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## IMPROVED CROSS-BORDER PASSENGER TRANSPORT: A LONG TERM INVOLVEMENT IN GERMAN-DANISH COOPERATION

### The initial situation before the Interreg project family "Baltic Gateway"

The turning point around 1990 "rolled up" the entire Baltic region thoroughly. Paradigms of all kinds with roots from the Cold War - including spatial distribution patterns for technical and institutional infrastructure - lost their validity, as did previously internalized planning and development goals. The Baltic Sea changed from a separating to a connecting ocean within a few weeks. Neighborhood potentials were given completely new, accessible potentials on all scales; new identities and alliances had to be established.

In 1992 Karlskrona (Blekinge) invited the ministers for spatial development of the states bordering the Baltic Sea to Karlskrona. The Baltic Sea should benefit from the social upheaval, should be given a common growth strategy; the VASAB initiative (visions about Baltic Sea) was launched by Karlskrona. The Interreg office for the Baltic Sea Region was opened in Rostock in 1998. VASAB ultimately led to the Baltic Sea Strategy.

The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) is the first Macro-regional Strategy in Europe. The Strategy was approved by the European Council in 2009 following a communication from the European Commission. The Strategy is divided into three objectives, which represent the three key challenges of the Strategy: **saving the sea**, **connecting the region** and **increasing prosperity**. Each objective relates to a wide range of policies and has an impact on the other objectives.

**WHY?** The Strategy is an agreement between the Member States of the EU and the European Commission to strengthen cooperation between the countries bordering the Baltic Sea in order to meet the common challenges and to benefit from common opportunities facing the region.

**WHO?** The EU member states involved in the EUSBSR are Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The EUSBSR implementation is coordinated in close contact with the European Commission and all relevant stakeholders, i.e. other member states, regional and local authorities, inter-governmental and non-governmental bodies. The Strategy is also welcoming cooperation with EU neighboring countries (Russia, Iceland, Norway and Belarus).

**HOW?** The EUSBSR is implemented in concrete joint projects and processes. Projects and processes named Flagships of the EUSBSR demonstrate especially well the progress of the Strategy. However, no new funding or institutions have been founded to support the implementation of the Strategy. Instead, the EUSBSR, as all Macro-regional Strategies, is based on effective and more coordinated use of existing funding sources, and the promotion of synergies and complementarities.



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## Trans-European Network

Since the mid-1990s, the VASAB initiative and the Baltic Sea Strategy have been working hard on modernizing the TEN transport axes. Without functioning transport axes there is no effective regional integration on a Baltic scale. In this deeply democratic and international process, too, all actors from the longstanding project alliance took an active part. For this purpose, local, regional and national decision-making bodies had to be provided with technical information; everything required a cross-border even transnational exchange and largely general agreement.

The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) policy addresses the implementation and development of a Europe-wide network of railway lines, roads, inland waterways, maritime shipping routes, ports, airports and railroad terminals. The ultimate objective is to close gaps, remove bottlenecks and technical barriers, as well as to strengthen social, economic and territorial cohesion in the EU. The current TEN-T policy is based on Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013.

Besides the construction of new physical infrastructure, the TEN-T policy supports the application of innovation, new technologies and digital solutions to all modes of transport. The objective is improved use of infrastructure, reduced environmental impact of transport, enhanced energy efficiency and increased safety.

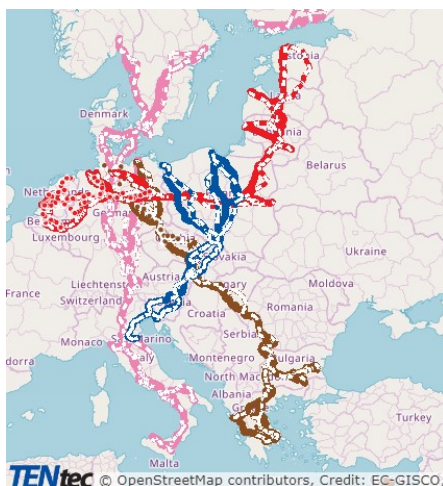
TEN-T comprises two network 'layers':

- The **Core Network** includes the most important connections, linking the most important nodes, and is to be completed by 2030.
- The **Comprehensive Network** covers all European regions and is to be completed by 2050.

