

Baltic ports met in Riga

Baltic ports discussed opportunities and threats for the regional maritime market in Riga, Latvia, during its annual meeting. Baltic Ports Conference 2015 gathered over 100 delegates from port and related industries, officials from governments, European Commission, researchers, consultants and media representatives as well.



The Baltic maritime market is currently facing a change caused by new macroeconomic and geopolitical conditions in the region. A recession in Russia as well as restrictions in trade between Russia and EU, USA and other countries, have a big impact on many Baltic ports as they handle a large portion of consumer's goods for the Russian market.

Torbjörn Becker, Director from Stockholm School of Economics, underlined that Russia has experienced a negative economic growth since 2014 (below -4 % in 3rd quarter 2015) and drop in import value by 8 % comparing 3rd quarter in 2015 with the same period in 2014.

Prof. Sergei Sutyrin from St. Petersburg State University proved that revenues from international economic transactions, as a share of RF federal budget revenues is a level of 40 %, therefore decreasing oil prices have a significant impact on Russian budget and public spending. **Dr Maciej Matczak** from Gdynia Maritime University, gave a comprehensive overview of Baltic ports market, which have recently experienced drops in handled volumes. According to his estimation the container traffic will decrease from about 10 mln TEU in 2014 to 8 mln TEU counted totally in all Baltic ports.

Apart from geopolitical and macroeconomic circumstances Baltic ports are now facing environmental challenges associated with the new or planned environmental regulations. According to the new IMO rules, sewage from passenger ships will be delivered to port reception facilities instead of discharged to the sea. BPO supports this new regulations as it leads to less nutrients at sea and thus cleaner waters. However, there are many questions and unclear issues associated with introduction of such rules, e.g. the sewage pumping capacities, quality of sewage delivered from cruise vessels, charging system, etc...

Moreover, ports are also facing a challenge to find out a logic and economic compromise with municipal waste water treatment companies. **Bogdan Ołdakowski**, BPO Secretary General, commenting the discussion during the environmental panel said: *"It is a real challenge for the Baltic ports to overcome many uncertainties in whole process of introduction of these new rules. BPO is on the opinion that the role of maritime*

administration and relevant ministries in the Baltic countries should facilitate the dialogue between many stakeholders, like ports and municipal waste water companies, in order to reach a solutions in each of the Baltic countries.” During the conference BPO has presented a new project initiative "**Green InfraPort**". Green InfraPorts Project focuses on the development of green port infrastructure, e.g. port reception facilities for sewage, onshore power supply, reception of sewage, LNG bunkering and energy management.



The second day of the BPO Conference was dedicated to EU transport policy and financing the transport infrastructure. In particular the debate focused on how to link TEN-T land based corridor concept with Motorways of the Sea Programme. **Jose Anselmo**, from European Commission presented the recent status of the Motorways of the Sea program and ways to the future. He encouraged ports to establish a partnership among the ports and apply for co-funding from CEF fund. **Catherine Trautmann**, EU coordinator for North Sea-Baltic Sea corridor, explained that one of the main role as coordinator is to link maritime transport with land transport. She also emphasized that during the last CEF call, Baltic States received 442 mln Euro for Rail Baltic project. However; the total estimated cost of investments for development of Baltic-North Sea corridor is around **133 billion Euro**. The next call for MoS projects within CEF Fund is expected to be open in autumn 2015.

Baltic Ports Conference was held in Riga (Latvia) on 2nd- 4th September 2015. Ports of Helsinki and HaminaKotka will be hosting next year Baltic Ports Conference (8th - 9th September 2016) dedicated to the celebration of 25th Anniversary of BPO.

For conference presentations, please, click [here](#).

Prepared by BPO