WIKTOR SZYDAROWSKI
Karlskrona, Sweden

INCENTIVES FOR A GATEWAY FUNCTION OF THE SOUTH BALTIC SEA AREA

Abstract: The South Baltic Sea area is predestined to play a gateway role, bridging old and new members of the European Union with its neighbours. One of the crucial factors determining gateway performance of territories is quality and accessibility to the transport infrastructure. The consolidated Trans-European Transport Network and complementary national transport policies provide two solid cornerstones for an effective transport system in the South Baltic Sea area. The rationale presented in the official transport planning documents demonstrates, however, a sector dimension and as such requires a more systematic approach provided with transnational spatial planning tools. Two major fields for reconciliation are: responsibility of national, regional and local governments in transport policy-making, and – horizontal interactions between the transport and other policy areas. It has been noted that although the Baltic Sea countries have developed procedures to decide upon future transport investments, seldom if at all, spatial development impacts are taken into consideration. The same applies to existing transnational transport infrastructure concepts, which concentrate on linking together major urban centres and metropolitan areas.

Introduction

The political process initiated by the South Baltic Sea regions aims to create a common strategic approach to utilise unique growth opportunities of the South Baltic area, related to its specific socio-economic profile and the geographical location. Compared with the European and national planning schemes, the vision of the future transport system in the South Baltic Sea area laid down by the regional decision-makers advocates for matching the EU Cohesion Policy objectives with local and regional development priorities. The integrated transport system is destined to contribute to better accessibility within the South Baltic area and to improve-

ment of links both between European Union and Russia and between the core economic areas placed on intercontinental trading routes. Intensified and smoother goods and passenger flows will put the South Baltic area in a more competitive position against other areas as far as operation costs and time savings in trade activities are considered. This, in turn, will result in better conditions for business growth and in increased capital investments from the private sector into the local and regional economy.

1. Transport determinant of a gateway function

Through the history the South Baltic Sea area has derived its strength from maritime trade serving economic exchange between the coastal states and provinces. Its economic prosperity climaxed in the medieval times when the Hanseatic League united 160 cities and towns in common trading patterns across and along the Baltic Sea.

Harmonious development of the South Baltic Sea area suffered from the years of political and economic division. With the fall of the iron curtain the area is reclaiming its identity and making use of new perspectives associated with European integration process, which set forth a common market and turned the Baltic into an inland sea of the European Union. The EU enlargement process brought intensified efforts to restore an essential role of the seaways in the transport systems.

In the world-wide process of globalisation the South Baltic Sea area is predestined to play a gateway role, bridging old and new members of the European Union and collaborative countries on the eastern edge. By means of its economic, demographic and cultural potential it may not only provide services for transit flows but produce and receive commodities from all over the world. The gateway function of the South Baltic Sea area is therefore to be perceived in three dimensions: (1) intercontinental – as an alternative route for exchanging goods between two core economic markets of the North America and Far East; (2) interregional – at a scale of enlarged European Union and its neighbouring countries of the former Soviet Union; and (3) macroregional – on the domestic Baltic arena.

One of the crucial factors determining gateway performance of territories is quality and accessibility to the transport infrastructure. The European Commission (2001) has recently noticed that the transport system needs to be optimised to meet the demands of enlargement and sustainable development. It also needs to be more harmonised and integra-

ted at the European, national and regional levels to counteract unequal growth in the different modes of transport, congestion on the main transport arteries and harmful effects on environment and public health.

2. European and national transport planning scene

In the White Paper on the European Transport Policy for 2010 the Commission (2001) laid down several measures to mitigate development constraints in the transport sector. Among them four are of fundamental importance for the future of the South Baltic Sea area: (1) revision and extension of the Trans-European Transport Network, (2) revitalising railways for cargo services, (3) construction of veritable sea motorways, and (4) new dimension for the maritime safety.

The consultation process on the revision of Community guidelines for development of the Trans-European Transport Network found its inspiration in the report from the Van Miert High Level Group. The Van Miert Group identified a set of new priorities considered as crucial to facilitate transnational trade exchange in a single internal market and to promote interoperability between different modes of transport. One of their most important findings included in the report issued on the 30 June 2003 is a list of priority projects on the transport network regarded as the most contributing to economic and social cohesion of the territory of the enlarged European Union. These projects are organised in 4 categories, respective of their maturity and realism as regards financing and the possibility to start work on time.

