

Dear Finnish Trade Guild Member,

The 2014 Annual General Meeting of the Finnish Trade Guild (FTG) took place on February 11th at the Finnish Embassy in Warsaw. Participating members approved the Guild's 2013 activity report and finances and the 2014 activity plan, elected the 2014 FTG Board members as well as nominated the FTG representatives to the Board of the Scandinavian-Polish Chamber of Commerce (SPCC).

The participants also received an interesting analysis of the political situation in Ukraine by Special Adviser **Dr. Hiski Haukkala** from the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a topical update on Finnish-Polish cooperation and upcoming events from Ambassador **Mr. Jari Vilen**. The meeting was followed by a cocktail reception hosted by Ambassador Mr. Vilen.

The following persons were elected to the **2014 FTG Board**:

Johan Puotila, Confero Consulting, Chairman; jpuotila@conferopr.com

Piotr Prus, ECOVIS Milczarek I Wspólnicy Kancelaria Prawna, Vice Chairman, piotr.prus@ecovis.com

Anna Maria Kalamaja, Suomen Unipol, Board Member, suomen.unipol.pl@unipol.fi

Harri Reiman, Leinonen, Board Member, harri.reiman@leinonen.pl

Pauli Rumbin, HT Laser, Board Member, pauli.rumbin@htlaser.fi

Kari Vähäkangas, Finpro, Board Member, Kari.Vahakangas@finpro.fi

Marcin Bruszewski, Fortum, Deputy Board Member, marcin.bruszewski@fortum.com

Mika Leppänen, Lemminkäinen, Deputy Board Member, mika.leppanen@lemminkainen.com

Pekka Männistö, OpusCapita, Deputy Board Member, pekka.mannisto@opuscapita.com

Johan Puotila, Piotr Prus and **Harri Reiman** were nominated as FTG representatives to the SPCC Board, for the Chamber's upcoming Annual General Assembly.

On behalf of the newly elected Board I want to thank our members for their trust.

Our gratitude and thanks also go to **Iska Nirviö** and **Tuomas Asunmaa** for their valuable and active service and participation in FTG Board work over the past several years, Iska as a FTG Vice Chairman and SPCC Board Member and Tuomas as a FTG Deputy Board member.

In 2013 FTG had another **year of record participation** in different FTG events, with ca. 600 persons in attendance. At the same time we increased our corporate membership by 2, from 59 to 61. The latter did not meet the net growth objectives that the Board set for itself at the beginning of the year as while FTG gained 7 new members in 2013, 5 members seized their Polish operations or resigned from membership for other reasons. Meanwhile number of total SPCC corporate members declined in 2013 by 4, from 341 to 337.

FTG has a distinct and important role to play in bringing the Finnish business community and friends of Finland in Poland together and in providing a Finnish context, angle and edge to their SPCC membership. This the FTG Board will continue building on, together with our members, and with the crucial support of our corporate sponsors.

We will continue looking into opportunities to promote our members and their interests in Poland, both through active participation in the work of the SPCC Board and our own distinct activities. FTG events such as the *Summer Picnic* and the *Independence Day's*

Night continue to be important in bringing a large number of our members, business partners and friends of Finland together and in enhancing **social and business networking**.

Adding further concrete value to SPCC membership is the only way to secure the Chamber's future in terms of membership retention and attracting new members across Poland. Therefore and in line with the initiative adopted in the 2011 FTG Annual General Meeting in form of an unanimous resolution addressed to the SPCC Board, FTG kept alive also in 2013 the idea of providing **basic legal advice services to SPCC members**. As a result, the SPCC Board decided in the Fall of 2013 in favor of initiating such services.

By majority decision the SPCC Board also decided to outsource these services to an external law firm, as opposed to hiring an in-house resource as advocated by FTG. 2014 will form an important year in implementing this service in a practical way so it can become as successful and popular a membership attraction and retention tool as it is in the many Nordic Chambers of Commerce that already provide such a service through an in-house resource.

FTG also continues to strive for increased **backing of member companies' legitimate business interests** through SPCC. In doing so the Chamber can learn from corresponding activities that numerous Chambers of Commerce in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway engage in.

Ambassador **Jari Vilen** has actively spoken for and engaged in activities aimed at saving some of Warsaw's so called **Finnish houses, or "Suomitalot"**, erected soon after WWII and constituting a genuinely historical part of the Warsaw that was rebuilt following the devastating destruction of the capital.

FTG continues to support this initiative and to cooperate with all parties sharing the goal of preserving one block, or 6 to 7 of these historical houses for future generations, maintaining them in active use. The preserved houses could contain for example a permanent exhibition of the re-building of Warsaw, serve as meeting premises and promote different Finnish products, services, know how and design.

Now that a foundation was established in 2013 to administer any preserved houses, the Finnish business community can have a very important role in contributing to this project through technical know how, products and services or funds.

We look forward to an active and productive year 2014. If and when you as a member have ideas on the development of FTG and the Chamber's activities and services or cooperation opportunities between your company and FTG or the Chamber, please feel free to contact me or any of the other FTG Board members at any time.

Tapaamisiin!

Johan Puotila
Chairman