Nomination for the position of Vice-Chair of the BSC Working Group Transport

Dear Madam/Sir/Baltic Sea Executive Members,

Region Östergötland hereby nominates Mr Jan Owe-Larsson for the position as Vice-Chair of the BSC Working Group Transport.

Mr Jan Owe-Larsson is the Chair of the Transport and Urban Planning Committee in Region Östergötland. The Committee is responsible for strategies and tasks in the area of spatial planning, public transport, infrastructure, rural development, energy and climate, and international cooperation linked to the tasks of the committee. Mr Owe-Larsson has extensive knowledge in the field of mobility and transports and has previously held the position as Chair of the Transport Working Group of AER (The Assembly of European Regions) for several years.

Region Östergötland is a new and very active member of the BSC/CPMR since 1 January 2022. The application for membership was preceded by one year of participation as a non-formal member in order to thoroughly assess and evaluate the added value of a membership, as well as internal preparations for becoming a member. After our first year as a member, we have gotten to know the CPMR and the BSC a bit more. The greatness of this collaboration we now are part of makes us as a member region even more committed to the opportunity to take our engagement one step further, and contribute more actively to a working group.

The BSC Transport Working Group has been a priority for Region Östergötland from the start since accessibility is a key issue for all European regions. This is particularly important for Östergötland due to its strategic location close to a major metropolitan area. The East Link between Järna and Linköping is the first part of Sweden’s new main lines which will be constructed and open for traffic in 2035. It will increase the capacity in the railway system and result in bigger labour market regions, easier commuting and regional growth and development. The European route E4 passes through our region, we have two regional airports with international flights, an extensive archipelago, and two major cities designated as urban nodes in the new revised version of the TEN-T, together with a major port.

Mr Owe-Larsson will be supported by Mr Lukas Andreasson, EU Policy Advisor at Region Östergötland EU Office in Brussels, and Mr Linus Johnson, Senior Infrastructure Adviser at the Region Östergötland Regional Executive Office in Linköping, Sweden.

In addition to the staff hours and expertise Region Östergötland will be happy to arrange and co-fund any physical meeting in our region and provide regional expertise on various topics linked to
transport. In this field, our areas of expertise include, amongst other topics, alternative fuels and digitalisation.

For the two year Action Plan 2023-2025 Region Östergötland suggests the Working Group to address the following topics of interest for the Baltic Sea Region:

**The continued implementation of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy**

In a broader European context, the Baltic Sea Region stands before unique conditions due to its geography. Our remote and peripheral locations and share of sparsely inhabited areas puts before us our own challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the strategy. The strategy, presented in 2020, spans 82 initiatives and four years, and will be important to continue to actively follow and, where needed, engage with. It will also be of interest to monitor and engage with the continued implementation of alternative fuel policy and infrastructure, as well as initiatives dealing with the digitalisation of mobility, as both of these will undoubtedly play an important role in the field of transport in the years to come.

**The implementation of the revised TEN-T regulation**

The revised TEN-T regulation is expected to be adapted by the EU institutions in 2023, possibly entering into force in early 2024. Thus, the regulation will be entering its next stage very soon: implementation. Monitoring and evaluating how the implementation will take place for the urban nodes and their respective SUMPs, for example, will be of importance going forward. Sharing our best practices will be vital to a successful implementation of the network and its components.

**Rural mobility**

The Baltic Sea Region has a geography which enables unique opportunities and simultaneously presents unique challenges. One such challenge which is presented is that of rural mobility. The Baltic Sea Region is not only a remote part of Europe, but also one which is sparsely populated, particularly in the north. This thematic area is not necessarily connected to any one initiative, but rather a call to promote a more inclusive approach when the EU presents initiatives on transport issues, so that sparsely populated areas also may benefit from the initiatives.

**Dual use and military mobility**

Resilience and autonomy will continue to be high on the EU agenda in the coming years, not least after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It will be of continued importance for the Baltic Sea Region to actively monitor dual use within the Connecting Europe Facility and the notion or military mobility as a whole due to our strategic location, having access to the ever-important Baltic Sea, and having key access to the Arctic.

If Region Östergötland would be appointed as Vice-Chair of the BSC Transport WG we aim to contribute with knowledge and engagement to grow mutual opportunities to strengthen the collaboration within the working group and the policy area of transport in the BSC.

Linköping 9 January 2023

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Annette Ohlsson
1st Vice-Chair of the Transport and Urban Planning Committee
Region Östergötland, Sweden