Ongoing and future investments on the road and rail axes in the South Baltic Sea area are highly prioritised on the lists. Swedish road and rail sections in the Nordic Triangle project and motorway and a railway line from Gdańsk southwards when accomplished – will create a vertical part of the transport fundament for the area.

A separate priority identified by the Group is 'motorways of the sea' understood as maritime routes, which connect ports located on the main Trans-European axes and may help alleviate road congestion on the main axes. The concept itself stems from noteworthy drawbacks in a potential of intra-Community maritime transport, which is expected to provide a means of coping with the growing congestion of road and rail infrastructure and of tackling air pollution (European Commission 2001). Therefore a structural aid is envisaged to those ports of national importance, which have good connections to the inland network and

which could form part of an authentic logistics chain. One of the listed future investments is the Motorway of the Baltic Sea linking the EU Member States in the north-eastern Europe with the core economic centres in the continental part (Germany, the Netherlands).

In the planning process of the extended Trans-European Transport Network the European Commission closely co-operates with the Member States. The high-capacity investments acknowledged in the European transport plans are carried out by respective state governments who, in turn, continue with other national-level projects, directed to removing of bottlenecks in smooth flows of goods and passengers within the administered territory.

The consolidated Trans-European Transport Network and complementary national transport policies provide two solid cornerstones for an effective transport system in the South Baltic Sea area. Their main principle is to improve circulation of goods and passengers and provide better access to markets in internal and external trade relations. The rationale presented in the official transport planning documents demonstrates, however, a sector dimension and highlights the aspects of:

- a land-and-sea network of multimodal transport corridors conveying, as a priority, freight traffic;
- interoperability between modes of transport, with emphasis to railroads and short sea shipping;
- innovative solutions in cargo logistics, especially in port operations.

3. Transnational spatial planning perspective vs. transport networks

The European Commission's affiliated ESPON Programme (European Spatial Planning Observatory Network) has given attention to the complexity of harmonisation issues between transport policies run at various administrative levels. The latest report on *Territorial Impact of EU Transport and TEN Policies* (Bröcker *et al* 2004) reflects on the essential role of the transport sector for the competitiveness of European economy and voices a need for clarity in the way policy is enacted and communicated between different policy actors. It has been noted that although transport has a distinctive position in the European Union Treaties with the commitment to the development of a Common Transport Policy, large elements of transport policy are the responsibility of national, regional and local governments under the principle of subsidiarity (see Table 1).

The authors claim that whilst it is essential that local transport policy is performed at local level, where it can be developed more efficiently and be responsive to the needs and wishes of local communities, local policies should be informed by and consistent with EU transport policy. EU transport policy has therefore to set a clear framework for the other levels' policies.

Another aspect considered in the ESPON Programme is horizontal interactions between the transport and other policy areas, which may become contradictory partly on account of insufficient regard for the impact of transport on issues related to macroeconomic growth and stability (Bröcker *et al* 2004). This holds true also for spatial development policy, the more so as despite clear and evident linkages with the transport field (see Tables 2 and 3), the spatial approach is not formalised at the European planning level (Mathis *et al* 2004).

The informal documents of the EU ministers responsible for spatial development (*Principles for a European Spatial Development Policy* and *European Spatial Development Perspective*) acknowledged the role of transport in working out a balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union. Multimodal potential of the transport in-

Table 1

Interactions of vertical transport and ICT policies

EU transport policies	EU non-transport policies	National transport policies	Regional transport policies	Local transport policies
Infrastructure polices – TEN – Bottlenecks	Structural and regional. Stability and growth.	National infrastructure priorities. National budgets.	Regional infrastructure priorities. Regional budgets.	Local infrastructure priorities. Local budgets.
Transport policies – Pricing – Modal competition – Mobility – Safety – Urban transport	Competition. Environment. Agriculture.	Fuel tax policies. Road pricing policies National subsidies.	Regional subsidies.	Local subsidies. Local road pricing/congestion charging/parking.
ICT policies – galileo – broadband – other e-Europe	Structural and regional. Competition. Education and culture.	National ICT policies.		

