

OPENING SPEECH

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Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to Kalmar and to the University of Kalmar. Our city is one of the old diamonds around the Baltic Sea Region, as you may notice. Here was a Nordic union once declared during the late 14th century.

The University of Kalmar is a middle-sized, rather young university with a research focus in science and undergraduate education in several fields. One of our research fields is environmental science. Another is chemistry. Sometimes our researchers combine the two.

The Baltic Sea Region has become a concept. And it also stands for something. Visiting China and the Yangtze Delta River some month ago, I realized that the Chinese looked at our Baltic Sea Region with great interest. Especially the eastern part of the region has a tremendous growth, almost comparable to the one in China – therefore they see this region as an interesting commercial partner. But the Chinese also recognize the industry here working with sustainable solutions and our research in this field, which is a necessary part in making the growth sustainable.

This symposium is a good example of the growing collaboration between researchers and industry in the countries in the Baltic Sea Region. Our goal for this conference is to make this a continuing talk with focus on the future health of the environment in our region, not least our Baltic Sea. The behaviour of industry, agriculture, shipping and ordinary people has to be changed in order to make this region a better place to live in. We, living in this region are well aware of our responsibilities to the coming generations in order to hand over this Baltic Sea Region in a good environmental shape to the next generation.

It is my sincere hope that you will have an interesting conference!