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European Commission
Directorate-General for Energy and Transport
TEN-T Revision
B - 1049 Brussels
Belgium

Revision of Community Guidelines Decision No 1692/96/EC

Dear Ms Loyola de Palacio
President, DG Transport and Energy

The North European Transport Corridor - the link between Western and Northern Europe

The North European Transport Corridor is the dominating goods link between Western and Northern Europe and carries the heaviest flows of goods of the Nordic countries. It's already today of significant international importance and thus important to the European integration. Considering the European Union's east enlargement, this importance will increase further.

A sturdy intermodal transport network is vital to the internal integration of the EU. The northernmost industrial concentration in the EU lies around the Gulf of Bothnia in northern Sweden and Finland. The region is a major producer of raw materials and semi-manufactured products for European industry. The Barents Region is expansive and rich in natural resources and is one of Europe's regions of the future. In order for the European Union to develop in the spirit of the Lisbon Summit, it is crucial that there should be cost-effective and environmentally sound transportation from the industries and suppliers of raw materials in the far north of the European Union to their export markets in continental Europe. The EU has set itself a target to provide good conditions for the entire Union and also to link peripheral areas with the centre. It is a major regional issue to the internal market that the entire Union has its main goods routes in the transport axes.

Comment on the work of the High-Level group

The work of the High-Level Group was presented in June 2003. One of the main tasks has been to recommend a number of priority projects within the transport network of the enlarged EU. With the support of Finland, Sweden has proposed to the High-Level Group the Boden-Kemi railway project as a cross-border project, but this was not among the selected projects. The projects singled out and the projects previously funded via TEN-T have to a marginal extent favoured the northernmost parts of the EU.

In the view of developing transportation from the industries and suppliers of raw materials in the far north of the European Union to their export markets in continental Europe we feel that it's absolutely vital for the EU to include The North European Transport Corridor in the strategic european transport system.

As a first step in this development we therefore support the proposal from Sweden and Finland to include the Boden-Kemi Project among the priority projects, and wish to underline the importance of ensuring that the transport axes cover northern Sweden's intermodal goods transport routes. Well-developed infrastructure in the north can also help alleviate congestion in continental Europe. We also would like to stress the importance of making concrete plans as to how transport links with Norway and North-West Russia are to be developed. These areas are producers of energy and raw materials that are needed throughout the EU.

Boden-Kemi is a "missing link" in the BEATA railway network, as well as a cross-border project of considerable importance to the Member States Sweden and Finland, as well as to the third-party states, Norway and Russia. It is important to ensure that TEN-T axes also cover northern Sweden and Finland. The missing stretch is the road and rail stretch along the coast of northern Sweden, with strategically important seaports and airports which enable intermodal transportation. We also lack transport links in an east-westerly direction. The corridor from Narvik via Haparanda/Tornio and on to Russia is vital in order to connect the Barents Region. So is also the connection from Trondheim via Mid-Sweden for connections to south Finland and on to Russia. Northern Europe has long transport routes, and in many cases, no alternative transport modes and routes, which makes industry here more vulnerable to disruption as regards transport than industry in continental Europe. To enable favourable development in the whole Union, it is important to link the Barents Region with the rest of the EU.

Importance to national economies and European supply of goods

The North European Transport Corridor still has significant investment needs, mainly in form of low capacity and "missing links". Strategic system shortcomings are limiting the international connections between the countries and the regions. Improved rail standard will have great significance for the transport economy of concerned industries and markets.

The corridor makes a number of important regions with diverse functions interact:

- Northern Norway: ice-free ports, food industry and oil industry
- Northwest Russia: raw materials and industry with low value added
- Northern Sweden and Finland: raw material and industry with higher value added
- Middle and southern Sweden and Finland: industry with high value added
- Denmark, Germany and the rest of Western Europe: industry with high value added and important markets

Currently, the flow of goods comes primarily from the Swedish basic industry, followed by the Finnish and Norwegian. Sweden stands for the dominant part of EU:s iron ore production and significant parts of copper, zinc, gold, silver, etc. The dominant goods flows are generated from ore-based industry, forest industry and manufacturing industry. In the short-term perspective, the largest potential is from/to northern Finland's heavy base industry, which increasingly is part of the same multinational companies as the Swedish industry. The supply of Russian raw materials is currently much higher to Finland than to Sweden.

The largest potential in the long term concerns the flows from/to northwest Russia, which is one of the richest natural resource areas in the world, with ores, minerals and natural gas. The Barents Region is expansive and rich in natural

resources and is one of Europe's regions of the future. In 1997, the EU transport ministers designated the Barents Region a Pan-European Transport Area (PETRA), where transport corridors between the EU area and Eastern Europe were to be set up. This PETRA area, the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA), comprises the northernmost areas of the Nordic countries and the northwestern part of Russia. It is important to put in place good transport systems in order to further European integration and improve our competitiveness, the major transport corridors and the Nordic Triangle being linked by the Bothnian Corridor.

An efficient and optimal corridor is of great importance to concerned national economies. The industry in northern Sweden alone produces a value of EUR 20,000 millions per year and produces 20 percent of Sweden's total net export, nearly twice the national average per capita.

Sweden invests EUR 3,600 million in the NET corridor

Since a decade, Sweden have set a high priority on developing the North European Transport Corridor and makes substantial investments in modernising the neglected transport-intense railway network in Norrland. Billions of Euro have been invested to increase capacity, bearing capacity and technical standard to international levels. This investment must be completed in order to secure and strengthen the North-European economy and growth. The large investment of the Bothnia Line will be completed in 2009. A political agreement exists to build the finishing part of the coastal railway, the Norrbotniabanan Line. The proposal in the Swedish National Rail Administration's (Banverket) Future Plan contains totally EUR 3,600 million investments in the goods route in 2004-2015, the Norrbotniabanan line not included. This means that Sweden objective is clear to give priority to the North European Transport Corridor.

Norrtåg represents Norrland

Within the Norrtåg association, the municipalities, county councils, county administrative boards, county traffic companies and county labour boards of the Norrland region co-operate for the development of the railwaysystem in the region Norrland.

Leif Hjalmarsson
Vice chairman

Olle Tiderman
Manager