The backbone of the Core Network is represented by nine Core Network Corridors, which were identified to streamline and facilitate the coordinated development of the Core Network. Two horizontal priorities, the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) and Motorways of the Sea complement these. Oversight of the Corridors and of the two Horizontal Priorities lies with European Coordinators, nominated by the European Commission.

<https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/about/about>

[https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t_en)



*Outcome of our contribution to a new joint EU-strategy*



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## Development of the Berlin - Rostock - Gedser - Øresund region axis

### Looking back from the immediate neighborhood perspective

The importance of the Baltic Sea region for Rostock was already emphasized in the provisionally formulated guidelines for urban development Rostock of 1991. Rostock began to transform its self-image from the leading Baltic port of the Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Aid) to an important port city in the Baltic Sea region.

Related royal families from Norway, Germany, Denmark and Sweden initiated the railway and railway ferry infrastructure since the end of the 19th century. Continuous train connections Berlin-Copenhagen-Stockholm / Oslo represented high tech at the time; Multimodality was a matter of course - because it was autocratic. This technical and organizational infrastructure had survived the two world wars and the period up to the early 1990s. The ferry between Rostock and Gedser was - due to the post-war situation - state property and belonged to the Deutsche Reichsbahn. From Rostock's perspective, the railway ferries to Gedser and Trelleborg were bottlenecks for cooperation with the liberal and strongly social-democratic Scandinavia, and there was also a ferry from Sassnitz to Trelleborg. The Scandinavians did not take part in the western economic embargo; rather, Rostock remembered for a long time the care packages from Sweden (1945 / 46ff.), As well as e.g. the International Baltic Sea Week in Rostock (1958-1975) or the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki 1973-75).

Passenger transport relations to Gedser and Trelleborg were one-sided until 1990. GDR citizens were either strictly forbidden from private trips to Scandinavia or almost impossible as pensioners due to a lack of currency. A small number of western / Scandinavian railway tourists use the railway connection to Berlin or from Berlin to Copenhagen - recorded in every detail by means of a strict visa policy and martially guarded by GDR security forces.



*Summer 1990: Gedser hasn't had so many guests in decades. East Germans came as pedestrian tourists to look around. There wasn't much going on in Gedser, but both sides were delighted to be able to simply visit their neighbors again. A lot of German visitors continued by train to go to Copenhagen; experienced what was normal in the 1930s.*



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The neoliberal privatization of the Rostock-Gedser ferry was accompanied by the relocation of the ferry terminal from Warnemünde to the Rostock seaport. As early as the 1990s, the Scandinavians had open plans for the Øresund Bridge and the Fehmarn Belt Crossing. Logistics economists rated passenger transport as economically insignificant in terms of accounting and in comparison to cargo. Traditions in cross-border passenger transport and the resulting competitive advantages and the "Baltic lifestyle" (lived up to the middle of World War II) had meanwhile been forgotten in both the West and the East and were further suppressed (related to former comecon area). This is where the Rostock and Falster / Guldborgsunder cooperation come in. The initiative came from the Falster regional development authority: the senior civil servant Kristian Primdahl visited Rostock and quickly found allies in the city administration and in the regional planning association.



