Dear Members of Parliament, colleagues, and distinguished guests

- Thank you for the opportunity to address this seminar
- North Norway is a sparsely populated area. We are only 480,000 people, spread over more than 100,000 square km.
- Even so, this region has a higher export rate than the rest of Norway. The export performance of North Norwegian companies is steadily increasing. Export value from Northern Norway was 11 percent higher in the first eight months of the year compared to the same period last year.
- Exports of seafood from Northern Norway are 25 per cent higher than last year. In other words, it is a matter of record growth in this industry. The value of Norwegian salmon exports so far this year is 35 percent higher than in 2015. Every tenth salmon eaten in the world, is produced in Nordland, my home region.
- For North Norway and our industries, it is important that the products get to the customers in a fast, reliable, cost efficient, and, of course, environmentally friendly way.
- For the region I represent, Nordland County Council, two corridors are crucial; The Ofoten railway line and E12, both as parts of the Bothnian corridor.
- E12, as part of the European road system is a vital route for seafood transported out of the southern part of Nordland to the international marked.
- The Ofoten Line, situated in the “middle” of North Norway is one of the largest routes for export, measured in weight. The line is an essential corridor to and from the Norwegian Arctic.
- Not only do we use the Arctic train tracks to ship Swedish iron ore out of Narvik; every year, over 200,000 tons of salmon, cod and other seafood from our fjords go to Narvik, where they catch the train that brings them to customers all over Europe.
- To put it in perspective: In the last 20 years, freight of fish products from Narvik has increased more than tenfold. The Ofoten Line transports fresh and healthy seafood and other products from North Norway to the European market.
• In the coming years the demand for Arctic goods, such as seafood and minerals, will only continue to increase. Investments in improved infrastructure is therefore necessary to cover these needs.

• I can’t stress enough the importance that the Bothnian Corridor, with its Arctic connection, will have for Europe.

• It will generate food security, industrial competition, regional development across borders and contribute to the low-carbon economy.

• Thank you!

Talepunkt til debatten:

• Fortunately, one of the key objectives to enhance cross-border networks and infrastructure projects in the European Arctic is to do it through the TEN-T network. (I refer to the Joint Communication “An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic” launched by the Commission and External Action Service last year.)

• The corridor from Narvik is a part of EU’s TEN-t corridor. In order for the train to be competitive also in the future, the entire route Narvik - Alnabru / Stockholm must work well. Double tracks and actions to improve regularity are important.

• An electric train is an environmentally friendly transport option. An electric train can drive 9000 km, where a truck can drive 20 km or a diesel run train can go 40 km. A continued emphasis on the TEN-T network is vital in ensuring the further development of the line.