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**Consultation of «Streamlining the implementation of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)».**

**-Contributions and answers to the submitted questionnaire from the EU Commission**

**1. Background**

The Ministry of Transport has encouraged the involved Norwegian actors/regions to take part in the Consultation of «Streamlining the implementation of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)». Norway participate in TEN-T as part of the European Economic Agreement (EEA) and involves particularly the bordering regions between Norway and Sweden. These regions have for the last 10-20 years been especially concerned about the poor state of the cross border rail connections. Building of the national railway system is an important task for the national transport authority. This has meant that the cross border rail links have not been prioritized sufficiently between the two countries.

The submitted consultation questionnaire the EU Commission seems to a large extent to have been designed for actors/regions that has previously been involved and have experience with EUs TEN-T projects. This is not the case for the Norwegian regions and their cross border organizations. This means that many of the questions seems not relevant, bearing in mind the limited experience they have attained up to now. The answers to the questions in the questionnaire is however submitted and shown in the enclosed Appendix. There are ,however, some important issues/points in the questionnaire that ought to be elaborated more, despite the limited experience the regions have had up to now with TEN-T. These are described below.

**2.Comments to Permitting procedures/State aid/Possible solutions(Questions 12-20)**

Norway participates, as described above , in the TEN-TNetwork as part of the European Economic Agreement (EEA). An important issue of the agreement is the aim to have an efficient and environmental sustainable transport corridor between the capitals Oslo-Stockholm and Copenhagen ( Nordic Triangle).This is very important for the regional development in both Scandinavia and EU. The aim here is that railways should be the backbone of the future Nordic transport system.

With reference to the current TEN-T guidelines there is a need to clarify and improve the cooperation and involvement between the National Transport Authorities and the Regional Authorities. Both EU and the National Transport Authorities in Norway and Sweden have been very passive in involving the neighbouring counties at the Norwegian and Swedish border in a constructive and clarifying dialogue about the advantages and opportunities for the involved regions in the TEN-T Network to improve this cross border rail connection between the two countries. EU has with regard to present procedures primarily communicated with the National Transport Authorities. EU should therefore in its TEN-T guidelines ask more clearly the National Transport Authorities to involve the relevant regions at an early stage in the process. This means information about the required process for proposing a project and information about the available administrative and technical support that EU can supply etc.

Further, EU should ask the national transport authorities to give a status report of TEN-T project (s) in the current National Transport Plan in Norway and Sweden. The National Transport Authorities

 2 should also arrange annual meetings to clarify the status and progress for the relevant TEN-T projects. This ought to be incorporated in the revised TEN-T guidelines.

**3.Comments to EUs competence and assistance in the TEN-T work. (Questions 37-39).**

EU has attained a considerable knowledge/competence and experience with regard to the planning and involvement of the building of different transport projects. This applies especially to technical and wider economic benefit assessments etc.

Many of the involved regions in the cross border railway projects have started to analyze how different financial- and organizational solutions can be relevant in order to build their project. In this context the assembled knowledge/competence and experience in EU would be of great benefit for the clarification and design of relevant infrastructure projects, This applies also to the clarification of possible of financial support/contribution from EU to the planning and building cost. EU should also in the TEN-T guidelines also suggest how the National Transport Authorities together with the relevant Regions can incorporate this aspect in a appropriate/beneficial manner.

**4.The revision of future TEN-T Area/Transport corridors**

Norway participates to day in the TEN-TNetwork as part of the European Economic Agreement (EEA). The improvement of the transport corridor between the capitals Oslo-Stockholm and Copenhagen ( Nordic Triangle), is very important for the regional development in both Scandinavia and EU. However, the current TEN-T Network has omitted the Northern leg of Nordic Triangle of between Oslo and Stockholm in the prioritized “Core Network” which is eligible to special financial support (CEF funding). This is also very unfortunate, not only for the development of the Nordic Triangle , but also for the development of the adjacent main transport infrastructure (Comprehensive network) in the Northern part of Nordic countries. In the planned future revision (2021) of the TEN-T Network one should include the whole of Nordic Triangle, and also extend the core corridors to include East-West transport routes to the main harbours /industrial locations in the Northern part of the Nordic countries/Northern Europe. Hence, EU should therefore invite/ask the Nordic countries to start a process in order to clarify the possible alternative extensions to the present “Core Network” in TEN-T Network.

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