*Andreas Schubert (Rostock), Bengt Gustavsson (Blekinge), Kristian Primdahl (Storstroems Amt) 2007*

The cooperation between Rostock / Rostock region and Falster began on the following levels:

- a) Improvement of the quality and quantity of cargo and passenger traffic / compensation of the economic and image losses from the closure of the cross-border rail link
- b) Establishment of Falsters / Guldborgsund as a transport hub to both Hamburg and Berlin, new Danish commitment to the Øresund bridge / Øresund region as well as the Fehmarn Belt and Nykøbing-Rostock: the Y-axis strategy was launched
- c) Cooperation agreement and town twinning
- d) Active participation in the Rostock maritime festival "Hanse Sail"
- e) joint acquisition of EU funds (Interreg; coordination of state EU funds to strengthen the axis)
- f) joint participation in drawing up and updating the Baltic Sea strategy

From now on, networks were jointly built up or expanded. Karlskrona (S), (comparable to Kaliningrad) a sealed off naval base opened up to civil life and international cooperation in the early 1990s. The colleagues from Falster were very experienced with the acquisition of EU third-party funds, use the funds of the Nordic Council, so to speak, Bengt Gustavsson from Karlskrona and his colleague Wiktor Szydarowski launched the Interreg project "Baltic Gateway". Met before as partners in the Interreg projects Scandria and Coinco.





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Rostock decided in the mid-end of the 1990s to re-industrialize by means of wind turbine production and to create an alternative to the use of fossil fuels with the installation and operation of wind turbines in the region. The Rostock region turned out to be an excellent region for the production and sale of wind turbines and the construction of wind farms. The first help came from Falster, more from Västjör. After the turn of the millennium, Rostock launched Interreg projects on the subject of wind energy in the BSR and South Baltic programs for a decade as a lead partner.

In return, the colleagues from Karlskrona and Falster developed the Interreg transport projects Baltic Gateway, Gateway +, and Transgovernance from around 2000. Between the two Baltic Gateway projects and the Transgovernance project, Rostock was the lead partner responsible for the Interconnect and Interconnect + projects.

Alliances and development axes have played a major role in strategies since the early 1990s. It was of strategic importance for Rostock and Falster / Guldborgsund to be able to draw benefits and development advantages from the triangle situation Hamburg-Berlin-Copenhagen / Malmö; The development progress of the Öresund region was on everyone's lips, as was the Baltic Sea strategy.

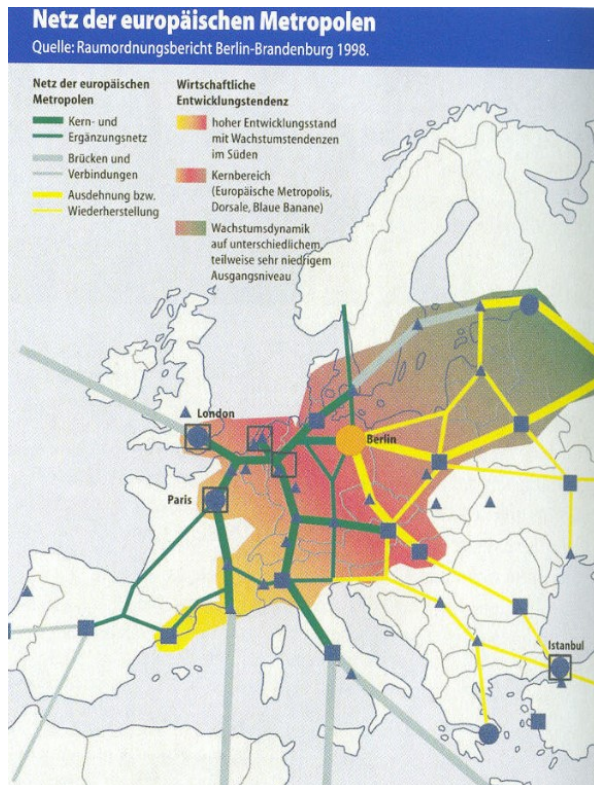
## **The common Interreg project family Scandria-Coinco**

The Scandria project, which ran from 2009 to 2011, was supported by 19 project partners from business, administration and research and is an implementation of political agreements to develop the corridor between Scandinavia and the Adriatic more jointly. The aim of the initiative was an attractive transport infrastructure as well as a transport offer in the Baltic Sea-Adriatic development corridor and its access routes at an internationally competitive level, in particular the expansion of the trans-European transport networks and the connection of the area to these routes.

