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# Danish Ports joins BPO

## BPO's ranks reinforced by Danish Ports

The key objectives of Danish Ports refer to developing a positive climate for business and sharing knowledge and experience.

**D**anish Ports is a national association of 69 commercial ports in Denmark and the Faroe Islands, ranging from larger commercial ports like Esbjerg and Frederikshavn to smaller local ports like Bønnerup. The Danish association decided to join the Baltic community, thereby extending BPO's reach to Atlantic ports in Denmark.

### What Danish Ports can offer BPO

As the Jutland Peninsula and hundreds of Danish islands act as a natural barrier between the Atlantic and Baltic currents, Danish ports play the role of a gateway between the two regions and function as

ports. For example, the EU Commission's proposal for a port package is to some degree modelled after the Danish model, focusing on a transparent economy and increased quality in port benefits and services. Danish ports, as one of the world's leaders in introducing green and safety standards, are willing to share their experience with other ports.

### What BPO can offer Danish Ports

The BSR seems a very attractive market to ports in Denmark. Danish Ports decided to join BPO in order to provide its management an international outlook and promote cooperation between ports in the area of transportation and business development. First of all, new contacts may bring market development for some of the products and transports offered by Danish ports. Presently, the countries around the Baltic Sea receive over a third of Denmark's total export of goods, but the potential is much higher. Danish export to the Baltic Sea region has grown from EUR 24 bln in 2009 to EUR 30 bln in 2011. Over a quarter of a million people are now employed in Danish companies in the region.

The European Commission's prognosis for development in the Baltic Sea is optimistic. While the demand in Denmark's largest export markets in Sweden and Germany continues to grow, further development of business cooperation with Latvia, Lithuania and Poland is also expected. Additionally, countries like Poland and Germany provide an opportunity for Danish companies to become subcontractors of trade outside the EU. However, discussing the new mutual business opportunities, like creating stronger connections from the Baltic Sea and Kattegat to the European transport network, offers a great chance for both parties.

Last, but not least, Danish ports attach great importance to exchanging information and sharing knowledge. A possibility to compare the experience with different laws, regulations, opportunities and limitations faced by members from Baltic countries, even if separated from economic issues, is still worth integrating with the BSR.



# Supporting port business

Interview with Bogdan Ołdakowski,  
BPO Secretary General

**BPO is about to accept its new strategy for the years 2014-2016, which will be presented in September at the Baltic Port Conference in Klaipėda, Lithuania. We talk with Bogdan Ołdakowski, BPO Secretary General, about the organization's plan of activities and its vision for the future.**

■ **Concerning the strategy for the years 2010-2013, what are the most important achievements?**

We have reached a point where we can say that we are a well-recognized organization within the Baltic Sea region as well as among the EU institutions. As far as the BSR is concerned, we are the only transport organization gathering members from all countries around our sea. We have an observer status in the Helsinki Commission, where new regulations on port reception facilities for sewage from passenger ships are being discussed. In Brussels, we play an active role when it comes to discussing TEN-T policy and funding, consequences of the SECA rules for maritime transport, LNG as a fuel for ships, etc. We have achieved this by being present in the discussions of many international forums and explaining our point of view.

■ **The Vision included in the new strategy also places an emphasis on BPO being a well-recognized organization in the EU bodies and the European regions. How is this realized?**

Let me give you an example, we organize a BPO port debate in the European Parliament on an annual basis, where we discuss issues relevant to the Baltic ports and more generally – the maritime sector. We invite members of the European Parliament and Commission, to whom



we present our view but we also invite other stakeholders, e.g. shipowners. By doing this we influence the policy makers and regulators in Brussels. At the same time we try to follow the development of the ports located in other regions of the EU; we ask ourselves the question: are they facing the same challenges? An example of this is a study visit we organized to Adriatic ports, which was a very useful experience.

■ **BPO will continue to lobby for the Baltic ports at a regional and European level. Which topical areas should the most attention be given to?**

The main challenge for Baltic maritime transport are the new rules for the sulphur emission from ships and their consequences for the business activity in our region. A 0.1% limit will be introduced on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. I think we should all take a lesson from how the IMO regulations and the Sulphur Directive have been introduced. Therefore, we try to explain in Brussels but also to the governments of the Baltic countries that the principle “the same rules throughout the EU” should be applied to avoid distortion of competition in the European Union in the future. However, since the Sulphur Directive has been approved, we are in a dialogue with the Commission on how to help the maritime industry meet these new requirements. Among others, we initiated the project “LNG in the Baltic Sea Ports” supported by the TEN-T fund. We also keep track of how the EU plans to support transport infrastructure projects (new TEN-T Policy, Connecting Europe Facility), making sure that the EU money is fairly distributed all over Europe.

■ **BPO plans to organize seminars and study visits to discuss**



**various topics important for the ports. Which topics have been identified as crucial by the BPO Board?**

Yes, this topic was discussed in Kotka in May this year by the BPO Board and, as a conclusion, our organization will pay more attention to the exchange of knowhow between ports. Seminars, study visits and even small meetings are the way to do it. The Board identified a number of topics, e.g. waste reception facilities in the ports, port/city relations, cold ironing, custom and other control procedures, management of dockers and crane workers. However, the list is not closed and other proposals from BPO members are encouraged.

■ **BPO wishes to create a networking forum for small and medium-sized ports in the BSR. What are the incentives behind this?**

The fact is that small and semi-sized ports are a very important part of the port market within the Baltic. However, port organizations like ours, the European Sea Ports Organization or national organizations tend to discuss issues like TEN-T Policy, big infrastructure projects, SECA rules, EU port package, etc., while the needs of smaller ports are different, including e.g. environmental management, financial performance or how to define their strategies. Smaller ports also need to have a forum for discussions to learn from each other. BPO in its new strategy is responding to this need. The plan is to organize a first seminar for small and semi-sized ports in Spring 2014.

Lena Lorenc