Source: Bröcker *et al* 2004.

Table 2

Horizontal interactions between transport and other European level policies

Opportunities / Risks	Transport Policy	Regionsl, Structural and Cohesion Policies	Environmental Policies	Common Agricultural Policy	Internal Market and Growth Policies	Stability and Growth Policies	European Spatial Development Perspective
Implementing White Paper on Transport Policy	+++ ...	++ ..	+++ ..	++ ..	++ .	+ .	+++ ...
Implementing Transport TENs	++ ..	+++ ...	+++ ...	+ .	++ .	+ .	+++ ...
Implementing GALILEO	+++ ...	++ ..	++ .	+ .	+ .	+ .	++ ..
Implementing ICT guidelines	++ .	+++ ...	++ ..	+ .	++ .	+ .	++ ..

Source: Bröcker *et al* 2004.

frastructure is perceived a vital agent for improved territorial access to infrastructure, which implies the following goals for the transport network (VASAB 1994; EuroFutures 1994, European Commission 1994):

- enhancement of a spatial integration of the European continent;
- faster economic development of peripheral areas;
- strengthening of the settlement network;
- increase in accessibility to labour and customer markets;
- reduction of disparities in living conditions.

The spatial development concepts envisaged for the current programming period of the Structural Funds attribute a model of polycentric development to transport networks. Consequently, the transport policy should contribute to strengthening a polycentric and more balanced system of metropolitan regions, city clusters and city networks through improvement of the links between international/national and regional/local transport networks. This especially applies to (European Commission 1999):

(1) structurally weaker and peripheral areas where lack of access to transport and communication infrastructure restricts economic development. There, high-quality transport infrastructure should be

Table 3

Transport and spatial development policy aims

Growth	Sustainability	Cohesion
TRANSPORT POLICY AIMS		
Market conditions for provision and management of infrastucture (transport impact on growth through improvement of private investments profitability	Apply the "polluter pays" priniple and adequate payment mechanisms	Provide adequate acces to social and economic opportunities for all European inhabitants
Fair competition betwee modes	Introduce global and longterm considerations in transport planning Strategic Environmental Analysis	Facilitate the development of international trade and mobility to enhance economic and social integration within the single market
Make long-distance and international transport costs equivalent to those in competing areas (USA, Asia...)	Apply Environmental Impact Analysis	Use the design and implementation of major transport investments to enhance social cohesion
Maximize economic returns on investment, operation and maitenance of the multimodel TEN		Help the accesion of the CEEC and the economic development of neighbouring areas Mediterranean and CIS areas
Internalise network costs and benefitseffects on project appraisal, in particular in cross-border areas		
Stimulate multimodal chains		
Integrate EU in world logistic trends		
Provide adequate links between long-distance flows and their local and regional components		
SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AIMS		
Dynamic, attractive and competitive cities and urbanised regions	Polycentric urban development: a basis for better accessibilty	Efficient and sustinable use of infrastructure
An integrated approach for improved transport links and access to knowledge	Endogenous development. Diverse and productive rural areas	Natural and cultural heritage as a development asset
Diffusion of innovation and knowledge	Urban-rural partnership	Preservation and development of the natural heritage
	Creative management of the cultural heritage	Water resource management
		Creative management of cultural landscapes

Source: Mathis *et al* 2004.

supplemented with secondary networks to stimulate the economic performance and magnify regional competitiveness;

(2) 'gateway cities' providing access to the EU territory. This usually denotes specific urban centres located in the peripheries of the European Union and featuring large seaports, intercontinental airports, trade fair and exhibition cities or spectacular cultural events. The gateway cities can compete with their specific advantages, such as low labour costs or geographical links with economic centres in the countries neighbouring the Member States.

A prospective spatial development dimension of the transport policies in the South Baltic Sea area is guided by the responsible ministers of 11 countries around the Baltic Sea co-operating in an intergovernmental programme (VASAB 2010).

