

Baltic ports' representatives meet in Turku

# On the edge of changes

On 6-7<sup>th</sup> September, 2012, the Baltic Ports Organization in conjunction with the Port of Turku hosted this year's Baltic Ports Conference and General Assembly. More than 80 delegates from all major Baltic ports, EU bodies, governments, academia and media attended the event.

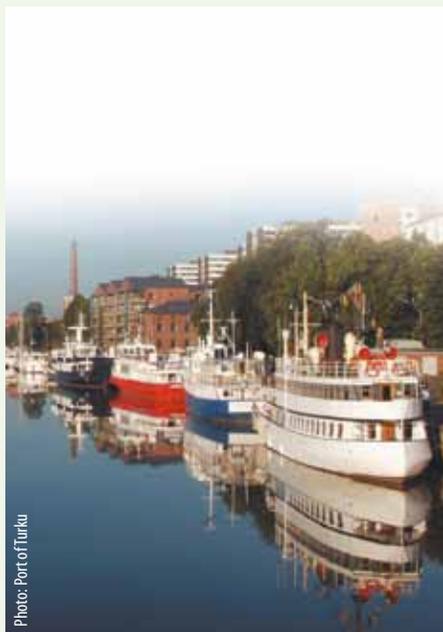


Photo: Port of Turku

The theme of this year's event was "Baltic transport market on the edge of changes". One of the main topics discussed was the new transport policy in the European Union (TEN-T Policy), particularly the

issue of financing transport infrastructure. Because of the key role of ports in the EU's logistics network, both the policy and financing tools have strong implications for the port sector.

The other major topic was the challenge the Baltic transport market will face after 2015 when the new IMO regulations on SOx emissions are launched. One of the possible solutions for the shipping industry is to fuel the ships using LNG (liquefied natural gas). During a panel session entitled "When will LNG be available as a fuel in the ports? – motivations and bottlenecks" delegates discussed bunkering solutions, investing in infrastructure and port authorities' role in implementing an LNG network.

Finally, on the second day of the event, the seminar "Focus on Russia" was held. Russia is still the biggest market in the region and many Baltic ports (including those in Finland) benefit from handling cargo to/from it. Discussions focused not only on infrastructure development in Russia itself, but also on the development of roads, railways, ports and border crossings connecting the EU with Russia. ■



Photo: Port of Turku

# LNG in



Photo: Port of Tallinn

BPO to be registered  
in Tallinn, Estonia

## Baltic Ports Organization's registration

At its annual meeting in Turku the General Assembly of BPO decided to register the organization in Tallinn, Estonia.

The decision to register BPO came as a follow-up to the internal discussion on strengthening its legal foundations. Over the years BPO's operations have grown in scale and its soft legal status has produced some uncertainties, which led the General Assembly to accept a proposal from the Port of Tallinn.

Until the end of 2012 the book-keeping and bank accounts will be run by the Ports of Stockholm. From the beginning of 2013 these duties will be handed over to the Port of Tallinn (BPO will share its address with the port's headquarters). BPO will operate under Estonian law, but the official BPO Secretariat will be kept in Gdynia, Poland. ■

BPO's new initiative

# Baltic Sea ports kicks off



**On 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2012, in Stockholm the first meeting of the 'LNG in Baltic Sea Ports' project gathered Steering Committee members and Activity Leaders of all seven Project Partner Ports.**

**T**he 'LNG in Baltic Sea Ports' project was initiated by the Baltic Ports Organization as a response to IMO's decision to establish new SOx content limits in marine fuels for ships sailing in Emission Control Areas from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2015. The initiative fosters a co-ordinated approach towards LNG bunker filling infrastructure in the Baltic Sea area with seven ports involved in the project – Aarhus, Copenhagen-Malmö, Helsingborg, Helsinki, Stockholm, Tallinn and Turku.

Each of the project partners plans to develop a suitable port infrastructure to offer LNG bunker stations to ship-owners in the future. The works in the ports focus on pre-investment studies.

The initiative's efforts will be centred in the 'LNG Guidebook' containing best practices, recommendations and standards on how to develop effective gas infrastructure in ports. The project will end on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2014, just one day before ECA becomes the daily bread in the region for us all. ■

BPO calls for a change

## Too much border control in cruise ferry business

**Baltic Ports Organization is concerned by the increased border control checks in the Schengen ports for passengers sailing between Russia and Helsinki, Stockholm and Tallinn.**

**A**pril 2012 saw a change in the passport controls carried out for St. Peter Line and its regular cruise ferry line Princess Anastasia. Up until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 the cruise ferry liner had passport checks when entering the first Schengen port (Helsinki) and when exiting the last Schengen port (Tallinn). There were no additional passport controls when travelling within the Schengen area (Helsinki-Stockholm and Stockholm-Tallinn). Since then full passport control has become obligatory (inward and outward clearance) in every port during the trip. In effect this means that full border control has to be undergone twice in all EU Schengen ports.

Baltic Ports Organization considers the new regulations as a drawback and as being controversial with the existing EU legislation. As there are reports of similar practices on operations of ferry and cruise lines in other parts of Europe, there is a growing concern that the additional long passport checks at each Schengen port will create a "bottleneck" state. The situation has already had a negative effect on the cruise clients and will undoubtedly discourage more potential customers of Baltic cruise ferries in the future. A negative financial impact might affect all ports and stakeholders involved, including local participating cities and their economies due to a decline in the amount of visitors, and will also increase all-around administrative loads.

BPO issued a statement on the subject, calling EU authorities to change the passport control at each of the Schengen call ports and revert to the previous legislation. The statement included a proposed amendment [Proposal by the EC – COM (2011)118] to EU law [a new section 3.2.11 (Giving that: Port of Departure and Arrival is the Port of St. Petersburg)]: "Where a ferry from a third country with more than one stop within the territory of the Member States takes passengers on board only for the remaining leg within that territory, these passengers shall be subject to an exit check at the port of departure and an entry check at the port of arrival. Checks on passengers who, during those stop-overs, are already on board the ferry and have not boarded in the territory of the Member States shall be carried out at the port of arrival." ■



Photo: St. Peter Line