

*Foresight debates officially launched*

# TransBaltic debuts in the conference



Photo: TransBaltic

**T**he first official TransBaltic Conference took place on March 17-18 in St. Gertrud Conference Centre in Sweden's Malmö. It was arranged in co-operation with Swedish Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, and two other transnational territorial integration projects: East West Transport Corridor II and Scandria. The role of the host was fulfilled by Pia Kinhult, representing the Swedish Region Skåne, leading partner in the project. The meeting was held under the motto: The new geography of freight flows in the Baltic Sea Region.

More than one hundred guests attended, among them project partners, many independent researchers and representatives of the transport industry in the region. The conference was divided into two topical areas: day one was wholly dedicated to the concept of Green

Corridors concept, and how feasible it would be to implement the idea in the Baltic Region, while the second day's focus was on the development of alternative traffic flow routes connecting the region with Far-Eastern markets, chief among them North/Arctic Passage and Trans-Siberian/Trans-Asian Railway.

Each day's agenda included a series of presentations by a selection of international industry experts, which was then followed by foresight discussion panels. In keeping with the organizers' aim to make the conference interactive, the panels proved particularly engaging – participants were given specific problems to tackle while divided into separate tables, which resulted in grouping of experts from various fields of the industry. At the end of the day, each team's conclusions would be presented before the whole auditorium and compared with those of other groups.

## From brown and grey to green

On the first day the participants were asked to try and create a development scenario for Baltic transport until the year 2030, which would incorporate the ideas of green corridors. The proper introduction to the subject matter was delivered by experts presenting the results of their research results as well as their own assessments of potential future developments, which included such factors as demographic shifts (overall ageing of the European population), ongoing technological progress, changes in the geopolitical landscape and dynamic trends in global trade and consumer behaviour.

The conclusions drawn from the discussion by the separate groups were diverse. There were different points of view at play when the participants pondered the evolution of the future transport demand or the extent in which

# circuit

green technologies will be introduced in transport industry. One of the deciding factors, it was asserted, would be the changes in the transport consumers' motivations, who can either become more and more ecology-minded or driven by purely economic concerns.

## Future in the North

The second day's foresight debate was concerned with the perspectives for the Arctic passage scenario, which could enable a new maritime route connecting Europe and Asia.

The presentations by the conference guests paved the way for the discussion panel by touching upon numerous related issues. There was analysis of climate change patterns, as well as breakdown of conflicting interests and aims in the use of ice-free Arctic areas (transport vs. energy resources mining). Panelists also addressed the need for technological upgrades such as introducing large ice-class vessels, and last but not least, the potential impact that the new route might have on the functioning of transport system in the Baltic. Discussion participants in turn offered a rather critical view

of the concept, pointing to the limited usability of the northern passage, stemming from the relatively short ice-free period in the area. Finally, territorial conflicts, and high cost of adapting the passage for transport needs were also among the arguments against putting too much trust in this scenario.

Irrespective of the two ideas discussed in detail, during both discussion panels the participants put much emphasis on the difficulties in making reliable forecasts in relation to European cargo traffic changes – a lesson that we have all been learning since mid-2008. At the same time, there seems to be a consensus as for the necessity of offering creative analysis of future developments, which can be a significant contribution in making the transport market and the economy in general more stable and predictable. ■

*Maciej Matczak*

Experts' presentations, photographs and other conference materials are available at [www.transbaltic.eu](http://www.transbaltic.eu).



Photo: TransBaltic

## Green Corridors: a close-up

Green Transport Corridors is a concept whose fundamentals were first formulated in Logistics Action Plan 2007. The idea is for the transport corridors to form a coherent, multibranching cargo transit system while making full use of modern, advanced technologies and hence promoting efficient and environmentally-friendly transport model.

TransBaltic is an official partner in the initiative since November 2009. The formal agreement's was also signed by East West Transport Corridor II, Scandria and Swedish Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications.

The assumptions of the Green Corridors include:

- taking advantage of ecological transport alternatives, including transport branches with low external costs, promotion of co-modality; limitation and optimization of transport demands;
- utilization of green technologies within particular transportation legs, e.g. electrification of railway, development of inland terminals located along the corridors, use of clean energy sources;
- use of efficient transport solutions, e.g. economy of scale, implementation of interoperability of national transport systems, use of cabotage and avoiding empty courses thanks to the use of Intelligent Transport Systems;
- keeping high safety standards thanks to monitoring systems, improvement of accident-free infrastructure, standardization of infrastructure and vehicle equipment, removing language barriers, development of resting facilities for drivers;
- providing advantageous transit time within the corridors thanks to the use of friendly customs procedures and coordinated cargo inspection system, as well as offering attractive rail routes and keeping low levels of congestion in roads and at cargo handling spots.

The implementation of the presented concept requires detailed analysis of the problem, assessment of opportunities and threats as well as defining the potential "corridors" able to meet all the demands. To this end, a number of development projects are being underway, which are co-funded by the EU, among them TransBaltic, as well as others: So-NorA, Scandic, East West Transport Corridor II and SuperGreen.

