

High Level Meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA)

14 October 2021

Pentti Malinen
Region mayor
Kainuu region, Finland

DEVELOPING OF THE BARENTS TRANSPORT COOPERATION – REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Good afternoon!

The Barents Regional Council has adopted **The Barents Program 2019 –2023**. The Barents Program is the framework for the inter-regional Barents cooperation. The overall objective of the Barents Program is “to generate social and economic growth through a knowledge driven economy and the sustainable development of the region’s natural and human resources”. Prioritized 4 areas for programme period include “*Infrastructure, transport and communication*”. (See slide 1)

The Regional Working Group of Transport and Logistics (RWGTL) under the Kainuu chairmanship has been active. By running several **joint projects** created unique base of knowledge on the situation and challenges of transport, logistics and accessibility of the all Barents area. This information has been important both for region-state dialog in each country and for joint interregional and state-level planning.

One of the first activities of the RWGTL has been the "Barents Freeway" project aimed at preparing a common **Regional Transport Plan for the Barents Region**. The work is based on studies made during the project and the national transport strategies. The **Joint Barents Transport Plan** (JBTP) has been made in close cooperation with BEATA and Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL).

As part of national and crossborder transport systems **accessibility of all Barents regions** shall be developed to be sustainable, inclusive and efficient. But keeping in mind the special circumstances with very long distances, sparse population but at the same time importance of vast local resources, industry and tourism. The regions need good external links to world markets. To achieve this *it is important to promote the all modes of transport and traffic; and further more transport modes are needed to link closely together.* (See slide 2)

At the moment regions and states are facing new challenges: recovering after the covid19 pandemic and global challenge to reduce CO2 emissions and succeed in green transition with practical and fair way.

Under Regional WG umbrella Regional Council of Kainuu is leading a project dealing with the **Barents Region Transport and Logistics (BRTL)**, and another project called **Northern Axis – Barents Link (NABL)**, which both are funded by CBC Kolarctic Programme. The objective of the first project is to put the state level multilateral joint strategy document "Joint Barents Transport Plan" in practice on the regional level. The second project aims to identify the main bottlenecks of the east-west transport corridor and contribute to its harmonization. I understand these projects as valuable start for looking Barents region from the point of our future challenges. First case studies are already seen on the project web-pages.

As an example of the fact that transition towards **green transport** is already in our regions, I can show how in our region, Kainuu, has got a new opportunity to support the transition by producing high-value minerals needed in electric car batteries. Electrification and other innovative technologies are in key role in stimulate the environmentally friendly transition. In addition there is a need for **intelligent transport systems**, networks of gas stations and charging infrastructure in the whole Barents area. (Slide 3)

Dear Barents friends,

I hope that on-going Barents Transport Cooperation will be strengthened to meet the new challenges in fruitful co-operation between states and regions of Barents area. I welcome the new Barents Financial mechanism to stimulate the cooperation in the next years. I still emphasize the possibilities for our co-operation created by EU part-funded cross-border programmes (Kolarctic and Karelia) and more close dialog with EU.

Thank you for your attention!

More information:

[Regional Council of Kainuu - Kainuun liitto](#)

[Barents Region Transport and Logistics \(BRTL\) - Kainuun liitto](#)

Northern Axis – Barents Link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiYHEqfzstU> (Webinar 1.9.2021 in Russian)

<https://kainuunliitto.fi/en/roads-small-aviation-and-infrastructure-development-discussed-at-nabl-webinar/> (in English)