

**OPENING ADDRESS IN THE SESSION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE BALTIC SEA REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Honorary Chair, dear members and participants,

Welcome in the fifth General Assembly of the Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council. I am very pleased to see you all in this session. It is a great honour for us that this year this important event is held in Lithuania.

Fisheries in the Baltic Sea as well as Baltic region co-operation are very important to our country. Regional Advisory Councils were established quite recently, however their activity is a big step forward in co-operation in the fisheries sphere, involving regional fisheries sector in the management of fisheries in the European Union.

I would like to stress, that the contribution of Regional Advisory Councils into implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy is positive. In the Context of the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, the activity of Regional Advisory Councils could be improved by paying more attention to better regional representation and integration. The strengthening of the role of the Regional Advisory Councils as well as the importance of the given advice also have been stressed in the Informal Meeting of the Ministers Responsible for Fisheries, which was held in Vigo on the 4-5th May.

Thank you for your attention. I believe the presentations and discussions of this session will be useful for finding ideal regional cooperation model.