# Green or arctic?

*Interview with Wiktor Szydarowski, TransBaltic project leader*



Photo: TransBaltic

**After the conference in Malmö, we ask the TransBaltic project leader about the main clashes of the debate and his own impressions.**

■ *How do you feel about the conference? Are you satisfied with the attendance and the outcomes of the discussions?*

I believe that the conference met the expectations of both the project team and the gathered representatives of the administration, research sector and businesses. It is worth mentioning that the overwhelming majority of the respondents to our post-conference survey gave credit to the quality of presentations and debates. Also, over 70% of the surveyed participants claimed they had learned something new as a result of our event.

■ *You have decided to use a very interesting method of conducting the debate – by dividing participants into separate groups. Do you plan to use a similar method in the upcoming debates as well?*

Our ambition has always been to put a distinct footprint on TransBaltic actions. We therefore aspire to connect, inspire and show new horizons with regard to the transport development processes in the Baltic Sea region, which, in agreement with the TransBaltic motto – were presented at the conference. The foresight process on new geography of freight flows inaugurated in Malmö follows such reasoning and is a pioneering act in the scale of the whole macroregion. It requires vivid interaction among participants, which is well enabled by the round table seating. We are going to continue with that scheme for the upcoming debates.

■ *What was the general response to the discussed future traffic scenarios? Which of them, Green or Arctic, proved more inviting to the conference participants?*

Both scenarios stimulate imagination and provoke reactions as to the extent to which they are probable or unfeasible in the next 20 years. We have gathered an impressive amount of comments that will help us profile the consecutive events in four other locations around the Baltic Sea. An important finding is, however, that the Northeast Passage alone will not become a serious alternative to the traditional sea routes and may only complement them in the ice-free navigational season. That's why we intend to broaden the scope of the Arctic scenario to include all essential intercontinental freight routes and in that way to make this scenario more representable for the whole Baltic Sea region. We have christened it as a 'Gateway scenario'. Such a change follows the logic of a foresight process, which – as we are fully aware – may lead us to an utterly different set of scenarios at the very end of the debates.

■ *What are your expectations towards the upcoming events? Is there much interest in the debates?*

The foresight debates are an unprecedented experiment in the history of transport development initiatives in the Baltic Sea region, to a certain extent inspired by the EU transport foresight projects (e.g. 'TRANSvisions' or 'FREIGHTVISION') and the Baltic Development Forum Round Table on Intelligent Transport and Infrastructure (which in 2005 presented private sector priorities for transport development in the Baltic Sea region). We count on having 30-50 individuals in each debate representing public and private stakeholders from the given part of the Region. However, bearing in mind certain time and accessibility constraints for attending such events by all interested actors, we plan to complement the debates with an online discussion forum. It will be fuelled by a questionnaire with key development issues resulting from the debates, which will be distributed to all relevant transport and regional development organizations in the Baltic Sea region. Also, we do not exclude carrying out another round of foresight debates (about finding the right solutions to achieve the optimum development path) in early 2011. In such a case we are going to visit countries and areas not covered by the present scheme of the foresight debates.

■ *The final in the current series of the foresight debates will take place in St. Petersburg. Do you think it is particularly important to add a Russian perspective to the discussion?*

We anticipate much from the St. Petersburg debate, which is to show the perception of transport development tendencies in the BSR by representatives of North-West Russia. This particular area, because of constraints in obtaining EU funding for joint transnational projects with the counterparts from the Member States, needs to be well integrated in the foresight process. We will do our utmost to invite participants that do not only come from the city and the surrounding region but also from more peripheral areas. It will be extremely interesting to get to know the views of North-West Russian stakeholders on such hot issues as the greening of transport or investing in container terminals on the Arctic Sea shores.

*Adam Olesiejuk*

As the official partner of *TransBaltic*, *Baltic Transport Journal* supports the project in seeking active participation of the private sector of the TFL industry in the Baltic Sea Region. Therefore, we are looking forward to our readers' personal opinions and expectations towards the future transport system in the BSR. We hope that your knowledge and experience will help create incentives for an intelligent multimodal transport system in our region.

If you want to help TransBaltic with your ideas, kindly fill in the questionnaire below and send it back to us:

by mail: **Baltic Press, ul. Pułaskiego 8, 81-368 Gdynia, Poland**

by fax: **+48(0) 58 621 69 66**

You can also send your ideas by e-mail to [editorial@baltic-press.com](mailto:editorial@baltic-press.com).

## TRANSBALTIC NETWORKING GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE: MARCH-APRIL 2010

First & second name*:	
Position*:	
Company/organization*:	
E-mail*:	
Telephone/mobile*:	
Postal address*:	
Country:	
TFL sector	

*\* If you wish to stay anonymous, please do not fill in your personal data. Just mark the country and TFL sector you are active in.*

### 1. What are today's main bottlenecks in the Baltic region transport system in your sector?

### 2. What infrastructure projects should be prioritized to help your sector?

### 3. What legislation should be changed/improved or accelerated to help your sector?