

Holmön, Sweden February 26th 2011

Vice president of the commission, SIIM KALLAS.
Responsible för transport

PASSENGER RIGHTS FOR TRANSPORTS TO HOLMÖN

Mr. Kallas!

The people of Holmön, Sweden hereby urgently asks for Your support to solve our transportation mismanagement. A mismanagement backed by the Swedish government.

This issue is of utmost importance for the survival of our community on the island.

The present transportation equipment is not up to EU standards 2011. Frequently we have cancelled trips, break downs and a timetable that does not correspond to the needs of the passengers.

Future development of transports to our village and island is being hampered by the wrong decision of the Swedish government, based on information from the governmental body, Trafikverket.

People are moving away, investments dry up, banks don't dare to lend money to investors, development plans have to be shelved, our village and future is rapidly grinding to a serious halt. All these problems stem from the lack of a reliable transportation system.

The Swedish government does not look out for our passenger rights and give us our rightful future development. We are being, on all accounts discriminated.

Responsible for our transportation issue is the Infrastrukturminister of Sweden, Mrs Catharina Elmsäter-Svärd. She has had our latest petition for 3½months, and given us no answer.

Summer is fast approaching with lots of visitors due to travel to Holmön, we don't know if we can receive them all, or if visitors have to turn around due to lack of space on the ferry. We even might have to cancel our big summer festivals as the capacity of the ferry is too low..

See enclosures, to get the overall picture of our huge problem. One compact summary in english, the balance is in swedish, that give full specifications on what we ask for and why, and are copies of our petition to the Infrastrukturminister.

Best regards

Holmöns Infrastrukturgrupp(IS-gruppen)

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HOLMÖN, SWEDEN

Holmön is a village and a group of islands(5.400 ha) in the northern part of Sweden, closest town is Umeå. On the islands we have Swedens biggest Marine nature reserve, summer festivals, forestry, museum, fishing, old peoples home, school (closed spring 2010), farmer with cattle, a grocery shop(building a new one right now), restaurants, three hostels, many small tourist- and computer companies. Holmön is a village, full of life and a very popular tourist spot in the summer, with a potential to increase the number of visitors if the means of transportation is improved.

The distance to the mainland is about 9 kilometers over open sea. The route to Holmön is limited by depth(max 3,1 metre), waves(up to 4 metres), wind (up to 35 metres/second), ice (up to 60 cm thick) and limited space in the ports. Transportation of passengers and goods to the islanders is carried out by Trafikverket (department of the Swedish government).

Holmön village is a small functional society, with all the needs that is essential for people living in the EU 2011. The present means of transportation is carried out by an old worn out ferry, built 1983, that can carry only 59 passengers(was recently downgraded from 173). Maximum cargo capacity is 17 tons. In addition to the ferry a "hovercraft" was bought 2010, for transports on ice, with a capacity of 12 passengers and very limited cargo weight. Traffic delays and cancellations of trips are frequent. The Trafikverket is now trying to find ways to modernize an even older ferry, not built for open seas, to relieve "our" present one. They have been trying to find ways to rebuild this "relic" for the last 23 months, but have so far been unable to, mainly due to safety reasons. In the meantime Holmön village is losing inhabitants rapidly, and we all have difficulties planning our daily life. Trafikverket is sending the wrong information to the Government and thus blocking us from getting a functional transportation system.

The islanders (through IS-gruppen) has been trying(for 5 years) to get The Department of Infrastructure to realize that the only means of transportation that can work for Holmön is a newly built ferry. Built, considering all limitations that has to be taken into account for the run to Holmön. The department of Infrastructure has only listened to Trafikverket, and tells the islanders that our request is too expensive. The total estimated cost for our alternative runs to € 11-14 millions, that includes even the new landing piers in the ports. Lifespan for the new ferry is 35 years, a ferry that can run 365 days per annum.

The Holmö islanders therefore asks for Your assistance to convince the Swedish government that a newly built ferry, with the right size, safety measures, enough capacity(passenger, trucks and cars), right icebreaking abilities, rough weather compensations and passenger friendly means is the only way to navigate forward. We are running out of time, a quick decision is therefore vital.

We are being mistreated, neglected and discriminated, therefore we need the support from You and the EU Commission to get a reliable transportation system to our islands.

Best regards

Holmöns Infrastrukturgrupp (IS-gruppen)
Thorbjörn Lindberg