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## Stellungnahme zur westlichen Elbquerung der A20

Sie haben mich in einem E-Mail vom 17. Juli um meine Stellungnahme bezüglich die mögliche Finanzierung des westlichen Elbquerung der A20 durch ein „dänisches Modell“ befragt. Um nicht zu viel Zeit für diese Aufgabe aufzuwenden, und um Ihre schöne Sprache nicht zu viel zu misshandeln, erlaube ich mich meine Stellungnahme in Englisch vorzuführen.

First, I would like to emphasize, that my field of expertise is transport planning and transport policy, mainly within a Danish context. When it comes to German *Verkehrsplanung* and *Verkehrspolitik*, I am more of an interested spectator than claiming any form of expertise. I will thus limit myself to describe Danish experience with the model of using State guarantees for financing major infrastructure projects (the ‘Danish model’) as I see it, and to come with some comments concerning the *A20 Elbquerung* project.

Second, I have read the description of the ‘Danish model’ by GvW and IB.SH. To my knowledge, this is an accurate description of the role and the history of the ‘Danish model’. However, when it comes to judicial details I will not claim any form of deep knowledge.

The ‘Danish model’ has been introduced through the three major infrastructure projects of the last 30 years, the fixed connections over Storebælt, Øresund and the Fehmarn Belt. These are the only user-financed projects in the Danish road system. The model was a precondition for deciding on Storebælt and Øresund in times of low economic growth. For Øresund and Fehmarn Belt it is also a practical model for handling bi-national projects. This is especially true for the Fehmarn Belt fixed link after it was shown that it could not be built through PPP (Public-Private-Partnership).

The ‘Danish model’ has thus lowered the hurdle for investing in new infrastructure, and it has led to significant improvements in the road and rail system, the ladder through de-facto cross-subsidies from road to rail.

From a socio-economic point of view you could claim, that it is not optimal to have a user-fee for using the motorway across Storebælt, whereas the rest of the road system is free to use. A kilometer based roadpricing scheme applied to all roads would certainly have a benefit for the economy as a whole through closer collaboration between west and east Denmark. This is , however, not a politically possible option for now.

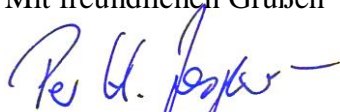
The amount of car traffic across Storebælt has by far exceeded the expectations. This has not led the Government to shorten the payback time, nor to significantly reduce the ticket price. Instead, the extra revenue is being used for other traffic infrastructure projects.

The present discussion in Denmark on the economy of the Fehmarn Belt Link is very much a discussion on whether the project will be able to pay for itself. My critique, which has also been quoted in the German press, is that it is professionally questionable and democratically irresponsible to rely on more than ten year old traffic forecasts which are made on very naïve presumptions. Traffic is – besides TEN-T-support – the only source of income to the project.

I therefore see a danger, that the ‘Danish model’ as described in the GvW/IB.SH-report, with refinancing and extensions of the State guarantees until the project is fully financed may not be possible. There is a chance that the project will go into the ‘Zinsen-Tod’ (direct translation from Danish), where the debt will just increase and the Danish tax-payers will have to save the project. It might still be a good project seen from a cost-benefit point of view, but it is not fair to the Danish public that this issue cannot be discussed on the base of professional and updated analyses.

Finally, I would like to point at an important difference between the Danish projects and the *A20 Elbquerung*. The three fixed links in Denmark do only have competitions from ferries, whereas the car driver having to pass by Hamburg will have the choice of either taking the paid *A20 Elbquerung* or to use the free alternatives closer to Hamburg. In rush-hours many will use the *A20 Elbquerung*, so it will certainly have a positive effect on congestion. The financing through user-fees might, however, become very limited through the existence of good and free alternatives.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen



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