

## **STRING POLITICAL DECLARATION, FRIENDS OF FEHMARNBELT LAUNCH EVENT**

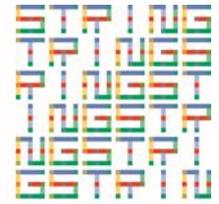
The Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link is a key component in the north-south transport route between central Europe and the Nordic countries. The link will consist of an 18 kilometre long immersed rail and road tunnel under the Fehmarn Belt between Rødby in Denmark and Puttgarden in Germany.

The Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link is essential for achieving EU targets relating to growth and sustainable transport as part of Trans European Network for transport (TEN-t) policy, as the link will:

- *Greatly increase passenger and goods transport capacity in the Scandinavian-Mediterranean TEN-t corridor.* It will remove a major transport bottleneck in northern Europe and aid in generating growth by improving the movement of passengers and goods. The European Commission estimates that fully implementing the trans-European transport network, wherein the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link is a strategic priority, can create up to ten million jobs and increase Europe's GDP by 1.8 percent by 2030.
- *Support the EU goals for lowering CO2 emissions from transport,* which need to be reduced by 67% by 2050 to meet EU targets. The link will reduce the environmental and climate impacts of road and rail transport mainly by changing traffic flows, most notably for rail freight traffic that currently uses the Great Belt. The route for this traffic will be shortened by 160 kilometres, resulting in less air pollution.
- *Reduce travel time between Germany and southern Scandinavia* which could boost growth and create jobs in both urban and rural areas, for example through increased trade and tourism. When the link opens the train journey between Copenhagen and Hamburg will be reduced to 2.5 hours, supposing parallel upgrades of German onshore facilities and the Danish railway system. The link will also drastically reduce road transport travel time for the crossing from 45 to ten minutes.

However, the financial commitment and need of EU support for the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link project is extensive. For the following reasons the project will need EU grants also in the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) to reach completion:

- Cross-border infrastructure projects with a high EU added value but no short-term revenue stream are dependent on grant-based funding. Large infrastructure projects in general and in particular a railway tunnel often require decades before becoming profitable for investors and demonstrating their true worth for business and citizens. This, in addition to the cross-border aspect, makes the need for the EU grants as incentives essential for the member states to fulfill the visions of the transnational European network.
- In addition, complementary upgrades in the transport system surrounding large-scale infrastructure projects are also vital for future development. Both connecting upgrades, especially in the railway system as well as complementary innovation projects rely on the possibility to apply for EU funding and support. One example is the CEF-financed innovation-oriented project GREAT: Green Region with Alternative Fuels for Transport, which aims to promote electric vehicles and bio-LNG by building charging infrastructure in the Fehmarnbelt region and beyond. Initial public funding has proven



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indispensable for persuading the private sector to join the project since the customer base is not yet large enough.

The organisations involved in the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link and its societal impact have joined forces and established the Friends of Fehmarnbelt initiative ([www.friendsoffehmarnbelt.org](http://www.friendsoffehmarnbelt.org)). Friends of Fehmarnbelt is a network that encourages people involved in politics, business, academia and the public sector as well as members of the general public to show their support for the Fixed Link and the benefits Europe will see from it. It also offers a forum for debate. One of the first steps you and others can take to show your support for this imperative European project is to join Friends of Fehmarnbelt and create backing, awareness and discussion; and not least create a counterpart to the few but loud critics. We strongly urge you to join the movement of Friends of Fehmarnbelt to make your voice heard.

**Steen Bach Nielsen**

**Knut Fleckenstein**

**Gesine Meissner**

**Jeppe Kofod**

Chairman of STRING

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