

STRING

STRING STOCKHOLM DECLARATION

With this joint Stockholm Declaration, agreed at a political meeting in Stockholm on the 8th of April 2016, the STRING politicians:

- Recommend the German authorities to do everything in their power to secure the approval process of the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link in any way possible.
- Call for improvements on existing infrastructure in Northern and Central Europe to eliminate major bottlenecks, such as the Lund-Hässleholm stretch between Malmö and Stockholm and the Swedish west coast link up to Oslo.
- Favour a fast building start of the new Swedish high speed railway starting in Southern Sweden as one way to ensure the maximisation of the accessibility provided by the Fehmarn Belt tunnel.
- Recommend national governments to work together and with regional authorities to ensure a coherent planning across borders and the elimination of bottle-necks in order to deliver a seamless infrastructural system
- Call on the Danish, Swedish, German and other governments to find common European solutions that can adress the refugee situation and put a stop to the current temporary border controls.

Europe needs the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link

It is the firm belief of the STRING partners, representing six regions and cities across three countries that the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link will have a major positive impact on economic development in the corridor between Hamburg and Greater Copenhagen, and further up to Stockholm and Oslo, and serve as a core link between Northern/Central Europe and Scandinavia. The Fixed Link will increase mobility and accessibility significantly, thereby increasing competitiveness for our region through growth of businesses and more jobs for our citizens.

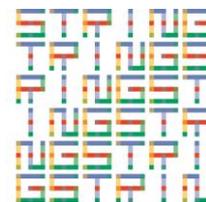
The Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link will also bring a CO2 reduction in the field of transport, as more traditional modes of transport will be replaced by a more competitive railway between Scandinavia and Central Europe, over Fehmarn. The importance of sustainability and decarbonization is highlighted as one of the future growth factors by the STRING-partners, as is shown through the joint initiative GREAT which focuses on increasing the market share of fossil free fuels and vehicles.

Following a new financial analysis from Femern A/S released on the 11th of February, confirming the financial solidity of the project, STRING is very positive to the fact that the consulatory parties of Danish parliament have given Femern A/S the all clear to continue the contract negotiations with tendering building consortia. STRING sees this as an important step towards stabilising the situation around the project, and means that we can focus more on maximizing the long term positive effects of the Fixed Link in a close cooperation between our Swedish, Danish and German regions.

STRING is the political cross-border partnership between Hamburg and Schleswig- Holstein in Germany, the Capital Region of Denmark, the City of Copenhagen and Region Zealand in Denmark, and Region Skåne in Sweden.

Our vision is that the STRING region will be the driver behind a North European green growth corridor consisting of the STRING region in a functional partnership with our neighbouring regions. The corridor will be a green European powerhouse; a strong strategic axis contributing to knowledge, growth, welfare, and sustainability in Northern Europe, including the Baltic Sea Region.





STRING

The construction delay of the Fixed Link is regrettable, but with an agreement in place with the contractor's indicating a construction start between 2018 and 2020, we are on the right path to realising one of Europe's largest and most significant infrastructure projects. STRING therefore recommends the German authorities to do everything in their power to secure the approval process in any way possible.

A connected infrastructural planning in the Scan-Med Corridor is needed

New and improved infrastructure in this part of Northern Europe is important to the regions of STRING, as well as for the entire Scan-Med corridor. The corridor stretching from Finland to Southern Italy is one of 9 core transport corridors in the EU. It is home to more than 114 million people and produces 27% of the entire EU28 GDP. The Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link has been pinpointed as a highly prioritized project in the Scan-Med corridor. However, to fully reach the potential which the Fixed Link holds together with other large scale projects such as the new high speed railway and other upgrades in the railway system, STRING recommends the national levels to pay attention to the infrastructural needs of the Fehmarn region, as well as their impact from a national and international perspective. Apart from the already planned and highly necessary improvements in infrastructure in Denmark and Northern Germany as part of the Fehmarnbelt Fixed Link planning, we would like to highlight the following aspects:

Firstly, European connectivity and progress brought by the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link is also dependent on other investments in the Scan-Med Corridor. One of these developments is the plan of the Swedish Government concerning high-speed railways from Stockholm to Gothenburg and from Stockholm to Malmö, to be completed by 2035. From a STRING corridor perspective, a future railway running from Sweden to Denmark and Northern Germany means large improvements in mobility and connectivity, both for the metropolises and rural areas in the geography.

