

## Press Release

December 2, 2008

### Tarja Halonen receives the Swedbank Baltic Sea Award

The President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, has been honored with the Swedbank Baltic Sea Award 2008. The award was handed over by the CEO of Swedbank Jan Lidén at a gala dinner at the Baltic Development Forum Summit in Malmö on 1<sup>st</sup> of December.

It is the second year the Swedbank Baltic Sea Award is handed out. The award is assigned to an individual or organization that has made an extraordinary contribution to the development of the Baltic Sea Region.

- The Baltic Sea Region needs fiery spirits, individuals who believe that they through a personal and assiduous commitment can make the region stronger, better and sustainable. President Halonen has a longstanding record of focusing on the common good for the Baltic Sea Region, often stressing the fact that we all live in a common region, with common assets, common problems, and common solutions, said the CEO of Swedbank Jan Lidén upon handing over the award.

With her strong commitment for the Baltic Sea region President Halonen has inspired both political leaders and fellow citizens to take a common responsibility for this region.

President Halonen was appointed among several strong candidates by a jury consisting of the Prime Minister of Denmark Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Swedbank's Executive Chairman Carl Eric Stålberg, and the Baltic Development Forum Chairman Uffe Ellemann-Jensen. The prize sum is €5,000.

The Baltic Sea Award 2007 was dedicated to Mr Björn Carlson, a financier with a great personal involvement in the Baltic Sea Region and also the funder of Baltic Sea 2020.

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*See attached rationale*

*The Baltic Development Forum's 9<sup>th</sup> annual Summit is this year held in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Baltic Development Forum is an independent non-profit networking organisation and think-tank in the Baltic Sea Region. It has members and partners from large companies, major cities, institutional investors and business associations in the Baltic Sea Region. Swedbank is the official Summit partner 2008.*

*Swedbank's vision is to be the leading financial institution in the markets where we are present. Swedbank has 9 million retail customers and 600,000 corporate customers with 459 branches in Sweden, 300 branches in the Baltic countries and another 190 branches in Ukraine. The group is also present in Copenhagen, Helsinki, Kaliningrad, Luxembourg, Moscow, New York, Oslo, Shanghai, St. Petersburg and Tokyo. As of December 2007 the group had total assets of SEK 1,600 billion and approximately 22,000 employees. For more information about Swedbank, please visit [www.swedbank.com](http://www.swedbank.com).*

# Swedbank Baltic Sea Award

## Rationale

The Baltic Sea Region needs fiery spirits, individuals who believe that they through a personal and lifelong commitment can make this Region stronger, better and sustainable. The Baltic Sea Region has many assets and values, but also a number of challenges, such as the water quality of the Baltic Sea, an emerging recession in some parts, and increasing problems related to social divisions. These challenges need to be defined and redefined, addressed and readdressed, time and time again.

The Swedbank Baltic Sea Award last year was dedicated a financier with a great personal involvement in the Baltic Sea Region – and this year the award will go to a politician with an equal kind of personal involvement in the Region. Through a personal commitment to the Baltic Sea Region over many years, and by believing that the responsibility for the Region lies with all of us, the 2008 Swedbank Baltic Sea Award winner has inspired both political leaders and fellow citizens to take a common responsibility for this Region, by setting a personal example.

The winner of the 2008 Swedbank Baltic Sea Award is the President of Finland, Mrs Tarja Halonen.

President Halonen has a longstanding record of focusing on the common good for the Baltic Sea Region, often stressing the fact that we all live in a common region, with common assets, common problems, and common solutions. In this regard, the initiative by President Halonen and Prime Minister Vanhanen 1 January this year - to call upon the heads of state and government of the countries bordering the Baltic Sea to proceed to action deserves special attention and appreciation. In the letter attention is drawn to the Baltic Sea – a shared sea – which has linked the countries culturally, economically and politically. With rapid economic growth in the Baltic Sea Region, the ties it represents are today perhaps stronger than ever.

As pointed out in the appeal to fellow political leaders, the Baltic Sea is the pride and joy of all the countries bordering it, yet that we all also have caused it much harm through our actions. And in a very straight forward way, president Halonen encourage not only your fellow political leaders, but all citizens of the Region, to take action.

By awarding you this prize, we would like to express our appreciation of your longstanding commitment to this Region.

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