



23/02/2017

The European Commission

Europaforum Northern Sweden's views in response to the mid-term evaluation of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Europaforum Northern Sweden (EFNS) is a network for politicians at the local and regional levels from Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland. EFNS is a meeting place and knowledge arena where EU policies are analysed and discussed as regards how they affect northern Sweden. EFNS monitors European issues to influence EU legislation, the EU's strategies and action programmes and the EU's budget. The objective of EFNS is to safeguard the interests of northern Sweden both in the European arena and in relations to the national level in matters with a clear European perspective.

On November 28, 2016, the European Commission opened a consultation aiming to collect views on the mid-term evaluation of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). Stakeholders are invited to assess the progress of the implementation of the CEF and to provide suggestions for shaping its future.

IN BRIEF - VIEW OF EFNS ON SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE CEF

- The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)¹ is an important tool for extending the Core Network Corridor Scandinavian-Mediterranean (Scan-Med) to include the Bothnian Gulf in northern Sweden (and the North Sea Baltic corridor, to include the Bothnian Gulf in northern Finland) to be implemented in the next CEF Regulation as of post 2020, as the concerned infrastructures are identified on the core TEN-T network. In addition, the Scan-Med Corridor could also include a connection to the port of Narvik in Norway.
- The extension could define and introduce the "Arctic Triangle" as an additional priority to the Scan-Med, along other priorities like the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link and the Brenner Base Tunnel.
- The Arctic Triangle in the Scan-Med corridor would consolidate the engagement of the EU and its role as a key player in the development of the Arctic region.
- The extension of the Core Network Corridors to the northern parts of Sweden (and northern Finland and Norway) includes, in addition, an important measure to promote territorial cohesion and growth, strengthening the relevance of EU on local and regional level.

¹ REGULATION (EU) No 1316/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010



I. EFNS VIEW ON SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE CEF

EFNS proposal – Arctic Triangle as a priority in the Corridors

In the view of Europaforum Northern Sweden, the extension of the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Core Network Corridor (Scan-Med) to connect to the TEN-T Core Network sections in northern Sweden and connecting via the Iron Ore Line in northern Sweden to Narvik in northern Norway, and the North Sea-Baltic to Northern Finland would clearly define these sections as the *Arctic Triangle*.² The *Arctic Triangle* would hence be introduced as a new priority object to the ScanMed, along the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link and the Brenner Base Tunnel. The inclusion of the *Arctic Triangle* in the Scan-Med could hereby strengthen the engagement of the EU and its role as a key player in the development of the Arctic region.

EFNS views are adopted on the basis of the in-depth dialogue held with European institutions regarding the extension of Core Network Corridors concerned to European Arctic. Our views are supportive of the recommendation and outlooks approved by Member States in the Second Work Plan of the Scan-Med, as explained below:

- *In-depth dialogue:*

In the in-depth dialogue process held in recent years by representatives of Northern Sweden with the European Commission DG MOVE and with the European Coordinator for Scan-Med (and North Sea Baltic and MoS), we have experienced increased interest in the development of the transport system in the northern parts of Sweden, Finland and Norway. We are most satisfied that we now can see a clear possibility to extend the Scan-Med and the North Sea-Baltic to northern Sweden and northern Finland, also connecting to northern Norway. The Norwegian government has expressed an interest in the extension of Scan-Med to include the core sections in Northern Sweden and via the Iron Ore Line in Sweden to Narvik in Norway, which is manifested in the letter³ addressed to the European Coordinator Pat Cox, to the European Commission DG MOVE and to the Swedish government. Similarly, the Finnish government supports the extension of the North Sea-Baltic to include the core sections in Northern Finland up to the Bothnian Gulf. Europaforum Northern Sweden also looks forward with optimism to the clarification of the view of the Swedish government on this issue.

² The Arctic Triangle would be comprised of the core network sections in northern Sweden, and northern Finland and northern Norway, as identified by the CEF as “Other parts of the Core Network”.

³ Letter by the Norwegian government submitted to Coordinator Pat Cox during his visit to Kiruna, June 1, 2016.



- *European Commission proposal for transport infrastructure in the Arctic*
The Joint Communication on the Arctic⁴ comprises an integrated policy on Arctic matters for the European Union and a coherent framework for EU action and funding programmes. The Joint Communication points out the most important core and comprehensive network ports in the European Arctic i.e. Luleå, Kemi and Oulu, (and also Narvik and Hammerfest in the "Indicative extension of the TEN-T Network to third countries") which comprise part of TEN-T and form important interlinks between maritime and land transport. The Joint Communication also points out the land-based connections and highlights the opportunities to enhance both the modal shift and the capacity for rail transport between Narvik (NO), the Bothnian Corridor (SE, FI) - both for freight and passengers - to be achieved through cooperation between the EU institutions, Member States, third countries and industry. The Joint Communication proposes that in order to obtain the optimal use of the network, a coordinated financing strategy should be considered.