It was about

- noticeable reduction in rail travel times in passenger and freight traffic between the City and metropolitan regions,
- fast, multimodal logistics chains, - the upgrading of the location qualities of cities and regions along the corridor for industry and services and
- the settlement of traffic-related and other innovative branches of the economy.

The transport backbone of the corridor, which needs to be further improved, is of paramount importance, to trigger economic development impulses through cooperative, integrated spatial, transport and economic development.



*For Rostock it was of crucial importance that Berlin was declared the federal capital in 1991. Rostock's situation in the German and European urban system improved suddenly. The chances of macro-regional integration with Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea region increased enormously. Rostock began to define itself as a node in the metropolitan triangle Berlin-Hamburg-Copenhagen / Malmö. Falster (DK) positioned itself similarly.*

## COINCO: corridor for innovation and cooperation

COINCO was a multi-level and multi-sectoral cooperation that was supported by EU funds. It is based on the COINCO III B project 2005-2007. This project family is steered towards the development in a cooperation area that was initiated by the Scandinavian Arena, including the Öresund region and the Gothenburg / Oslo region, around the year 2000. Initially, the infrastructural goal was to achieve a better connection between the former TEN-T axes 11 and 12 (Nordic Triangle) with the entire TEN-T network. The "COINCO Charter" formed the basis for a large number of cooperative follow-up activities.



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## Scandria Final Conference

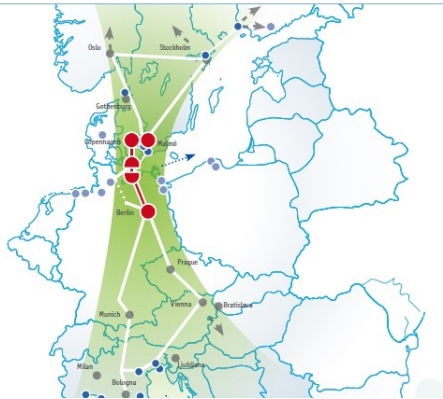
"Smart Growth in the Scandinavian-Adriatic Corridor"

11-13 June 2012

Berlin – Rostock – Gedser – Copenhagen – Malmö



The Scandinavian-Adriatic  
Corridor of Innovation  
and Growth



<https://www.scandria-corridor.eu/index.php/de/home/about>

*These graphics symbolize several trigger points for a new strategy: the traditional north-south axis is strengthened without being structurally and sustainably impaired by the developments - the Öresund Bridge and the fixed Fehmarn-Belt connection; there are more similarities than opposites. Rostock and Guldborgsund are no longer "bottlenecks" hindering development, but are becoming efficient HUBS with adequate capacities; The EU regional development fund enables the less competitive Objective I region to receive enormous subsidies to make it more competitive.*

*Guldborgsund became stepwise the core of the Y strategy for the continuation of the axes converging in Copenhagen / Malmö from Oslo and Stockholm to branch off at Nykøbing to Hamburg and Berlin.*

