

## Opening Speech, Jari SAINIO, BSC General Assembly, Gävleborg

Dear Members of the CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Dear Guests

Dear Hosts from Region Gävleborg,

Warmly welcome to the 21st General Assembly of the Baltic Sea Commission. Region Gävleborg, thank you for hosting us.

20 years ago this year. In the Region of Kymenlaakso in Finland, the Baltic Sea Commission was founded. We have a long history together and being part of the same platform creates understanding of each other and builds trust. This is fundamental for good cooperation.

During the last year, the organisation has had a process where we have discussed the strength and importance of our organisation.

This has resulted in documents for approval of the General Assembly. We will today adopt the organisation's new Vision and Mission Statement, we have a proposal of revised internal rules. And in order to strengthen the foundation of the organisation the Executive Committee proposes an increased membership fee in the years to come.

The main action of our organisation is done through our working groups. The chair persons of the working groups will present the work carried out in the Maritime Affairs, Transport and Energy.

Henry Ford once said on the topic of partnership:

Coming together is beginning

Keeping together is process

Working together is success.

The work and the success of the working groups we will hear more about during today.

Throughout the year the Baltic Sea Commission has sought cooperation with other Pan-Baltic organisations and actors who are also dedicated to implement and improve the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

We have sought partnerships and within our thematic areas made workshops during EUSBSR, Strategy forum in Jurmala, BSSSC Conference in Visby, European Maritime Days in Turku and much more.

I am proud over the work we do.

I see results both when it comes to personal and organisational learning, formulation of joint positions and political impact. Both at sea basin level and in Brussels.

I am looking forward to today.

But I am also looking forward to tomorrow.

The Baltic Sea Commission is the voice of the Baltic Sea regions. And a platform for cooperation.

Tomorrow, Region Gävleborg, PA Innovation in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the Baltic Sea Commission organises a stakeholder conference that many of you will also be attending.

Once again. I am happy to welcome you to the Baltic Sea Commission General Assembly.