Arctic Passion News 1 / 2025

Dear Reader,

Over the past year, global geopolitical tensions have intensified, leading to an increasingly polarised world. This division affects all sectors, including Arctic technology development and icebreaker design.

The rising tensions highlight the need for resilience and adaptability in our industry. As divisions between nations and regions deepen, cooperation and innovation in Arctic operations become even more crucial.

Recently, United States, Canada, and Finland signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on icebreaker collaboration, the ICE Pact. This initiative formalises cooperation between the three nations, aiming to strengthen the shipbuilding industry's role in enhancing NATO's Arctic capabilities.

The ICE Pact represents a significant step forward in improving our collective ability to operate in extreme Arctic conditions, while ensuring regional security and stability.

In the Baltic Sea, damages to subsea cables and pipelines have emphasised the need for robust security measures to protect maritime infrastructure. The Finnish Navy's new corvettes under construction will improve NATO's capability to increase security also during wintertime, when the Gulf of Finland may be frozen.

While the winter of 2025 appears mild, the previous one was a stark contrast. A relevant question is today's capability to protect our waters under normal winter conditions, let alone during severe winters. In 2010/2011, ice covered nearly the entire Baltic Sea. How many naval vessels are able to operate even in relatively easy ice conditions or a cold environment?

At Aker Arctic, we continue to advance icebreaker design and ice technology expertise. Our knowhow is our contribution to solve maritime challenges in icy waters. Through our commitment to innovation and excellence, we have introduced many pioneering icebreaker concepts tailored to our clients' needs, and our work continues.

Recent efforts also include contributions to the structural dimensioning in the Finnish-Swedish Ice Class Rules, an example of our exceptional understanding of ice and how operations in ice influence the technical solutions of ships.

Our commitment to energy efficiency improvements continue to shape the environmental impact of shipping in icy waters. We have a long tradition of developing solutions that require less energy to get the work done.

Since power demand accounts for the majority of icebreaking costs, reducing this consumption lowers both construction and operational costs. Additionally, it decreases emissions, and enables the use of greener fuels.

Having served as CEO for over a year now, I find our current environment both dynamic and fascinating. The focus has shifted from commercial winter navigation to governmental projects, reflecting the evolving nature of our business landscape. The challenges we face are complex, but they also offer opportunities for growth and innovation.

Our exceptional team, driven by their passion for overcoming obstacles, continues to be our greatest asset. Their dedication and motivation are the driving forces behind our success, enabling us to push the boundaries and achieve remarkable results.

Sincerely yours,

Mika Hovilainen
Managing Director