



## 10 COUNTRIES ON A STRING



Press Release/News Update

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### CRUISE BALTIC CONFERENCE IN COPENHAGEN FACES INDUSTRY CHALLENGES HEAD ON

- focus on consolidating relationships with the cruise lines positioned in the Baltic Sea Region -

Over 45 partners of the **Cruise Baltic** network, representing the ports of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Russia, gathered for their Steering Group Meeting at the Scandic Copenhagen Hotel on October 28 and 29, 2010. The objective - to discuss the industry challenges and issues facing them currently, while at the same time using the opportunity to forge closer relationships with those cruise lines with a presence in the Baltic Sea Region.

The highlight on the Agenda was the **Cruise Industry Session** when industry experts formed a panel for discussion with **Cruise Baltic** partners. These experts (below) were introduced to the audience by organizer **Cruise Baltic Director, Bo Larsen**, who then provided background on their respective companies/roles and covered topics ranging from:

#### **Terry Dale, President and CEO of Cruise Lines International Association CLIA:**

- reference made to the "cruise industry revolution, not just evolution" – we are witnessing accelerated growth in Europe – record no of 4.95m Europeans cruised in 2009; The Travel Agent is integral to success – cruising remains no 1 with their customers. In their 2010 Travel Agent Survey Results, the Baltic is ranked in the Top 5 'Hot' Destinations; and Top 5 Cruise Destinations. The three C's of cruising - collaboration, co-operation and communication.

#### **Robert Ashdown, Technical Director, European Cruise Council (ECC)**

- shipping is only one part of the maritime sector and that all stakeholders ie ports, need to play their part. Key to our message, the Baltic needs protection. Cruising has to meet passenger expectations and the industry has a responsibility – the focus must be increased on measures to protect the environment. The Baltic is recognized as an extremely sensitive sea area.

#### **Neil Palomba, Corporate Operating Officer of MSC Cruises:**

- 18% of European cruisers travelled in Northern Europe; 2011 will see 250 calls by MSC in the Cruise Baltic regions. Looking to increase capacity in the region and extending the season, especially if the ports are prepared to lower their costs. In 10 years, family-owned MSC will have increased its berth capacity by 7 times.

#### **Captain Burkhard Mueller, Director of Fleet Services for AIDA Cruises:**

- sustainable success can only be achieved by ethically correct behaviour and responsible behaviour towards guests. The German market still has potential for dynamic growth – the German cruise market reached 1m passengers in 2009 for the first time, however, currently only 1.2% of all Germans choose to go on a cruise. AIDA offers a casual but stylish holiday for outgoing people of all ages, looking for diversity and value for money.

#### **Graeme Adams, Vice President Voyage Planner, SeaDream Yacht Club:**

- SeaDream has introduced Northern Europe voyages for the first time in 2011 – in planning these new voyages, Copenhagen ticks all the boxes and itineraries featuring Stockholm have sold particularly well. The concept/lifestyle of SeaDream is Yachting not Cruising; both 112-passenger SeaDream I and II are rated by the 2011 Berlitz Guide to Cruising as two of the top 5 passenger vessels in the world.

Says Bo Larsen, **Cruise Baltic**: "This on-going, two-way communication with industry specialists is essential in order for us at **Cruise Baltic** to keep moving forward and succeed at achieving our objectives and goals.

"The topic of the environment is always at the top of our agenda; we believe it is a key issue in the future growth potential of our Baltic Sea region."

On speaking at the conference, in support of **Cruise Baltic** and its initiatives, partner **Annica Jansson** representing **Mariehamn**, The Åland Islands, Finland, said: "Cruise Baltic's meetings not only let us share ideas and experiences with other ports and destinations in the Baltic Sea but they also provide an excellent forum for meeting with key representatives from the cruise lines. Cruise Baltic is an invaluable liaison between destinations like Mariehamn and the cruise lines. Representing a smaller port and destination, I appreciate the chance to learn from the high calibre speakers from the cruise lines, as well as the opportunity to talk with them.

"Smaller, premier ships and yachts are a perfect match for our small ports. Next season, we are thrilled to have both Seabourn and SeaDream calling at Mariehamn, with a total of 8 calls. For these type of cruise lines smaller ports like ours offer a more intimate experiences, allowing their guests to explore the destinations in a more personal way."

The guest speakers' comments also included:

**Robert Ashdown**, ECC: "As the ECC looks to advance the interests of the cruise industry in Europe, we wish to develop, build and strengthen our good relationship with Cruise Baltic and others – spreading that message across the regions."

**Neil Palombo**: MSC Cruises: "I support the positive role of the Cruise Baltic network; we look to them to facilitate contacts between cruise lines and destinations (for example, local politicians, public and private stakeholders); and for the co-operation on common approaches to regional bodies, such as HELCOM on e.g. waste reception facilities and other environmental matters. Additionally, Cruise Baltic is an invaluable source for passenger cruise stats/impact in the wider goal of promoting cruising in the region."

**Captain Burkhard Mueller**, **AIDA Cruises**: "Cruise Baltic has the vision and is committed to promoting the Baltic as a top of the world cruise destination as a whole. They recognize that cruise ports should closely co-operate with us as cruise lines, in order to create attractions for cruise passengers, managing best port services and achieving commercially viable conditions for our mutual benefit."

#### **The Facts:**

**Cruise Baltic** is a network of cruise destinations in the Baltic Sea offering easy access to 10 countries on a string with an ocean of adventures. The association - started in 2004 with a joint co-operation between 12 destinations - now headed by Director Bo Larsen, has grown to 27 destinations and 47 partners.

#### **For further press information, or photographs of the Copenhagen meeting, please contact:**

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