



The market place of ideas

Turku is the oldest city in Finland and for many centuries it has been its very heart and originally the word “Finland” referred only to the area around the city. The town is also the birth place of the country’s first port, which in 2012 is going to host the Baltic Ports Organization Annual Conference.

Having over 860 years of trade and shipping tradition (the word “Turku” originates from an Old East Slavic word, *tŭrgŭ*, meaning “market place”), Port of Turku is one of three major universal Finnish ports. The seaport fully fathoms today’s harsh economic climate and is constantly evolving. In the coming years the port will have a better access road, as the Finnish government has inked EUR 20 mln for the development of the Suikkilantie road and a new HybriLift in order to improve crane operations. But the latest news is the port’s contract with Gasum for constructing an LNG import terminal in the Pansio

Harbour to be operational by 2015. Christian Ramberg, Managing Director of Turku stresses that this investment will be beneficial not only for the shipping industry, but also for other sectors in the city area. Having on hand the proper mix of cargo, passenger traffic (one of the biggest Baltic ferry ports) and prospective investments, Port of Turku is on a straight course to meet future demands.

The conference’s agenda

This year the Baltic Ports Conference will take place in the Radisson Blu Marina Palace Hotel. The event’s programme will kick off with presentations of trade and

transport issues viewed from a global to regional scale perspective. Attendees will get to know the macroeconomic situation in the world, within the EU as well as in the Baltic countries and afterwards will see how global schemes of trade and shipping are influencing the Baltic Sea region.

Next, Session II will commence, focusing on EU policy and infrastructure development. Representative from the Ports and Inland Navigation unit from the European Commission will highlight implications of both the TEN-T policy and the Connecting Europe Facility on the port sector. And, as in the future, one



Photos: Port of Turku

will have the opportunity not only to sail on the Baltic, but also go right underneath it; the company Femern A/S will showcase the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link as well as present how it will impact cargo flows in the Baltic.

In turn, the Afternoon Session will be devoted to responding to new challenges in the transport sector in the Baltic. Speakers will touch upon, among others, such topics as ro-ro and ferry industries and structural change, TEN-T policy, the ongoing development of LNG infrastructure, and last but

not least, the IMO sulphur directive and its consequences for the whole maritime cluster. Christian Ramberg invites to join the BPO event and the discussion about the future of the Baltic maritime sector, "We have a lot of questions regarding the years to come. For me and for the Port of Turku it's hard to imagine the Baltic society without a very well functioning transport system, connecting the countries within the BSR. There will be a lot of issues to solve, but I think we will make it". The first day of the conference will end with a gala dinner.

The second day of the conference will host the BPO General Assembly during the morning hours, then the whole day session entitled 'Focus on Russia' will start, presenting multiple aspects of doing business with and in this country. In the end, after summarizing the conference's outcomes, conference participants will have a chance to visit Turku Shipyard and see the construction of Viking Grace, the first big LNG ferry, ordered by Viking Line.

Grzegorz Barański

Baltic Ports Conference 2012

Baltic transport market at the edge of changes

Dedicated seminar: Focus on Russia

and

BPO General Assembly 2012

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More information at www.bpoports.com