

Back after a busy week in Brussels...

I was privileged to become acquainted thru Mid Sweden European Office with our Norwegian friends who had training regarding EU issues in order to better understand the level at which the EU affects Norway in practice. A very good training which described in a highly instructive manner EU rules in the past, the ones recently adopted, the new ones to come and how they affect Norway since Norway isn't a member of the EU. The idea was also that I would have the opportunity to talk about our NECL II -project but also to share experiences in general terms when it comes to international projects. Besides Midnordic Green Transport Corridor a project called Green Highway was in place and did likewise. Participants were from different counties, regions, government agencies and some courageous politicians from all over Norway.

The Sulphur Directive (IMO), the EU White Paper, the allowances for aviation, Europe 2020 and a lot of other things were discussed, encountered and soaked how they would affect or not, how time conditions were like. People were very active and inquisitive but ...

The feeling that suddenly came over me was that everyone listened, participated and were eager to learn, but yet at the same time they may have felt that they really didn't have any responsibility to handle or even address the issues at home since there was no decision taken yet what to do... at the national level ... and they did not have direct mandate to act.

And if no one has told you what to do ... can you really do anything without getting clear directives? I mean it may happen that you do wrong things or go beyond your mandate and that might get uncomfortable.

The feeling nagged me and I spent time thinking about my experience and the more I thought about it the more concerned I got. Suddenly I realized that this wasn't symptomatic for Norway and this training session. It's symptomatic in general for most people. We are probably not better at this in Sweden or Finland (or any other European Union countries for that sake). We all tend to sit patiently on our butts at different decision-making levels and just wait for someone else to take a final decision on how the hell you are supposed to do and act. Sure, some few brave projects push hard the augmentation forward but one must realize that cumulatively, these projects are mainly mayflies looking from an infrastructure lifecycle perspective.

Suddenly I realize the actual problem ... It's never done!...It's never finished!...It's constantly evolving!

The extent of this understanding is infinite because suddenly I realize that WHEN the actual decision is made, it's usually too late or at least there is a very short time before it has to be completed, operational and functional. A good example is the Sulphur Directive. If you follow the ongoing debate, you get the feeling that this is something achieved in a very short time.

After some quick googling I found a document from the IMO (Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC)-57th session: 31 March) http://www.imo.org/blast/mainframe.asp?topic_id=1709&doc_id=9123 .

IMO made a long-term strategic decision as early as 2008, and there may be even earlier related documents than this. The problem is that NO ONE took hold of the case and started in time to drive the development in the right direction. Everybody's first waiting for a "decision" to be made by someone responsible, saying exactly what to do, when to do it and how...

And when the decision is finally made EVERYONE agrees that it was taken too late and there is too little time to solve the problem and it will be a costly thing.

Now we are facing a similar situation, I'm talking about the EU White Paper, which implementation itself has not yet been decided upon on detailed level but which clearly maps out the future from a 2050 -perspective. This White Book has been under discussion for a long time on the official EU level (2007).

By 2050, key goals will include:

- No more conventionally-fuelled cars in cities.
- 40% use of sustainable low carbon fuels in aviation; at least 40% cut in shipping emissions.
- A 50% shift of medium distance intercity passenger and freight journeys from road to rail and waterborne transport.
- All of which will contribute to a 60% cut in transport emissions by the middle of the century.”

...and new regulations for heavy vehicles vs. CO2 are expected around 2013!

This IS actually a paradigm shift!

History shows that there will NOT be national decisions on time so we must solve this using our wisdom and experience at all levels and actually to learn from this.

We know the EU's clear direction and it's basically the same as an actual decision to relate to.

If we are going to succeed to reach the goal 'till 2050, we need to give communities, industry, vehicle manufacturers, citizens and others affected a reasonable timeframe, ahead start and opportunity to start in time so it's really, really, really crucial to get started NOW.

We also need to understand on all levels that EVERYONE must contribute in order for us all to succeed.

What can You, I, We all do then?

- At national level there is need to be crystal clear. There is no time to “be fuzzy around the edges”. We need political courage at national level. Even if you don't have all the answers you need to realize that the EU's focus for 2050 will be the basis for the future society ... Nothing do discuss...Final!! Just do it.

Beside the White Paper there are clear directions from the EU to GO for cross border corridor solutions “All the way solutions” and there is also a clear focus that the corridors should be intermodal, green and efficient.

- At governmental level there is a need to incorporate the EU approach in all decision-making. We're not only talking about infrastructure but in general terms. All decisions need to have a positive effect on the future. If the goals for 2050 are expected to be achieved it requires, in addition to a development of the transport system, also a general infrastructure development in order to meet future requirements and then it's a question of having a real International / Global perspective.

- The industry needs to redirect their technical development moving toward a technology that provides smarter resource solutions. It takes no rocket science to understand that electricity is the future and we need to have that kind of technical solutions pretty fast.

- At individual level, one needs to find out what the future has to offer. You need to know what will happen so you can make wise decisions concerning your own life situation. Your contribution counts!

We_are@paradigmskifte.now

...Deal with it!!!

Per-Åke Hultstedt
PROJECT MANAGER
Midnordic Green Transport Corridor

Mobile: +46701904195

E-mail: per-ake.hultstedt@lansstyrelsen.se

Webb: www.midnordictc.net