SESSION 1 – PLANNING INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

CONTRIBUTION

“PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF INTEGRATION OF THE BALTIC REGION IN TRANSPORT NETWORKS OF EUROPE”

BY

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Currently two transport corridors are defined in the new EU member states:

1. Crete (Helsinki) or Pan-European transport network that was established by Pan-European transport conference in Crete in 1994, it was supplemented in Helsinki in 1997;

2. TEN – Trans-European transport network – transport corridors of EU member states.

Apart from the mentioned there are also transport corridors that connect Europe with Asia, E-road network, transport corridors defined by railway organizations and etc.

In Latvia TEN corridors are based on the current and envisaged in near future transport flows, where transit transport in East-West direction from Russia and other CIS countries to ports is dominating.

Railway cargo traffic intensity in Latvia

![Railway map]

It is a significant freight flow – approximately 50 M tons a year. East-West railway corridor, as well as the roads from Eastern border in the direction to ports are of priority for investments. The largest share from the resources envisaged for transport infrastructure development including EU financial aid is invested yearly in their development.

Russia has defined its international transport corridor network as well. In the western part of Russia it is based on Pan-European transport network. Unfortunately, despite of the current transport flows, transit corridors that lead through Latvian and Estonian ports do not appear on this map, although Ventspils and Tallinn ports in the
aspect of cargo handling amount are between the first Baltic Sea ports, serving mainly export freight from Russia.

The reason is that TEN transport network in EU countries is more dense that pan-European or Russian international transport corridor network, therefore on the borders not everywhere there are connecting elements to these networks, as it is in our case.

European Commission is working actively on the revision of TEN guidelines, and I think that the revision of transport networks has to be made in larger scale, not only in EU scale. Since establishment of Pan-European corridor in 1994 almost 10 years have passed. Over this time commercial relations have become more stable and the transport volume between Western and Eastern Europe parts has increased several times. Therefore today we have to talk about one united transport network in the whole Europe and it is necessary to find a solution for the problem that TEN network does not have continuation on Eastern border. This problem should be dealt with not only in the framework of bilateral inter-state relationship but also in an organization like ECMT.

The solution could be relatively simple – it is necessary to put the current freight and passenger flow as well as the envisaged flows in the future on the map and compare them with the current corridor network. A similar study by the order of European Commission is executed by the company NEA Transport Research and Training BV and there are also some preliminary results, but again – that covers only the current and new EU member states but not all continent, and the results are too general. I am of the opinion that similar studies exists in Russia as well, and also in other non-EU countries. Therefore it would be reasonable to summarize the results of such studies or, if necessary, to launch a new study in the framework of ECMT.
After the examination of the results of studies as a possible solution could be:

1) establishment of the basic (backbone) network that would be based on the current Pan-European transport corridors, changing or supplementing it slightly if necessary;

2) establishment of secondary network that could coincide with TEN in EU countries and would ensure connection to TEN network elements, as well as connections to Pan-European transport network outside the EU borders.

Practically that would be something similar to continuation of the TINA process in the eastern direction. The mentioned approach – to establish basic network and secondary network – corresponds as well with the revision process of TEN-T guidelines launched by EU, the aim of which is to identify the main transport corridors in TEN-T network.

There are two more aspects to be taken into account when establishing the transport corridor network – development of environmentally friendly transport modes and connection of peripheral regions. In the case of Baltic States it is possible to achieve two aims by one measure because particularly the development of environmentally friendly transport modes – ferry transport and railway - will ensure integration of Baltic States into the common economic zone of the Europe. It is not a secret that the roads in Poland are overloaded and do not meet the requirements of the increasing demand for transit traffic; therefore it is necessary to find alternatives.

We are pleased that EC has approved both “Motorways of the Sea” project and “Rail Baltica” for the priority project list.
Currently there is no direct railway traffic between Baltic States and Western Europe mainly due to inadequate railway infrastructure. Therefore we have launched the work on Rail Baltica project, the aim of which is to develop adequate to current demands railway traffic on the route Tallin-Riga-Kaunas-Warsaw-Berlin. This project is complicated and expensive therefore as a first step the study for the whole line is needed and Ministers of Transport of all involved countries agreed about such study this summer. If we are looking for long-term solution, it is obvious that standard width gauge for whole line is the best solution for the insurance of effective passenger ad cargo transportation. At the same time East-West direction will also remain as a priority and interconnection of both networks has to be insured.