

The High Level Meeting of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics

Oslo, 1 December 2015

AGREED CONCLUSIONS

The High Level Meeting (HLM) of the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL) convened in Oslo, on 1 December 2015, under the chairmanship of Norway.

1. Prolongation of the Agreement on the NDPTL Secretariat

- Reaffirming all provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding setting out the modalities of establishing the NDPTL, signed in Naples on 21 October 2009 (MoU), and the Joint Declaration of Intent setting out the continuation of the cooperation within the NDPTL;
- Recalling the conclusions of the HLM in Oslo on 21 November 2012 regarding the prolongation of the agreements needed for the efficient work within the frames of the NDPTL;
- Confirming the conclusions of the NDPTL HLM in Moscow on 3 December 2014;

The NDPTL HLM encourages the Steering Committee (SC) to proceed further with the work on the prolongation of the Agreement on the NDPTL Secretariat concluded between the partner countries and the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) for the same period as the NDPTL Memorandum of Understanding.

The HLM encourages the Steering Committee (SC) to cooperate with the Nordic Investment Bank on reaching the possible solutions ensuring sustainable and continuous activities of the NDPTL Secretariat as well as providing adequate funding for these purposes.

2. NDPTL Regional Network

- Recalling the conclusions of the HLM held in Oslo in 2012 on the NDPTL Regional Network being the basis for the concrete work conducted by the Partnership, providing the general priority guidelines for the NDPTL activities;
- Taking into account the conclusions of the HLM held in Brussels in 2013 instructing the SC to further develop the NDPTL Regional Network and adopt changes if necessary, in particular to take into account changes in the national and international transport networks in the Northern Dimension Area;
- Following the statement of the HLM in Moscow on 23 November 2011, welcoming the efforts made to define the NDPTL Network and requesting the SC to identify projects having a high cross-regional added value and reflecting the parties' interests in a balanced way;
- In order to foster synergies and enhance cooperation with other initiatives active in the Northern Dimension region;
- Underlining the importance of collaboration with the four Regional Councils (AC, BEAC, CBSS, NCM) and welcoming actions already undertaken by them;
- Emphasising the practical nature of the NDPTL and strong orientation on the work with concrete projects, and stressing the importance of the tools facilitating this work;

The HLM welcomes the intention of the NDPTL SC to assess possible amendments to the NDPTL Regional Network.

The HLM encourages the SC to work closely on this matter with the NDPTL Working Group on transport and logistics to ensure that the NDPTL Regional Network reflects challenges and potential of the transport systems of the Northern Dimension region.

3. NDPTL Support Fund

- Recalling the main and specific goals of the Partnership;
- Underlining the importance of the practical nature of the Partnership;
- Welcoming the activities of the Support Fund as a key instrument for conducting the practical work within the scope of the NDPTL activity;

The HLM emphasises that project activity is one of the main priorities of the NDPTL's work and encourages Partners to actively promote this work in their countries.

The HLM underlines that the Fund is to serve the fulfilment of the main and specific goals of the Partnership and recognises that it plays an essential role in providing the financial basis and means

for accelerating the implementation, preparation and/or monitoring of transport and logistics projects.

The HLM welcomes the decisions of the Assembly of Donors from the last two years supporting seven projects from Finland, Russia, Poland, Lithuania and Sweden; as well as the last decision of the Donors to support three projects from Belarus, Norway and Sweden. This activity demonstrates the tangible results of the Partnership, serves the development of the transport systems of the Northern Dimension region and encourages future efforts in this direction.

The HLM expresses its gratitude to the partners who have financially supported the Fund.

The HLM underlines the importance of securing sufficient financial resources to enable the Fund to serve its purpose.

The HLM encourages the NDPTL partners to identify financial resources to allocate to the NDPTL Fund and to support of the NDPTL projects.

4. Challenges for coming years

- Recalling the achievements made by the NDPTL, particularly the establishment of a structure, both legal and political, for enhanced cooperation with a view to developing more efficient cross-border transport;
- Expressing its gratitude for the work laid down by the SC and the Secretariat and for their achievements so far;
- Underlining the importance of ensuring that the NDPTL remains relevant for the stakeholders;
- Recalling the concerns regarding the financial constraints currently experienced by the NDPTL Secretariat and the NDPTL Support Fund, which need to be resolved if NDPTL is to function in keeping with the bold ambitions of the Northern Dimension;

The HLM calls on the SC to intensify its work on improving the financial situation of the NDPTL Secretariat and the NDPTL Support Fund in 2016 and beyond. The NDPTL network, the Secretariat and the Support Fund are all functioning tools with great potential. The concept for further functioning of the above tools and especially of the NDPTL Secretariat should be created before the next HLM. The concept for further functioning of the NDPTL Secretariat should take into account available financing of the Secretariat and include an assessment of the possible scope of activity of the Secretariat.

5. Co-operation with other initiatives

- Recalling the agreement of the Northern Dimension Ministerial Meeting of 18 February 2013, to seek a more systematic approach to co-operation in the Northern Dimension region;

- Acknowledging the efforts aiming to identify objectives of mutual interest for co-operation in the region based on relevant strategic and policy documents of the partners;
- Recalling instructions given by the HLM on 23 November 2011 to further develop relevant issues in close co-operation with the four Regional Councils (AC, BEAC, CBSS, NCM) in order to foster synergies, while avoiding duplication of work within the mandates of these organisations;
- Emphasising the need for ensuring efficiency, avoiding the overlap of activities, achieving general co-ordination and promoting the efficient use of financial resources;
- Recalling the appreciation of the general co-ordinating role of the Partnership expressed by the HLM on 17 December 2013 and the agreement that the NDPTL should be used to co-ordinate the initiatives in the field of transport and logistics in the Northern Dimension area;

The HLM appreciates the work done by the SC and the NDPTL Secretariat to promote the NDPTL in general and to develop contacts within the network of stakeholders in the Northern Dimension area and instructs the Secretariat to continue activities in this direction.

The HLM appreciates the work done within the frames of Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area and encourages Russian Federation to further develop common document on cooperation aimed at the creation of an efficient transport system in the Barents region; the NDPTL HLM welcomes the intentions of the NDPTL Steering Committee to make use of the added value of this work, appreciates further co-operation between BEATA and NDPTL and invites Russian Federation to continue efforts in fostering synergies of BEATA and NDPTL during the Russian Chairmanship in BEAC in 2015-2016.

The HLM encourages the Steering Committee to continue the work of the Working Group on Transport and Logistics in order to support implementation of the NDPTL goals regarding the transport connections and logistics in the Northern Dimension region and for the purpose of cooperation with the regional initiatives.

6. Rotation of the Chairmanship

The HLM expresses its appreciation to Estonia's Chairmanship of the Steering Committee in 2015, and welcomes Poland as the new Steering Committee Chair in 2016, hoping for continuation of the fruitful practical co-operation within the transport and logistics sector in the Northern Dimension area.

The HLM expresses gratitude to Norway for leading the general co-operation, and for hosting and chairing the HLM in 2015, and welcomes the European Commission as the new HLM Chair for 2016.