PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Transport forum to boost cross-border transport

*As members of Bothnian Arc Cross-Border Transport Forum, we emphasize the importance of securing the public finance on both sides to start the train services crossing the border in Tornio-Haparanda. We also call for a systematic and intensified dialogue and collaboration between the local, regional, and national levels, between countries and governments, and with the European Union to secure investments necessary to establish a functional transport connection and infrastructures between Finland, Sweden, and Norway from the Baltic Sea shores to the North Atlantic.*

Bothnian Arc Cross-Border Transport Forum convened for the first time in Tornio-Haparanda on 19.3.2024. Jukka Kujala, the Mayor of Tornio, was elected as the chairman, and Roger Danell, the Municipality Director of Haparanda, was elected as the vice-chairman. The forum brings together the representatives of Swedish and Finnish municipalities, regional administration, transport operators, cross-border advice, as well as trade and industry of the Bothnian Arc.

Bothnian Arc is an important economic area and an internationally significant transport corridor in the northernmost part of Europe. Bothnian Arc is an important part of the TEN-T network that connects the Nordic countries to the rest of Europe.

In autumn 2023, transport vision 2040 for the Bothnian Arc: “Seamless travel and logistics – for a sustainable, growing and attractive Bothnian Arc region*”* was completed, financed by the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and in collaboration between Council of Oulu Region, the City of Oulu and Bothnian Arc Association. Almost 80 stakeholders from the Finnish and Swedish sides of the Bothnian Arc, including municipalities and transport and logistics operators, participated in drawing up the vision.

In the context of drawing up the vision, the need to launch a new cross-border transport forum was identified to ensure continuous cross-border dialogue between various actors about transport issues. The forum implements the action plan established in the vision and promotes transport themes and goals with cross-border relevance regionally, nationally and internationally.

The cross-border transport vision has eight goals, which the forum promotes:

Sustainable Bothnian Arc region: 1 Sustainable mobility and transport 2 Resilience and security

Growing Bothnian Arc region: 3 Borderless transport of goods and people, supporting investments 4 Connected logistics chains

Attractive Bothnian Arc region: 5 Accessible region 6 Fluent travel chains 7 Enabling tourism and leisure travel

And 8. Culture of co-operation

In the first meeting of Bothnian Arc Cross-Border Transport Forum on 19.3., it was decided to promote, among other things, launching cross-border passenger traffic and building a shared situation picture between the Finnish and Swedish actors in order to more efficiently promote the development of cross-border transport infrastructure.

The programme of the first forum is attached.

**Bothnian Arc strives to promote cross-border co-operation in our region enhancing sustainable, balanced and borderless territorial development with respect to regional diversity.**

Bothnian Arc is one of the twelve border regions of the Nordic Council of Ministers and a member of AEBR (Association of European Border Regions).

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