On the other hand, the transport and logistical system of the Baltic Sea area is significantly unbalanced from state to state due to the different long-lasting political and economical processes in different countries of the area. Although there has been significant Community support for the development of infrastructure and research projects most of which were

¹ "Transport challenges in the Baltic Sea area", Report by the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission work group transport, 2004.



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formulated as sequential from national and regional interests, still there is no concept for systematic approach to the solution of this problem.²

New Community initiative *Motorway of the Baltic Sea* linking the Baltic Sea Member States with the Member States in the Central and Western Europe might become one of the corner stones for the further development of business connections between the main centres of population in the Baltic Sea region, as well as for the establishment of the transit gateway, between the Community and Eastern neighbouring regions, Russia particularly.

Prevention of imbalance between the Baltic Sea regions is the precondition for further successful development for the whole Baltic Sea area. Therefore it is necessary to establish better co-operation between the maritime corridors, ports and hinterland logistic activities within the scope of the *Motorways of the Baltic Sea*.

In order to reduce existing imbalance between the Baltic Sea regions and foster further homogeneous development of the whole region, particular attention should be paid to the establishment of maritime connections between the "old" and "new" Member States along the coastline of the Baltic Sea, as well as development of the connections among the "new" Baltic Sea Member States themselves. Attention should be paid to the necessity of establishment of good maritime connections between the main centres of population in the Baltic Sea region, which might help not to see the Baltic Sea as natural barrier for business and cultural connections between the EU Member states around it. Establishment of good maritime links between the main centres of population in the Baltic Sea region might become a significant advantage for the region.

Motorways of the Baltic Sea might become a cornerstone for the establishment of the multimodal link between the Community and its neighbouring Eastern regions, particularly Russia. Within the framework of TENT-T initiative Pan-European Transport Corridors corresponding to the initiative of the *Pan-European Transport Corridors*, it is planned to develop the road connection Ventspils – Riga – Moscow. This road corridor ensures connection with the 1st Pan European corridor (Tallinn – Riga- Kaunas –Warszawa) and 9th Pan European corridor (Helsinki – St. Petersburg – Pskow/Moscow- Kiev-Ljubasevka-Chisinau-Bucuresti-Alexandroupolis).

Combination of possible maritime links within the scope of *Motorways of the Baltic Sea* (between the main centres of population and traffic links of the Baltic Sea Member States) with the road connection Riga - Moscow, would not only significantly reduce the length of the road West – East connections between EU and Russia, in particular Moscow, but also provide the possibility to diminish burden from the use of the II Pan European transport corridor (Berlin-Warszawa-Minsk-Moscow-Niznij Novgorod), and allows to use the connection Riga – Moscow as an alternative to the connection Helsinki – St. Petersburg - Moscow within the scope of the 9th Pan European corridor. Assumption that Latvia might become one of the gateways between the EU and Russia is well founded. 80 % of Latvia's freight traffic is transit to Russia and CIS. The same is correct for the turnover of the Freeport of Riga.

The importance of necessity to improve the regional accessibility through linking the priority projects and the overall trans-European networks with secondary networks should be highlighted. Therefore Freeport of Riga believes that development of connections between the trans-European Networks, including Pan European corridors and secondary networks has become today's reality. Moreover, *Motorways of the Baltic Sea* requires a common transport policy for the Baltic States.

² Ibid.



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Besides the focus on the main TEN-T principles, appropriate attention should be provided to the development of connections between the hinterland and logistic centres and backbone infrastructure like *Pan-European Transport corridors*. This would lead to the improvement of regional accessibility; enabling business to reach further markets at lower costs and is of particular importance to the peripheral regions of enlarged EU, like 4 new Baltic States.

The necessity to develop bilateral relations between the Community and Russia has been highlighted in Community policy documents many times. Establishment of the new European Neighbouring Policy, as laid down in the Commission Communication³, emphasizes necessity to strengthen relations between the EU and its neighbours, at the same time highlighting the importance of improved transport connection with the European Union.

Freeport of Riga believes that the initiative *Motorways of the Baltic Sea* should become one of the keystones not only for the establishment of good business connections between the 8 Member States of the enlarged EU, but also for establishment of multimodal transport links between the Community and Russia.

Summarizing we believe that initiative *Motorways of the Sea* and its combination with the appropriate hinterland connections in order to provide more possibilities for the multimodal freight traffic, might help to overcome natural barrier - the Baltic Sea - for eight Member States around it, and establish the bridge between the EU and its main neighbour Russia. In order to ensure these improvements we also believe that there is a necessity to carry out appropriate feasibility studies.

Sincerely Yours,



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³ 11th March 2003.



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