



10 COUNTRIES ON A STRING



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COMMUNICATION AND COMMITMENT - THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

The main theme running through the recent Cruise Baltic Steering Group Meeting held at Sweden's Scandic Crown Gothenburg, was the importance of 'communication and commitment' within the cruise industry. This was endorsed both by the partners from over 22 Cruise Baltic sea region ports and destinations attending and the two guest speakers Patrick Schneider, Royal Caribbean International (RCI) and Rachael Jackson, Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines during their respective presentations.

One of the first items on the agenda was a Shore Excursion Workshop when **Cruise Baltic Director Bo Larsen** introduced **Patrick Schneider** in his role for **RCI as Director of Shore Excursions and Explorations**.

In his introduction, Patrick spoke to the partners of his total respect for **Cruise Baltic** and what the association had and was achieving – 'the best example I know of destinations working together.'

With 19 years' experience working at RCI both on board ships and office-based ashore, Patrick currently oversees tour operations of 33 ships in the fleet. He reported that based on guest feedback, the Baltic region rates very highly on satisfaction levels in comparison to others – scoring strongly on accessibility and the friendly onshore welcome, key to driving guests ashore. Currently RCI is committed to targeting the Southern European market to cruise to the Baltic.

Patrick commented: "**Cruise Baltic** has already identified its commitment to innovation and collaboration. Cruise lines, together with marine, ports and destinations need to work together with their respective communities to find new ways of visiting new venues ashore – ensuring a great experience – and then promote these excursion programmes to the marketplace."

As **PR Manager for Fred. Olsen**, Rachael Jackson opened her presentation by stressing the importance of cruise lines and destinations collaborating to a greater degree, interaction and dialogue being essential. Fred. Olsen is renowned for its Norwegian cruising programmes; and she spoke of the popularity with its guests of the Baltic region, particularly with its first-ever winter Norway cruise, "In Search of the Northern Lights" in February 2012. Rachael encouraged the audience to keep the press informed at all times - facilitating the media in their work - which would in turn benefit the cruise lines, ports and destinations in their on-going objectives to promote the diverse attractions of the Baltic Sea region to international cruise passengers.

Comments Bo Larsen: "I believe we are fulfilling the overall objectives of our Steering Group meetings, which is to discuss and agree between us **Cruise Baltic** strategy and activities. Additionally, knowledge sharing with the partners of the association and external expertise from the cruise industry is essential to achieve our goals."

Between the 2-day workshop sessions discussing the challenges facing **Cruise Baltic** and its industry partners - and consolidating their knowledge and experiences - hosts Gothenburg treated the delegates and guests to an evening of entertainment: a comprehensive tour – on board a vintage tram - of the city and port area - culminating in a private show-round and dinner aboard the very special **Swedish Ship Götheborg**, which is moored at Eriksberg Pier.

On the 12th of September 1745, the Swedish East Indiaman Götheborg headed for her home port after almost two years of sailing the world's oceans. The ship suffered heavily from storms, and the crew were exhausted but full of expectations. However, the triumphant homecoming would end in catastrophe. With a pilot on board and before the very eyes of encouraging spectators in small boats and on shorelines, the ship ran aground in the middle of the entrance to Gothenburg harbour - and sunk with her entire cargo. Eventually the Swedish East Indiaman Götheborg was forgotten, until 240 years later when a diver rediscovered her and began a marine-archaeological excavation. The attention surrounding the find and the excavation whetted people's appetites, and led to the slightly crazy idea of rebuilding the entire vessel - in full scale using traditional techniques - and sailing to China once again. The ship is open for public at Pier four 2 at Eriksberg, between February - May and at Stenpiren in the city centre, from June 27 - August 21, 2011.

NEWS: EU invests in Port of Gothenburg - The ports of Gothenburg, - Århus and Tallinn - have received EUR 24.8 million in EU support. A joint project has been set up with the aim of improving sea transport throughout the whole of the Baltic region. The investment in the Port of Gothenburg amounts to EUR 11.5 million and will be used to eliminate bottlenecks in the infrastructure.

***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 12 destinations, headed by Director Bo Larsen - has now grown to 24.*

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