

Mr. Talis Straume, Chairman of BRA, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to address the 27th International Baltic Road Conference on behalf of the Nordic Road Association. For the first time, Iceland is the leading country of NRA, starting 1st of July 2008 and concluding with a conference in Reykjavík in June 2012. Iceland has a close friendship with the Baltic states and we are always met there with great hospitality.

The first Memorandum of Understanding between the Nordic and Baltic Road Associations was signed in June 1992. The intention was to promote the development of the road, road traffic and road transport sector in Northern Europe, through information exchange and co-operation between road and traffic professionals. Furthermore, the technical committees from NRA and BRA should find ways of regular co-operation.

The co-operation between the two organizations runs smoothly and I believe that the aims of the Memorandum have been fulfilled in most respects. Not least a lot of personal and professional contacts have been established, both on the level of the boards and the Technical Committees. Never the less, the collaboration can be developed further to become more efficient. In the global context we all represent small countries – at least I can safely say so myself – and by joining forces we have a stronger voice in the European and International forum. The main benefit with our co-operation will however continue to be the information exchange and technological knowledge transfer between our countries.

To day, some and luckily not all of our countries have great economical difficulties, which also reduce heavily our road budgets and can even influence our possibilities for co-operation and contacts abroad temporarily. Hopefully, the painful experience of the crisis will also give some new knowledge on how to meet and cope with such situation, which we can share within our organizations. I am confident that this situation will change in the very near future, and we will soon be back on the right track again. At least I trust that I will see many of you again at the Via Nordica conference in Reykjavík in June 2012.

I bring forward to the Baltic road Association the best wishes from the Nordic Road Association and we congratulate you with the 27th Baltic road Conference and look forward to the interesting technical and social programs we have in front of us in the coming days.

Thank you.