In their Stockholm declaration of 1996, the ministers responsible for spatial planning and development accentuated a need for establishing spatial development concepts for transport corridors, which would cause a significant shift from technical aspects to social and economic impact considerations. As observed, a positive and negative correlation between the transport corridors and regional development takes place. On one hand, the corridors enhance and foster economic development by increasing mobility opportunities, attracting human and physical capital, and improving accessibility. At the same time intensive development of transport corridors can jeopardise the preservation of non-renewable resources – particularly the natural environment – and likewise can contribute toward the deprivation of the social or cultural identity and stability of local societies. Therefore, the role of spatial planning with regard to the transport corridors is to bridge the interests of sub-national, local, and national authorities and organisations from various sectors.

Rationalisation of maritime transport has been found an important goal for Baltic spatial planning, as one of the key issues for spatial development of the Baltic Sea area in the future is maritime transport and the port-hinterland connections, with a focus on multimodal transport centres. Performance of these connections is now hampered by the insufficiently developed land-based infrastructure, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of the Baltic Sea area.

At the following conference in Wismar in 2001 the ministries recognised transport corridors one of the instruments for regional development. Transnational co-operation should thus upgrade studies on pan-Baltic intermodal transport systems and pan-European transport networks with an added component of spatial planning and development.

Consequent to political decisions, the transnational co-operation has focused on activation of high yet not adequately used development potentials in the Baltic Sea area, especially in areas along transport corridors (so called strategic development zones). Although the Baltic Sea countries have developed procedures to decide upon future transport investments, seldom, if in any case, spatial development impacts are taken into consideration. The same applies to existing transnational transport infrastructure concepts, which concentrate on linking together major urban centres and metropolitan areas.

From the transnational viewpoint, despite twelve years of co-operation at the national and regional levels, compatibility of planning is not sufficient – both between transport planning and spatial planning and vertically across decision-making tiers (European-national-regional planning systems). Therefore it has been voiced that strategies and programmes upon a preparatory or revision stage be compared and adjusted to one another, with a consideration given to their impacts across the borders.

The financial support from the two editions of the INTERREG programme (IIC and IIIB) helps promote the feature of transnational co-operation as joint solutions to joint problems. One of the eligible actions is evaluation of Pan-Baltic intermodal transport networks from a spatial planning and development point of view, another – setting up spatial development zones along transport corridors crossing the state borders.

4. Local and regional planning scene

Following the transnational spatial planning guidelines, six INTERREG III B projects co-ordinated by local and regional authorities ('Baltic Gateway', 'Baltic+', 'Seagull', 'SEBTrans-Link', 'South Baltic Arc' and 'String II') decided to jointly contribute to designing a comprehensive system of high quality transport and transport-related services in the South Baltic Sea area. The projects endeavoured to analyse development perspectives along selected transport corridors towards infrastructure improvements and business encouragement, carried out local and regional impact assessment studies and formulated recommendations on capital investments to support sustainable regional development.

The position taken by the administrative regions of the South Baltic Sea area based on the research findings of the listed INTERREG III B projects pinpoints a regional development perspective as a third corner-

stone of envisaged actions. The Joint Political Statement endorsed by fifteen South Baltic Sea regions at the 'Baltic Gateway' political conference in Malmö in April 2004 calls for inclusion of a spatial planning component into the planning process for transport infrastructure investments – in order to avoid identified level-to-level inconsistencies and better promote regional interests. It has been pronounced that the transport investment proposals formulated at European and national levels, although contributing to an integrated and intermodal transport system of road, rail, air, fixed links and maritime connections, are insufficient in the context of sustainable growth and cohesion in the South Baltic Sea area.

The political documents adopted in the 'Baltic Gateway' project state that counteracting peripherisation and ensuring efficient circulation of goods and people will not be achieved if transport policy measures are placed aside and not integrated with regional economic development. Transnational regional cohesion in the South Baltic area requires provision of fully-fledged connections across the sea, which would tie together inland sections of the transport corridors. A network of national and regional road and rail links shall supplement them and give access to from those parts of the South Baltic Sea area, which are located in a distance from the main transport axes. All investments shall be planned in compliance with the principle of interoperability between the transport modes and shall respect strategic interests of the private sector.

