The Council of Oulu Region is submitting a proposal for candidacy to the Vice-Chair of the Transport Working Group of the Baltic Sea Commission for 2023–2024. Our candidate is Mr. Jouni Jussinniemi, Vice-Chair of the Council of Oulu Region.

Jouni Jussinniemi is a member of the Transport Working group. He is very well connected, and he has very good contacts to national decision makers.

The primary supporting civil servant for Jouni Jussinniemi is Chief of Civil Engineering Lauri Romppainen and secondary supporting civil servant is Manager of International Affairs Hanna Honkamäkiäliä.

TEN-T network is strategically very important for the Council of Oulu Region and for the Baltic Sea Commission. We need to keep it on the high in the EU’s agenda and ensure the progress of the implementation of the TEN-T network. Northern Finland should be better connected to northern Sweden and northern Norway. Especially we should develop better cross-border land connection.

Securing the accessibility of the remote and sparsely populated regions of the Baltic Sea needs development of travel chains, regional airports, rail traffic and roads. To reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal, electrification of transportation is needed. It is, however, a complex challenge. We should develop mixed solutions for transport infrastructure and charging network. EU Green Deal is a growth strategy for Europe. For decarbonising transport sector, EU needs strategic raw materials that can be found in Europe’s peripheral regions. The importance of a sustainable multi-level approach to find ways to extract and transport minerals and metals to the market is a question for Europe.

Development of sustainable alternative transportation biofuels is also needed. Electrification may not solve everything, and it does not do it fast. That is why we need flexible and place-based approach. The Russian invasion of Ukraine underlines the need to strengthen transport infrastructure for the military mobility and security of supply.

Pauli Harju  
Region Mayor  
Oulu Regional Council