

## Norwegian- Russian Maritime Innovations, Moscow

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Vikings were able to construct more advanced ships than much wealthier nations further south in Europe.

These vessels took them as far as you could get at the time – to England, to the Middle East – even to America – 500 years before Columbus.

One of their favourite destinations was Russia.

They navigated their way down the Volga – and their vessels were filled with fur, honey, tar and other products that were in high demand here.

The Vikings are perhaps better remembered for other activities than peaceful trade – possibly because historians find fighting and looting more exciting than trade and business.

But I don't.

And our excellent hosts, the Chambers of Commerce, most certainly don't.

Trade represents one of the highest forms of human civilisation – and it is the highway – or main waterway – to wealth, welfare and well-being.

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For centuries, Norway has lived off the sea, from the sea, for the sea.

Modern Norway would not have been possible without the sea.

The wealthy bank of marine and maritime knowledge that Vikings, fishermen, sailors, ship-builders, captains, admirals, traders and engineers have built for us gives us a competitive edge – which we aim to exploit.

The Norwegian government has launched an ambitious ocean strategy, and one of the main pillars is our maritime industry.

This is an industry undergoing rapid changes – developing and implementing new technologies and adapting to new and stricter environmental requirements.

Some see green requirements as a problem – we don't.

They demand products and solutions of high quality – and innovative workers and engineers with refined skills.

We believe that our maritime industry is in possession of such skills and quality.

And we believe that we can achieve even more with these skills and qualities if we combine them with the skills and qualities of other powers of maritime industry – like Russia.

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For decades, our shipyards have gradually been equipping our fishermen with vessels that allow them to catch more fish and take better care of their own health and security.

By reducing the use of fuel, they have also done their share for the health of the planet – and for the health of the ship-owner's budget.

Also the handling of the fish itself has been improved – so that the health and quality of the product we offer to the world is much higher.

We treat the fish better – and we bring it faster and fresher to faraway markets.

This success would not have been possible without close dialogue and exchange of knowledge between those that build the vessel and those that use it.

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Already in 2000, the first ferry powered by liquefied natural gas was delivered – in Norway.

Today, there are around 125 ships fuelled by LNG in the world – and about 60 of them operate in Norwegian waters

The world's first fully battery driven ferry, "Ampere", has been operating in Norwegian waters since 2015.

By 2021, we will have more than 60 battery driven ferries in Norway.

We have built the world's first gas-powered ferry and the first electric fishing boat.

We have also developed ground-breaking aquaculture technology for use offshore.

All these innovations show that there is no contradiction between saving the planet and saving jobs.

They are profitable for both planet and profit.

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More than a thousand years after our ancestors sailed down the Volga, Russia and Norway are still closely connected by our waterways.

There is a lot we can achieve together.

As Russia looks to renew its fishing fleet – Norwegian shipyards are very eager to contribute.

And, as I told Deputy Minister Ryazantsev during our constructive talks today, they do have something to contribute with:

Their own experience in building vessels that catch more fish, emit less fuel and treat both fish, fisherman and planet better.

Their own experience in achieving this through listening to the needs and knowledge of the customer.

Their experience and expertise – and ability to listen – should enable them to deliver the technology, equipment, design and competence that Russian shipyards need – that Russian fishermen need.

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Centuries of contact with the sea has given Norway an advantage, but so has centuries of contact with the engineers and shipbuilders from other countries.

Learning is never a one-way street.

There is no such thing as a monopoly on maritime or marine knowledge.

Let me remind you:

We are celebrating 60 years of Norwegian–Russian marine research cooperation this year.

When our shipyards develop new projects, they take the best of their own ideas and combine them with the best they can get from others.

Whenever Norwegian shipyards develop an innovative vessel, the customers takes active part – informing about their particular needs and sharing their skills.

This is how you tailor-make the ships of the future.

Often, competent sub-contractors from 4-5 different countries are used.

We have a lot to learn from each other.

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As Peter the Great knew very well when he wanted to modernise Russia:

He needed access to the sea – and he needed access to knowledge and expertise.

He invited Italian architects and went to Holland himself to learn the art of shipbuilding.

It didn't take much time before Russian had world-class architects, sailors and engineers on their own.

This is how you build competence – by learning, sharing and doing.

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I can see the faces of many learners, sharers and doers in the audience here today – faces of people that are eagerly awaiting the new Russian fishery quota scheme that will be implemented in January.

Some of you have already connected well – and it is the job of us politicians – and of diplomats – to help you connect even further.

I am very pleased that our bilateral working group on shipbuilding has resumed its work and conducted its seventh meeting in Moscow in May.

This working group has been an important platform for establishing and sustaining constructive cooperation.

Another factor adding to the competitive edge of our maritime industry, is our tradition for clusters – groups of shipyards cooperating and sharing knowledge.

Last year, your ambassador to Norway, Mr. Ramishvili, visited a cluster in a region which is famous for its ship-building and engineering skills – Møre & Romsdal.

This cluster and their Russian partners have already started a close cooperation.

That is the maritime spirit we need – whether we are ship-builders, engineers, designers, researchers, fishermen, politicians or diplomats.

Thank you for your attention, and good luck with the learning, sharing and doing!

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