



Ministry of Economic Affairs  
and Employment of Finland

16 th Arctic Passion Seminar  
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Opening Speech  
Ann-Mari Kemell,  
The State Secretary to the Minister of Economic Affairs of Finland

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year we all wished for a mild winter. The high energy prices in Europe scared us all, and we have hoped for the icy weather to stay away.

Usually however, ice is not something we in Finland fear. On the contrary, we have learned to live with it – and gained high-level expertise in planning and building applicable ice-going solutions, technology, machinery, and vessels. During the seminar, from the other speakers, you will learn more about those.

The Finnish economy relies on international trade with concrete products – paper, machinery, food. The materials and equipment are first carried to Finland and then the final products to the customers abroad.

Approximately 90 % of goods exports and 80 % of goods imports are carried by sea. Therefore, Finland is dependent on efficient shipping – also at wintertime and in ice conditions.

This explains Finland's long tradition and continuous investments on shipbuilding and maritime equipment industry.

Today, maritime industry in Finland includes 1 100 companies with over 25 000 employees and total turnover of 7.6 billion euros. Finland's expertise in maritime industry covers ship design and construction, materials and technology; ship engine and automation systems; ship electrification, and navigation and piloting operations.

In ice-breaking and ice management technology, Finland has, along with world famous companies, led Arctic research and education, along with testing areas for sea trials.

The global climate goals are changing the logic in logistics. The business needs low emission fuels and carbon-free vessels as well as, smart digital solutions.

We need to integrate our ports, vessels and the whole logistics chain with digital and connected solutions in order to optimise goods transport. This will help us to reduce emissions and waste over time, and to ensure a well-functioning, resilient supply chain

To accelerate the development of sustainable solutions, our national innovation agency Business Finland has granted **40 million euros for leading companies** in maritime industry. These companies commit to increase their research, development, and innovation activities in Finland. In addition, Business Finland will fund the larger ecosystem of each leading company.

The leading companies with their ecosystem aim at developing sustainable and smart maritime solutions, for example a climate-neutral cruise ship, and technologies enabling introduction of green fuels.

We expect this seed fund to elevate the businesses with several billion euros and boost industrial investments and employment. We expect hundreds of new RDI jobs. Above all, we expect significant positive effects on the environment.

To further support the maritime industry, The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is leading a coordinative development program. The program aims to ensure that the policy targets and development tools for sustainable global growth of the industry are suitable, well known, and efficiently used.

As we all know, international interest towards the polar areas, Arctic and Antarctic, has increased significantly, both due to the climate change and its consequences, and to the geopolitical and economical importance of these areas. Finland has been and is keen to continue being active polar actor.

The importance of the offshore wind energy has increased during past years due to several reasons, but all with the same base: we need more fossil-free energy sources.

In Finland, we look for other benefits from the off-shore windmill business than only the green energy they are producing:

- As the offshore wind power sector grows, the export opportunities of the companies that have competence in offshore wind power, especially in Arctic conditions, will increase.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges of shipping are known. Many solutions are at use already, or at least they are at the drawing tables. Still there exist more possibilities to improve technology, materials, systems and business models. The companies and researchers in Finland are very good at many areas, but none of us will succeed alone. Therefore, the international collaboration is urgent, be it in trade, along the supply chains, or in R&D projects.

I urge you to form trusted partnerships and develop solutions, which will help save our planet.

I wish you a fruitful seminar. Thank you.