



Intervention by Mr Mårten Edberg at the TEN T-days in Antwerp 29-30 November 2011

Ladies and gentlemen! Thank you for the opportunity to give this intervention.

My name is Mårten Edberg. I am representing the European Forum of Northern Sweden, which is a network of politicians from the four northernmost regions in Sweden, representing 900 000 citizens and half the geographical area of Sweden.

I am also representing a quite new Baltic Sea Programme Transport project – Bothnian Green Logistic Corridor, with 29 partners in five countries around the Baltic Sea. Besides the regional stakeholders, the partnership also consists of the Finnish ministry and the Swedish Transport Authority.

We really appreciate the open dialogue we have had with the EU commission, the European Parliament and EC officials, throughout the TEN-T policy review process. During this, have stressed the importance for the European union of the natural resources and the industry in Northern Scandinavia.

Therefore we are very satisfied that the commission also see the European added value of this, and that the Bothnian Corridor is included in the proposal. The priority of the infrastructure in this area is also fully in line with the Commission Raw Materials initiative.

Having made these positive statements, I will go on to give my perspective on some challenges - I guess that there is even more than those I would like to highlight - to deal with when it comes to the implementation:

1. First: The national and regional infrastructure planning has to go hand in hand with the TEN-T priorities. At national level there are very many urgent needs for funding, which are not always in line with the European perspective. For example, how do you as politician say to the voters in a congested urban area that we need to spend the money at an important railway elsewhere for securing the European prosperity?
2. Secondly: Another problem, at least in Sweden is that investments in infrastructure should be funded from each years budget instead of allocating the funds at once, with loans. We need the modal shift to railways right now, to reduce the impact of transport on the environment. In the worst case the investment period could be so long that the benefit from the first Euro spent, will come only after the fulfilment of the whole project.
3. And as the third: We need to convince the citizens in Europe that even if we have an economic crisis, we have no choice. We have to make investments in transport infrastructure. Otherwise, the situation will be worse, for the citizens, for the industry and for the environment.

Finally I would like to ensure the willingness to continue the dialogue with the commission in the implementation of the TEN-T networks. Then northern regions in Sweden – and I also think other partners around the Baltic Sea - are prepared to contribute with our available resources.

To the benefit for both our own direct interest but also for the interest for the whole European Union! Thank you for listening!