

Danish Campaign for Maglev Picks Up Speed

by Michelle Rasmussen

The Schiller Institute in Denmark has escalated its campaign for Denmark to be the first nation in Europe to build a magnetic levitation (maglev) network, with a three-pronged intervention into the current optimistic infrastructure debate. The momentum toward a new domestic bridge project now seems to be unstoppable, after the completion of the internal Great Belt bridge and the Öresund bridge to Sweden, and the agreement to build a Fehmarn Belt connection to Germany (see map). The only question is, will it be with or without a maglev track.

That must be the conclusion after a conference on “A Connected Denmark: Vision for Establishing a Fixed Kattegat Connection,” in Copenhagen on Oct. 3, sponsored by regional politicians from Denmark’s Jutland mainland and the city of Copenhagen. The meeting was called to discuss building a new connection across the Kattegat Sea between Denmark’s two largest cities, Copenhagen and Århus, which the Schiller Institute has also promoted during the past year. The Institute’s proposal to make the new connection the first phase of a national maglev system, was discussed at the conference from the floor by Institute representatives, and from the podium by one of the speakers. Press coverage of the conference in Denmark’s largest newspaper, and the website of the Danish Engineers, led with the maglev proposal (although claiming that it lacks support).

The Schiller Institute also brought “maglev trains” to the Danish Parliament, during the yearly open house on Oct. 12, visiting the various parties’ hospitality suites wearing “maglev hats.” Several MPs enthusiastically reported on their having ridden on the maglev in Shanghai, the only commercially operating maglev in the world.

Institute activists spoke with 17 parliamentarians from five parties, including three party leaders, and with two government ministers, including the new transportation minister. The organizers counterposed the optimism of their maglev plans and Lyndon LaRouche’s solutions, with the graveness of the ongoing international financial collapse. The Institute will testify before the Parliament’s Political and Economic Committee on Oct. 25.

In addition, Tom Gillesberg, the chairman of the Schiller Institute in Denmark, and three Institute activists have announced independent campaigns for Parliament, under the slogan, “After the financial crash: Maglev across the Kattegat.” Tom Gillesberg will run in Copenhagen, Feride Istogu Gillesberg in the Copenhagen suburbs, Janus Kramer Møller



in Århus, and Hans Schultz in Aalborg. There is enthusiasm at the prospect of going maglev especially in Århus and Aalborg, which promises to create great interest in the election campaigns there.

The Kattegat Conference

The conference, held in the Danish Engineers' building, was attended by 180 participants, including members of the Parliament's Traffic Committee, mayors, engineering companies, business representatives, and interested citizens. It was opened by the Mayor of Århus, Nicolai Wammen (Social Democrat), who stated that a new Kattegat bridge could be ready by 2020, and called for the government to begin the initial studies for the project as soon as possible.

Traffic economist Uffe Jacobsen, who has been instrumental in arguing for a new Kattegat connection, referred to a 1972 study which figured that such a project would have already been completed by 1990, and that it would count for around 50% of the traffic between the Jutland mainland and the island upon which Copenhagen is located.

In the discussion period, after a presentation by Alex Landex from Denmark's Technical University about including a high-speed, non-maglev, rail line across the Kattegat bridge, which would result in a one-hour travel time between Copenhagen and Århus, Schiller Institute chairman Tom Gillesberg brought up the advantages of maglev, and asked the speaker if

he had considered this technology. The speaker responded that he had, but since it was important for the railroad lines to continue on to other Danish cities, a maglev line would be impractical. (The Institute has proposed a national network to solve that problem.)

Speaker Poul Arne Jensen, a representative of Danish industry from one of the Jutland regions, excitedly spoke about his trip on the Shanghai maglev, and added: "As we heard here, the further vision is that if we had maglev, we could do it in 25 minutes. That is a fantastic vision, to think that that is possible."

Gillesberg added that the most important investment a nation can make is in infrastructure for the future, suggesting maglev again. The participants at the conference agreed to form a committee to continue the work on the project to unite the entire country.

The online edition of *Jyllands-Posten*, Denmark's largest newspaper, headlined its conference coverage, "Århus-Copenhagen in 25 Minutes." The article begins, "A trip on a maglev from Aarhus to Copenhagen could be made in 25 minutes. That was one of the more curious suggestions at the conference, which no politician spoke warmly about." But if the enthusiastic response of Danish MPs to the Schiller Institute's intervention at the Parliament was any indication, the debate on maglev here is far from over.

For more on the Kattegat conference and the Schiller Institute's maglev campaign, see www.magnetto.dk.



Schiller Institute organizers, with "maglev" hats, sing their maglev canons at the Danish Parliament on Oct. 12.