

The Øresund and the Great Belt links – Experience and Developments

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Summary

The Øresund Link opened to traffic in 2000 and as a cross-border infrastructure it connects Copenhagen in Denmark and Malmö in Sweden, two urban areas. The Great Belt Link opened to traffic in 1997/1998. This link connects two non-urban areas in the central part of Denmark and has become the most important connection between East and West Denmark. The paper presents some of the experience gathered and the development in traffic at both links. Also topics such as environmental impact, traffic safety and financing are dealt with in the paper.

Keywords: Infrastructure, traffic, environment, safety, financing model

1. Introduction to the Great Belt and the Øresund Links

Denmark has a tradition for building bridges – which, of course, is quite natural for a country surrounded by water – or characterised by many straits, fjords and islands.



But a bridge is not just a bridge. We are talking about some of the largest infrastructure projects in European history, viz. the Øresund Link connecting Denmark and Sweden across the Øresund, a 16 km sound dividing the two countries and the Great Belt Link connecting two of the largest Danish islands across the Great Belt, a stretch of 17 km water.

Fig. 1 *Two major fixed links within 10 years and number three planned (Fehmarn Belt Link)*

The dimensions and position of the two links are both unique, as are the technical challenges confronting the builders.

Similarly, 20 km long Fehmarn Belt fixed link planned between Denmark and Germany will be a challenge, but within the boundaries established by the previously established fixed links.