



Länsstyrelsen  
Västerbottens län



LÄNSSTYRELSEN  
I NORRBOTTENS LÄN

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European Commission  
Directorate General for Energy and Transport  
Unit B2 – Trans-European Network Policies  
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Belgium

## **Networks for peace and development**

### **Extension of the major trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and region.**

#### **Replies on public consultation**

As governors representing the County Administrative Boards of Västerbotten and Norrbotten respectively, we hereby give our response on the report from the High Level Group (HLG).

We are very pleased that the HLG has presented a report that deals with very important questions regarding the European Unions need to develop good co-operation with its neighbouring countries.

In the Barents region – the most northern part of Europe – we have been working very intensive with the industrial development. The Barents region is rich in natural resources such as fishery, forest, ore, minerals and energy. The industries in the region contribute to wealth and economical growth in the entire Europe. Linking the industrial structures across the national borders in this part of Europe will generate economic growth in the region but also provide the rest of Europe with implements of great importance to its industry and its competitiveness.

Industrial co-operation across national borders within the Barents region is hard or impossible without a well-developed and efficient infrastructure and transport system. The report from the HLG presents, as one of the major axis, a proposal of a multimodal connection Narvik-Tornio-Haparanda-Vartius-St Petersburg. We would like to express our strongest support of this proposal.

This multimodal axis across the Barents region will reinforce and improve the existing infrastructure of sea, air, road and railway networks. In the northern parts of Sweden large investments in the existing main railroad is already approved. A new costal railway – The Bothnia line – is under construction. The total investment is approx. 1.5 billion Euros. The Swedish parliament has also decided to allocate funds for the construction of the Norrbotnia line, with a first

phase of construction to start in 2010. These investments in the Swedish railway network will provide the industry in the region an efficient transport mode in its interaction with the rest of Europe.

We are also in an intensive stage of developing networks between different industries within the Barents region, with special focus on northwest Russia. An important aspect of this development is the possibilities to use the existing railway infrastructure and to promote the further modernization of the railway network in Russia. In addition to the railways defined in the report from the HLG on Russian territory it is also important to mention the east-west railroad connecting the Nordic countries with the regions of Archangelsk and Komi. In this perspective the HLG also stresses issues of great importance such as administrative procedures at the customs stations, tariffs and possibilities for non-national carriers to operate.

These questions will surely also be discussed in the ongoing process under the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA). As a result from the ongoing project Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region, our counties have established a cooperation with BEATA.

With best regards



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Governor  
County Administrative Board of  
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Per-Ola Eriksson  
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