Secondly, starting the building process of the new high-speed railway in Southern Sweden on the stretch Malmö-Stockholm would be an effective way to ensure that major bottlenecks in the Scan-Med corridor are eliminated, creating a seamless connection between Stockholm and Hamburg and then further into Europe. Enabling larger traffic volumes on this stretch will also secure increased societal profitability from the Fehmarn Fixed Link, as well as have a positive effect on a sustainable development.

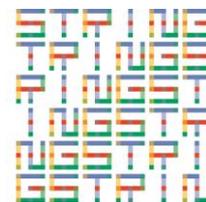
Thirdly, as the process of the high-speed railway is in the bud, immediate improvements are needed in existing infrastructure on vital parts of the Scan-Med corridor, for example on the Lund-Hässleholm stretch between Malmö and Stockholm and on the West Coast Link towards Oslo. These investments are needed in order to ensure a direct and full exchange from the Fehmarn Belt tunnel. Investments like these will not only shorten the travel time significantly and enable increased flows of freight in Northern Europe, but it will also mean an improved mobility and connection to two of Scandinavia's largest airports, Copenhagen Airport and Stockholm Arlanda.

To summarise, we would like to highlight the importance of coordinating national and regional infrastructure planning throughout the STRING region. This is the only way we can meet the infrastructural needs of this part of the Scan-Med corridor and consequently take full advantage of our large scale investments. Regions, cities and national governments need to work together to ensure a coherent infrastructural planning across borders, both on the physical and operational planning of infrastructure improvements, benefiting growth, jobs, business and quality of life for our citizens.

STRING is the political cross-border partnership between Hamburg and Schleswig- Holstein in Germany, the Capital Region of Denmark, the City of Copenhagen and Region Zealand in Denmark, and Region Skåne in Sweden.

Our vision is that the STRING region will be the driver behind a North European green growth corridor consisting of the STRING region in a functional partnership with our neighbouring regions. The corridor will be a green European powerhouse; a strong strategic axis contributing to knowledge, growth, welfare, and sustainability in Northern Europe, including the Baltic Sea Region.





One Europe

STRING

Open borders are an essential condition for long-term and sustainable economic development in the border areas, for common labor and housing markets and thus for the welfare of society and greater freedom for individuals. STRING acknowledges that the current influx of refugees into Europe, and the political response of cross-border barriers, has created some temporary challenges to European cooperation. However, the STRING politicians strongly agree that cross-border cooperation between Sweden, Denmark and Germany must continue unrelentingly, and that joint long-term solutions to the current situation must be sought at a European level.

Now, there is a threatened freedom of movement - at least temporarily - at the two borders in the STRING corridor. Therefore, STRING emphasizes that the border controls that we now see, cannot be a durable answer. The STRING cooperation therefore calls on the Danish, Swedish, German and other governments to find common European solutions to the border controls and to their cause.

STRING is the political cross-border partnership between Hamburg and Schleswig- Holstein in Germany, the Capital Region of Denmark, the City of Copenhagen and Region Zealand in Denmark, and Region Skåne in Sweden.

Our vision is that the STRING region will be the driver behind a North European green growth corridor consisting of the STRING region in a functional partnership with our neighbouring regions. The corridor will be a green European powerhouse; a strong strategic axis contributing to knowledge, growth, welfare, and sustainability in Northern Europe, including the Baltic Sea Region.

