

## **Round table Discussion of Polish-Finnish Municipal Cleantech Experts on February 2 in Warsaw**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the great pleasure to wish you all welcome to this event here in Warsaw.

Poland is a very important partner for Finland and our co-operation has developed steadily in recent years. In 2013 Finland was the third largest foreign direct investor in Poland.

The Baltic Sea connects our nations. We face similar environmental challenges, among them being climate change and the poor condition of the Baltic Sea. I see strong synergies between Finland and Poland to tackle these challenges.

I am proud to be able to say that Finland is a global forerunner in sustainable development and cleantech industries. Finland is positioned number 1 in EU Eco-innovation scoreboard, number 2 in Environmental friendliness Country Brand Index and number 4 in Global Cleantech Index.

Our cleantech strongholds are based on the fact that we have cold climate, long distances and we do not possess own fossil fuel resources, such as oil and gas. Partly due to harsh climate our nature, especially our shallow lakes, is sensitive. Therefore our industry has been “forced” to develop most energy efficient technologies, tailor made energy production solutions, closed circulation and less polluting processes.

District heating is a good example of Finnish know-how on energy efficiency: Finland is recognized as a country with the most efficient and reliable district heating systems. We are also a leading country in usage of combined heat and power and biomass based energy sources.

Another example I want to mention is waste management. Our target is to get rid of landfills. Waste should be regarded as raw material. The waste management centre of the City of Lahti is a good example: clearly over 90% of municipal waste is recycled, with the sludge being converted into bio-gas.

One key element behind the good environmental performance has been persistent public-private-cooperation. With it we have succeeded in protecting our nature – and building cutting-edge expertise in solving environmental problems.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We in Finland know that Poland is the EU's largest investor for municipal cleantech sector in the near future. We Finns are eager to strengthen our cooperation especially in the field of cleantech.

For these round table discussions we have invited the leading experts and opinion leaders from both countries in the field of municipal cleantech. I am sure that this event provides an excellent opportunity to share views and knowhow between the Finnish and Polish participants.

On behalf of the government of Finland, I would like to wish all the participants fruitful and successful discussions which hopefully will lead into concrete solutions in this vital sector.

Thank you very much!