In view of the transport links mentioned in the Joint Communication on the Arctic, DG MOVE noted that following a request by Finland and Sweden it will consider an extension of the Scandinavian-Mediterranean corridor in order to connect the northern regions to the Core Network Corridors. In line with such a request the Member States should consider a coordinated financing strategy:

“The TEN-T policy provides tools for common transport infrastructure planning and investment. The Core Network Corridors are an instrument to facilitate the coordinated implementation of infrastructure, among others. A potential request by Finland and Sweden to extend the Scandinavian-Mediterranean as well as the North Sea-Baltic Corridor to include the Bothnian Gulf could be considered positively by the Commission. This extension could be implemented within the next CEF Regulation as of 2020, as the concerned infrastructures are identified on the core TEN-T network. In addition, the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor could also include a connection to the port of Narvik in Norway. “

⁴ “The Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - An integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic” (JOIN(2016) 21 final, adopted by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on 27/04/2016).



- *The Second Work Plan of the European Coordinator Pat Cox for Scan-Med*⁵
“The Second Work Plan of the European Coordinator Pat Cox for Scan-Med”, adopted in December 2016, has been officially approved by all 8 Member States concerned. In recommendations and outlooks, the Work Plan outlines that “the current corridor alignment has been clearly defined. However, taking into account geopolitical developments, a future extension of the corridor cannot be excluded. In particular in view of forming a strategic gateway to the Arctic region, connecting the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor with the North Sea-Baltic Corridor at the border between Finland and Sweden through the so-called Bothnian extension should be taken into consideration.”

II. EFNS VIEWS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CEF SO FAR

The Core Network Corridor as a concept is an important tool for developing a seamless and multimodal trans-European transport system.

Relevance:

- The common EU transport policy as defined in TEN-T and in the CEF-financial mechanism comprises a crucial contribution towards developing the effectiveness of the EU Member States in creating sustainable growth along the Juncker Commission objectives related to the priorities “Internal market” and “Jobs, growth and investment”. The presence of the EU via the CEF in the regions contributes to the vitalization of cohesion policy and to the enhancement of coherence and the active participation of EU regions. This implies that the EU as a phenomenon becomes closer to institutions, industries, and citizens. The CEF is in our view an important tool and a relevant factor for both national and regional development.

EU-added value:

- We have positive experiences of the implementation of the CEF-Transport in our region, where important parts of our transport system are included in the core network system as “Other parts of the Core network”. Important projects, both core and comprehensive, have been able to take advantage of CEF and TEN-T funding, e.g. Iron Ore Line, Port of Luleå, North Bothnia Line, Midway Alignment of the Bothnian Corridor, New East Coast Line and the MidNordic Corridor. The CEF-support has to a great extent accelerated the implementation of these priority projects and has functioned as a catalyst to bring about a faster start of project implementation than would have been possible otherwise.

⁵ Scandinavian-Mediterranean The Second Work Plan of the European Coordinator Pat Cox (December 2016)



Effectiveness:

- An important aspect of the TEN-T transport policy and the CEF is the establishment of the TEN-T Core Network Corridors and the horizontal corridor MoS. The Corridors are essential to highlight that the development of the transport system both in regard to developing the necessary infrastructure and also as crucial to integrating the transport system via seamless transportation, reducing e.g. travel time, border crossing time, and the administrative burden particularly on railways.

The Core Network Corridors comprise in this respect a very important part of the development of the EU transport system as a whole.

Adopted at Europaforum Northern Sweden XXIII, Skellefteå, 23/02/2017

Erik Bergkvist (S) chairman of Europaforum Northern Sweden

Ewa-May Karlsson (C) Region Västerbotten

Harriet Classon (S) Region Västerbotten

Robert Uitto (S) Region Jämtland Härjedalen

Gunnar Hjelm (M) Region Jämtland Härjedalen

Thomas Andersson (C) Region Jämtland Härjedalen

Helena Öhlund (S) Norrbottens Kommuner

Anders Josefsson (M) Norrbottens Kommuner

Maria Stenberg (S) Region Norrbotten

Erik Lövgren (S) Landstinget Västernorrland

Peder Björk (S) Kommunförbundet Västernorrland

Anders Gäfvert (M) Kommunförbundet Västernorrland