The political process deployed by the South Baltic Sea regions aims to create a common strategic approach to utilise unique growth opportunities of the South Baltic area, related to its specific socio-economic profile and the geographical location. Compared with the European and national planning schemes, the vision of the future transport system in the South Baltic Sea area laid down by the regional decision-makers advocates for matching the EU Cohesion Policy objectives with local and regional development priorities.

5. Vision of the future transport system in the South Baltic Sea area

Making an efficient transport system discharging intercontinental, transnational and cross-border flows in the South Baltic area calls for interrelation of European, national and regional dimensions, recognition of strategies of the private sector and adoption of transnational spatial planning perspective. The standpoint also provides for a new under-

standing of transport planning – as a planning, which considers spatial development implications in pursuing for transport investments.

A postulate listing of desirable actions include:

- Integration of maritime links and inland hinterland links, with ports and their logistic centres and terminals operating as multimodal nodes, well connected with a network of inland road and rail connections. The concept should be further elaborated within the framework of the 'motorways of the sea'.
- Preparation and prioritising on those investments scheduled by the European and national authorities, which on one hand stimulate performance of transnational transport corridors and national transport axes and contribute to alleviation of missing links and elimination of bottlenecks, and on the other – improve accessibility of individual administrative regions.
- Extension of the secondary transport network, understood as a pattern of transport links tributary to transnational transport corridors, which improve access from and to local and regional markets. That network should be regarded a complement to the primary TEN-T network.
- Development of a network of gateway cities comprising ports appropriately linked with their hinterlands.
- Development of viable transport market concepts, which balance shares of rail, road and sea traffic and promote regional growth.
- Provision of innovative solutions, like intelligent traffic systems (ITS) and dangerous cargo handling systems, to make for smoother passage of cargo and passenger flows.
- Development of platforms for co-operation between public administration, research and business sector to identify potentials and pave the way for future investments in intermodal services. This platform should also serve a dialogue among ports and cities on their development policies in the context of the gateway function.

The likewise integrated transport system is destined to contribute to better accessibility within the South Baltic area and to improvement of links both between European Union and Russia and between the core economic areas placed on intercontinental trading routes. Intensified and smoother goods and passenger flows will put the South Baltic area in a more competitive position against other areas as far as operation costs and time savings in trade activities are considered. This, in turn, will result in better conditions for business growth and in increased capital investments from the private sector into the local and regional economy.

References

Bröcker J. *et al*, 2004, *Territorial Impact of EU Transport and TEN Policies*. Final Report of ESPON Project 2.1.1, ESPON Co-ordination Unit, Luxembourg.

EuroFutures AB, 1994, *Perspectives for the Economic Development of the Baltic Region*. Perspectiven für Schleswig-Holstein, Die Ministerpräsidentin des Landes Schleswig-Holstein, Kiel.

European Commission, 1994, *Europe 2000+. Co-operation for European Territorial development*, European Communities.

European Commission, 1999, *European Spatial Development Perspective. Towards Balanced and Sustainable Development of the Territory of the European Union* (agreed at the informal council of ministers responsible for spatial planning), Potsdam, Germany, May 10-11, European Communities.

European Commission, 2001, *European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide*. White Paper, European Communities, Brussels.

Mathis P., *et al*, 2004, *Transports Services and Networks: Territorial Trends and Basic Supply of Infrastructure for Territorial Cohesion*. Final Report of ESPON Project 1.2.1, ESPON Co-ordination Unit, Luxembourg.

Principles for a European Spatial Development Policy, 1995, Selbstvelag der Bundesforschungsanstalt und Raumordnung.

VASAB 2010 (*Vision and Strategies around the Baltic 2010*), 1994, *Towards a Framework for Spatial Development in the Baltic Sea Region*, Third Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development, Tallinn, Estonia, December 7-8.

VASAB 2010 (*Vision and Strategies around the Baltic 2010*), 1996, *From Vision to Action*, Fourth Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning and Development, Stockholm, Sweden, October 22.