



Opening speech of FEM 2011

County Governor Mr. Esko Lotvonen,

The Regional Council of Lapland

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A heartfelt welcome to the Fennoscandian Exploration and Mining Conference! It is eight in the series of nowadays biannual events organized since 1998. During the past decade, FEM has grown to be one of the biggest and the most important mineral industry events in Europe, with its focus on exploration and mining development in the Fennoscandian Shield. FEM provides an ideal opportunity for people from exploration, mining, and consulting companies, academia, governments, geological surveys, and service sector to meet and network in pleasant surroundings.

The availability of mineral resources is becoming more and more essential to prosperity and well-being in our rapidly changing world. Europe is heavily depended on imports, and the European Commission has taken measures to improve the long-term availability of mineral commodities through the implementation of the Raw Material Initiative. One of the pillars of this initiative is to promote access to European resources in areas such as the Fennoscandian Shield, which can be regarded as the key region for future mining in Europe.

The past few years have seen an enormous increase in mining activities and mineral exploration in the Fennoscandian region, the domain for Europe's richest ore reserves. Companies have invested record sums in the search for nickel, copper, gold, platinum metals, iron ore, uranium and diamonds. New mines have been opened and more are being planned. Old mining regions have been re-examined and the exploitability of new finds has been assessed all over the Fennoscandia. Governments of the Fennoscandian countries recognize that mining is one of the most important industrial sectors for economic growth, particularly in the north. Within the Barents Cooperation, which covers the northern regions of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia, the mineral policy has been in stronger focus during last two years.

We are happy to announce that this year we are welcoming the record number of 950 participants - this is 300 more than in the previous event in 2009.

FEM has moved from Rovaniemi to the Levi, which provides a first class venue in the heart of the Levi holiday resort with beautiful landscapes of the exotic Lapland, as well as a rapidly growing mining district around us. FEM has always been a non-profit event. This would not have been possible without the generous support by our sponsors and we cannot thank them enough for their contribution. We especially want to thank now our main sponsor Agnico-Eagle – their support in organizing this event has gone well beyond normal sponsorship.

During these days you will hear the latest exploration news and receive updates on current project developments in Fennoscandia as well as a glance to the global situation. You will learn about the exploration potentials and follow topical and interesting keynote presentations by the experts from all around the world. This is also the place to find information on working conditions and regulations in the Nordic regions. Some of you have already had the opportunity to participate in the pre-conference short course – we hope it has given you a deep insight into the resource estimation and evaluation in the new millennium. We thank both the Kittilä Mine and the Kevitsa Mine for the chance to visit the mines during the Friday excursion.

This year, we are also celebrating the tenth anniversary of co-operation with the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC). This cooperation has been most rewarding. The current president is one of our keynote speakers, as his predecessors before him. Welcome Scott!

In FEM 2011 we have been able to offer reduced fees for students, and a good number of them are also sponsored by the industry, to encourage active participation of junior geologists and engineers. A student - industry networking luncheon will also be organized for the first time. We hope that both students and industry representatives will make use of this event to cooperate and maybe also to discuss about job opportunities within the industry.

Yesterday I met our minister of Economic Affairs Mr. Jyri Häkämies in Rovaniemi in the opening ceremony of the Office of new National Mining Authority. He asked me to convey his greetings to you. Minister stressed that Finland as a country will support development of mining industry strongly. In government's political program says that the knowhow of mining sector will be priority of Finland in EU-policy.

Please enjoy the company of your colleagues from across the minerals sector, delight in the exotic Lappish life, and become inspired by the FEM atmosphere. Thank for your attention!