



SOLAKONFERANSEN

— Aviation Safety
Since 1987

Mayor of Sola, Tom Henning Slethei – Opening Speech Solakonferansen 2022, 20 September

Good morning everyone!

As the local mayor, I have the pleasure to welcome you all to Sola. I am glad to see that the conference gathers so many great skilled professionals every year.

I believe that it is no coincidence that this conference for Offshore Flight Safety takes place here in our region.

Having the North Sea as our closest neighbour, we have had a year-long tradition for being an aviation environment both for civil and military communities. The Sola airport was Norway's first civilian airport when it opened in 1937. It was actually the second airport in Europe with a fixed surface.

When Norway became an oil and gas nation in the 1960s, the Sola airport was strategically located as an important transportation hub for people and equipment, enabling efficient off- and onloading for offshore installations.

The Sola region has a strong and innovative aviation cluster: Aircraft and helicopter companies, simulator environments, workshops, training opportunities, Avinor's Stavanger area control center with the en-route service, that will continue to be located here, the Joint Rescue and Coordination Center in southern Norway is established at Sola, including the 330 Squadron Service with the Norwegian Defense Organization.

In sum, significant aviation competence, and everyone supports the continuation of this insightful aviation cluster.

As a municipality, we are also proud to have a local aviation discipline, offered at Sola Upper Secondary School, just next door to the airport. The school is already EASA-approved as a Part 147 and Part 66 organization. Also, the drone and the aviation communities experience many identical challenges, as the integration of unmanned and manned aviation must largely comply with the same regulations. The drone industry is growing in size and scope, so legislation and regulations will probably become an even more important subject on the agenda in the years to come.

The rapid development of the drone industry and the proximity to airports presents us with new issues. Sola Upper Secondary School initiated a desire to include a dedicated discipline for drones, and we experience a positive and constructive dialogue with Avinor by Axel Knutsen. We are pleased with this progress. Avinor will have a central role going forward in facilitating the findings for establishing sound regulatory arrangements for drone operations where manned aviation takes place.

We think it is very positive that Avinor has indicated to take this responsibility. This will affect how we think about - and how we organize future airports - where safe and secure manned and unmanned aviation will go hand in hand.

We have several players who work with drones with businesses located near the airport and its cluster already. In addition, the cross-cooperation in the local aviation community, combined with the interaction with a significant oil and gas industry and the drive to develop the world's best equipment and solutions, may explain why the drone industry has taken a position in our region. Several of our exciting players have secured contracts for drone

services and data collection, both nationally and internationally. As the local mayor, it is impressive to see all the hard and good work being done to achieve this.

In recent months, we have all been reminded of how access to affordable energy is important for our societies, our progress and continued social development. Both globally, nationally and locally, we clearly see how lack of energy can cause fear, pessimism and uncertainties. We all feel the effect of the vulnerability in our society with reduced energy access. The necessity to fuel societies with sufficient energy is the current number one priority on our agenda, following latest developments in Europe.

I use every opportunity to talk about how important the oil and gas industry has played to modernize Norway. It has been tremendously significant for our national development, growth and prosperity. In recent months, more people have come to realize that the Norwegian petroleum industry also has a vital role to play for the security of energy supply and democratic development in our part of the world.

The subtitle for this conference is "Sustainability through improved environmental footprint and adopting new technologies". At the same time as we are going to further develop our oil and gas industry, we need to accelerate the development, production and use of new energy sources and low-carbon technologies.

Like our ancestors did at Sola a long time ago, the Vikings, we must tame and make use of the natural forces offshore such as the wind and the waves. The Vikings used the wind to travel around the world with their fast and reliable ships. We need to use the wind to ensure that we and the world have enough energy, so that we can continue our journey of continued social development in the years to come. Future energy production at sea, whether oil and gas, or offshore wind or solar energies, will in any case require safe and efficient transport of personnel and material. I am glad that the local aviation community already seems to be very future-oriented and prepared.

Again, welcome to Sola and this exciting conference. I hope and believe you are provided some insightful work sessions and inspiring dialogues during your stay here. I hope that the conference and the facilities will encourage you to transfer productive thoughts and ideas as well as discussing opportunities while also making new business relations.

Many thanks to you all and enjoy your stay in Sola!