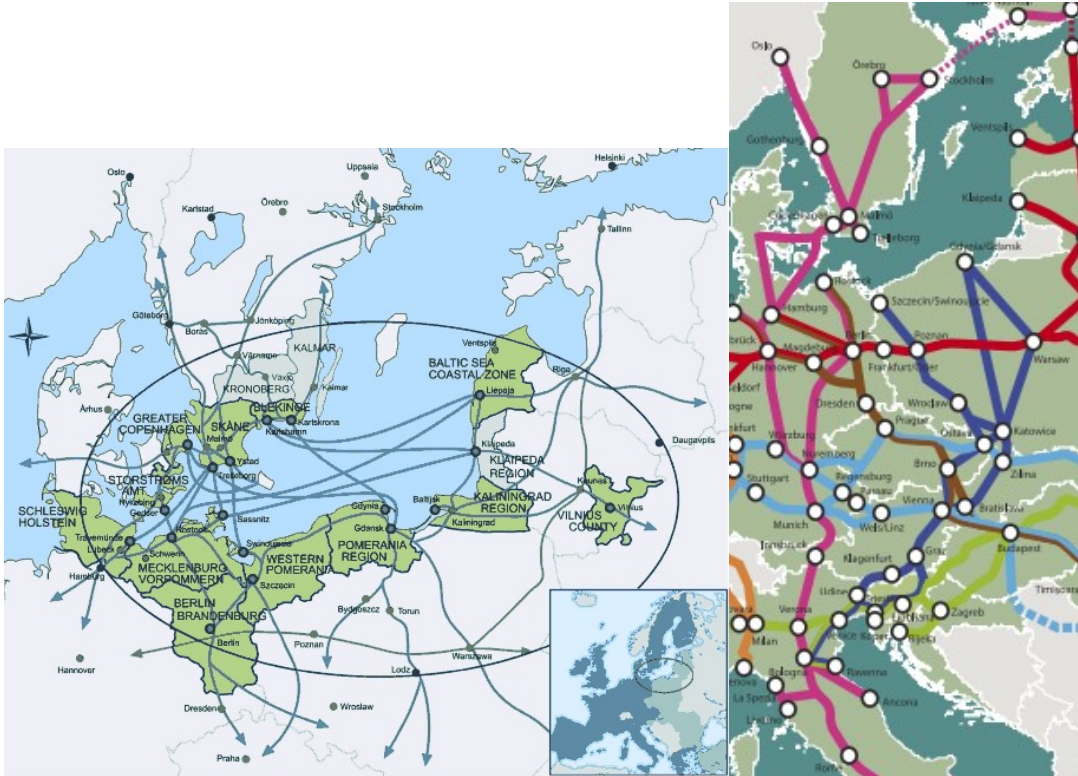


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## The Interreg-projects Baltic Gateway, Baltic Gateway+, INTERFACE, INTERFACE PLUS, BSR TransGovernance, Interconnect



*The Baltic Gateway project was funded by the European Union from 2003 to 2006 as part of the INTERREG III B joint initiative. Among other things, the project examined the prospects and potentials of the Berlin-Copenhagen transport axis. The W-NE orientation (EEC) during the Cold War and the indifferent N-S orientation (RGW), reinforced by the border regime, were dissolved. The horizon was directed towards the Silk Road and as far as the continental borders of Europe.*

In February 2006 the Baltic Gateway final conference took place in Rostock. Representatives from 16 regions adopted a joint declaration on the expansion of land-sea transport links in the southern Baltic region. It proposes various infrastructure projects to improve the landside connection of the Baltic ports.

Here the gateway project network began to transfer “multi level governance” from theory to practice. The large regional ERDF budgets have been harmonized across borders; they resulted in new transport infrastructure investments.

In the follow-up project Baltic Gateway Plus, selected projects were examined in more detail in 2007. 27 partners from 6 countries bordering the southern Baltic Sea region were involved - municipal and regional administrations, road construction authorities, port companies and others. The Swedish region of Blekinge was responsible for the overall project management.

<https://www.planungsverband-rostock.de/themenprojekte/fruehere-projekte/#%5b20032007%5d%20interreg%20iii%20b%20%7c%20baltic%20gateway%20und%20baltic%20gateway%20plus>





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## **The INTERFACE and INTERFACE PLUS Projects**

The 'Interface' and 'Interface Plus' projects, co-funded by the South Baltic Programme 2007-2013, aimed to help revitalise cross-border passenger traffic without car as a comfortable, cheap and environmental friendly alternative to travel within the South Baltic area. The projects succeeded in introducing an integrated railway-ferry-bus ticket ([www.intercombi-ticket.de](http://www.intercombi-ticket.de)) for the ride between the urban centres of Nykøbing (Denmark) and Rostock (Germany), operated through an online booking system and supported by the dynamic passenger information system, the first cross-border facility of that kind in the South Baltic area. Also, interactive information boards were installed on board of ferries, ferry terminals and in tourism offices of Guldborgsund (DK), Rostock (DE), Karlskrona (SE) and Gdynia (PL). Triggered by the project action, new direct bus shuttle services between the main station and the port were established in Rostock and Gdynia, with more synchronised timetables for public transport services over the sea and land. Finally, some measures were carried out to upgrade the ferry services between Poland and Bornholm.

