

## The possible extension of the TEN-T Core Network Corridors to the northern Scandinavia<sup>1</sup>

Since 2014 the Bothnian Corridor at both side of the Bothnian Gulf has been successfully included in the TEN-T Core Network, because of its importance for the industry in northern Sweden and Finland and for the rest of Europe. Considerable amount of the goods generated in these regions is transported to central and southern Europe, via the Bothnian Corridor and further south in either of the Core Network Corridors. South of Sweden and Finland is included in the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor and the Helsinki region is also connected to the North Sea-Baltic Corridor.

In connection to the mid-term evaluation of the Connecting Europe Facility, a possible extension of these two core network corridors, to embrace the Bothnian Corridor up to the Swedish-Finnish border in Haparanda/Tornio has been raised nationally and in different European fora.

The European Coordinator for the Scan-Med Corridor, Mr Pat Cox, says in the Second Work Plan (p.42): *“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.”*

In the same way the European Coordinator, Catherine Trautmann, supports the extension in the Second Workplan for the North Sea-Baltic Corridor (p 51): *“I will support the so-called Bothnian extension of the North Sea-Baltic Corridor which would make the Corridor join the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor at the border between Finland and Sweden and help in tapping the potential of the Northern Dimension in transport and logistics.”*

### The Logic of inclusion of the Bothnian Corridor in the Core Network Corridors

- The corridors represent the most important transport routes with the highest European added value. In many studies the very high European value of the Bothnian Corridor in both Finland and Sweden has been proven, due to the vast amount of natural resources in the region.
- The requirements and objectives for the infrastructure are already defined in the TEN-T Regulation (EU/1315/2013) while the Connecting Europe Facility regulation (EU/1316/2013) provides instruments for the realisation of the goals. This will not change with the extension.
- Already in this programme period the Bothnian Corridor in Sweden and Finland is, for the railways, included in the CEF Regulation Annex I.3 as Other sections in the Core Network, which provides somewhat better opportunities for CEF co-funding than the rest of the core network. Though the highest priority is at the Core Network Corridors, and especially their “Pre-Identified Sections”.
- The priority in Annex I.3 cannot be taken for sure in the next programming period, as the available resources for the CEF programme are expected to decline.

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<sup>1</sup> This document is a summary of a report as of 12/02/2017 from Mr Helmut Adelsberger, former Senior Advisor to the European Commission, DG MOVE, who had an active role in development of the planning methodology for the Core Network and the Core Network Corridors.

- The corridors are continuously monitored and evaluated against the set goals for the corridors for all modes of transport. Sweden and Finland already participate in this for the parts of the corridors in the southern part of each country.
- For Sweden, the Scan-Med Corridor sections are included in the Rail Freight Corridor co-operation, which has established a functional coordination of the operations of the railways in the corridor, including one-stop shop for transport buyers and operators, for facilitating increased modal shift from road to rail. The core railways in northern Sweden is not included in this, even though managed by the same authority, Trafikverket.
- The TEN-T Core Network Corridors, has much higher level of visibility, than the rest of the rather large core network., and is therefore in focus when the use of resources in CEF, EFSI and other funding instruments are planned. It is envisaged that in the next CEF regulation the focus on the core network corridors will be even more strengthened.
- The corridors higher visibility, and co-funding possibilities, will also promote the active development of intermodal systems and sustainable transport solutions, by market actors in northern Scandinavia.

## Pros and cons with the extension

The multimodal infrastructure in the Bothnian Corridor is already since 2014 included in the TEN-T Core network and the requirements for the member states to develop the infrastructure and remove bottlenecks are already valid. The requirements will not be higher in the corridor, but the northern infrastructure will be included in the transnational coordination, provided by the European Coordinators. However, in the same way as today the development will be based on national and regional transport plans, and the inclusion in the corridors will not generate any additional legal obligations.

The CEF instrument provides access to EU co-funding for improvements of the infrastructure, especially for rail, ports and cross-border infrastructure. In the current period the Bothnian Corridor is included in CEF Annex I.3 Other Sections on the Core Network, which is an intermediary priority, which makes the funding possibilities somewhat higher than the rest of the core and comprehensive networks. There is no guarantee at all, that this intermediary list of sections will remain in the next period. Especially since it is expected that the CEF budget will be lower in the next programming period, due to budget deficits in many member states and the risk of UK leaving the EU. There is already today a clear focus on the core network corridors in the CEF Calls.

The highest priority for funding have the "pre-identified sections" listed under each corridor in the CEF Annex I.2. These are recognised projects and sections already prioritized in national plans. For the Bothnian Corridor it is obvious that the Iron Ore Line, Norrbothnia Line and East-Coast Line have a planning status well suited for inclusion as pre-identified sections.

It is difficult to see any negative consequences of the proposed extension of the core network corridors. The TEN-T and CEF instruments have successfully been used for the improvements of sections of the Bothnian Corridor since 2003, in both Sweden and Finland (see enclosed annex with projects funded by TEN-T and CEF) The extension will secure that this possibility remains also in the future.