

Dear partners of the TransBaltic Projects, dear friends, ladies and gentlemen,

Your Final Conference marks the closing point of a very fruitful work, which you have been doing, since 2009, for the development of an efficient, sustainable transport system in the Baltic Sea Region and beyond. The Commission welcomes and thanks you for these efforts, which have been fully in line with main EU objectives as laid down in the Lisbon Treaty and, for transport in particular, in the White Paper of March 2011.

Within the same system of objectives, i.e. enhancing internal market, competitiveness, strengthening cohesion, supporting employment and growth, protecting the environment and contributing to de-carbonisation, the Commission has adopted, on 19 October 2011, its Proposal for the future Regulation on the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T).

The base of this Regulation is a multimodal dual layer concept which consists of a relatively dense "comprehensive network" and, as a subset thereof, a "core network" of the strategically most important nodes and links. While the "comprehensive network" has been established "bottom-up" by the Member States, however following certain general planning principles, the "core network" was determined "top-down" by the Commission, applying the criteria of a planning methodology developed for this purpose, with the input from six expert groups. (In this context, reference should be made to their final report (p.16), where group no.1 stated that "Improving accessibility of peripheral regions does not necessarily mean the construction of transport infrastructure within those areas but rather towards them, thus not excluding measures in central regions of the Union.")

Through the most important seaports and airports, as well as the relevant border crossing points to neighbouring countries the TEN-T will be open to the neighbourhood and the rest of the world, both for passengers and for freight. This will help the EU to maintain and to enhance its strong position in the global economy and trade.

Finally, exploitation of innovative technologies for traffic information and management, as well as for supply of alternative, low-carbon fuels and electricity, in particular on the "core network", shall be the infrastructural base of an efficient and sustainable use of the infrastructure, as a building block of a really "green" transport system.

In parallel to its Proposal for the future TEN-T, the Commission elaborated a Proposal for the "Connecting Europe Facility" (CEF), the funding and implementation tool for the TEN-T, with a proposed volume of 31,7 billion Euro earmarked for transport infrastructure. Included in this paper, multimodal "core network corridors" are foreseen as an instrument for a better coordinated implementation of the "core network", mainly of its cross-border sections. These corridors will also be a focus of pilot applications of these new technologies and the infrastructural base for efficient and sustainable operation, according to the "green corridor" concept. The final vision, however, not least of the mentioned White Paper, is a really "green" transport system, comprising long distance, regional and local traffic, combining all modes of transport and taking advantage of the most advanced technologies, for passengers and freight.

EU funds will contribute to the implementation of a high-quality transport infrastructure, spanning the entire EU and interconnected with its neighbourhood and the rest of the world as well as enabling sustainable, low-carbon operation. This will enhance the competitiveness of Europe, even in peripheral regions, and thus contribute to creating sustainable jobs throughout all EU Member States.

For the last three years, the TransBaltic project has played a key role in this field, together and coordinated with other institutions and platforms for cooperation, as the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics. It is also your merit that TransBaltic has become an umbrella for a number of transport and logistics related projects and activities in the Baltic Sea Region and contributed so actively to the development and maturity of the "green corridor concept", setting an example for EU transport policy.

The coming Final Conference of the TransBaltic Project is an opportunity to thank you for your valuable efforts, which will contribute to a relevant extent to achieving our common policy goals. Transbaltic has been a relevant step, showing the further path both towards regional development by improving accessibility and strengthened cohesion and towards higher efficiency and sustainability of transport and logistics.

Finally, the Commission also thanks the Cypriot Presidency for hosting this meeting, thus underlining the European dimension of the results of the project.

With best regards,
Helmut Adelsberger

Policy Officer
European Commission
DG MOVE, Unit B.1 Trans-European Transport Networks
Rue Demot 28, 1040 Brussels,
Tel: +32-2-29-61341
helmut.adelsberger@ec.europa.eu