<http://www.interfaceproject.eu/>

## **The BSR TransGovernance project**

The project started in September 2012 and has lasted for two years. It was operated by a consortium of 24 partners sharing joint interests in transport issues. The overall objective was to ensure greener and more efficient transport in the Baltic Sea Region, which is in line with Priority Area 11 of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. As an output, the project BSR TransGovernance managed to show how multi-level governance can contribute to a better alignment of transport policies in the BSR, by studying and developing the concept of multi-level governance as a tool to use in order to enhance more efficient decision-making process through good networking, dialogue and interaction among regional stakeholders. Rostock and Guldborgsund elaborated and stabilized the given improvements in passenger transport in test region Regiopolis region Rostock-Guldborgsund- Öresundregion- Karlskrona.

Being an honest broker in the Baltic Sea Region, Baltic Development Forum strongly supports the overall approach which was applied by the project in addressing transport cooperation. More active involvement of the business sector, involvement of end-users from the outset of the planning process, and stronger political commitment and ownership are the pillars on which to build any successful cooperation.

<http://www.bdforum.org/final-discussions-transport-bsr-transgovernance-project-close/>

## **The Gulborgsund-Rostock cooperation in Interconnect**



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The Rostock partnership consists of the Hanseatic City of Rostock and the two associated partners RSAG (Rostocker Strassenbahn AG) and the Rostock Regional Planning Association. Rostock decided to participate in the project because it is necessary to continue the progress made in the Interreg projects Interface and Interface PLUS. Transport is used as efficient tool for regional integration. All project activities have been coordinated with the Danish municipality of Guldborgsund down to the last detail. The public transport timetables and the Scandlines timetable have been synchronised since then. RSAG and Movia offer their public transport services with high frequency to the new ferries. Now also passengers of the Sweden ferries can count on a bus – public transport connection to the entire triangle region Skane, Falster, Regiopolis region Rostock.

The InterCombi Ticket -used as a promotional tool- makes it even easier for customers. They can buy their tickets up to end of 2020 on the internet. <https://www.intercombi-ticket.de/> Two promotional videos created as part of Interconnect get the message right to the point: planned and spontaneous, it is easy, convenient and inexpensive to travel to the neighbouring region. This insufficiently developed knowledge and the trust in harmonized public transport connections had to be strengthened through annual advertising and information campaigns. The subsidized pedestrian trips by school classes, sports groups and cultural activists were also popular. As part of Interconnect, the administrative cooperation and town twinning between Rostock and Guldborgsund was lived.



*07.08.2019 Art exhibition in Gedser „GRAUZONE – Ein Dach wird Kunst“ / Et Tag bliver til kunst“*

And if you don't want to use the InterCombiTicket, you can purchase the required tickets individually. Pedestrian tickets are not available online at Scandlines, but if you have bought a ticket from a machine, you can be sure that a bus will be waiting in Gedser or Rostock. In addition, travel planning has been made possible via the websites of the Transport association Warnow (VWW), Deutsche



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Bahn and Rejseplanen; the shortest and fastest connection Rostock-Nykøbing is shown with the embedded ferry connection. The bus connection via Flixbus is another travel offer.

### **Forecast**

We have achieved the strategic goals set in the mid-1990s: the handicaps - based on the inadequate technical infrastructure and reinforced by modern management processes - have been eliminated. The Berlin-Rostock-Guldborgsund-Copenhagen axis is fully under operation. We also have a well-functioning city partnership between Rostock and Guldborgsund. Consequently, in the future it is important to fill all facets of regional integration with life. The Y-strategy from Guldborgsund will give us Rostockians good development opportunities in the future too. So we are definitely thinking of a common Euroregion as a task for the next 10 years. What prevents us from working together as closely as they do in the Öresund region?

Andreas Schubert, Hanseatic City of Rostock