

Cursor - the leading expert organization in Russian matters

Toomas Lybeck seeked his way to Kotka to do the work, about which the Western Finland only dream of.

Seppo Häkkinen

KOTKA. Cursor has the leading role among the regional development organizations concerning the Russian questions, believes **Toomas Lybeck**, who started his work this summer as a program manager in the Southern Kymenlaakso regional development company.

In the beginning of this year he was estimating the situation from the other side of Finland in Turku, where he was taking care of different kinds of duties for supporting the cooperation with Russian business.

- I noticed back then, that people in Cursor were actually doing all those things that were mentioned in Turku only in public speeches. Therefore I used the opportunity to move here.
- Cursor has a good reputation also among financing organization,s and we are often wanted as a partner for different international and interregional projects. Those are the two dimentions that the government and regions prefer these days, says Lybeck.

For Cursor Russia is not a separate section for business development. Russia has become part of functions for all departments such as tourism, IT and all the other priority focuses.

From the six persons Russia Team two are program managers – Lybeck is developing the internalization of Finnish business in Russian market, and Sergey Troshkov is working for the Russian companies making the entrance to South Kymenlaakso.

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In Russia the economical perspectives are more positive than in Europe. It has a significant meaning for the region.

- The dynamics of economical growth has slow down, but its still growing - not like in Western Europe. And what is most important, the purchasing power is growing in Russia. This is the fact that should be noticed in the Finnish business.
- Russia is a vital partner for Finland. We cannot change our geography. For Russia our market is not so important, but Russia needs our expertise for carrying out the tasks in economical modernization. The expertise is needed not only in the boarder zones but all over the country.

Southern Kymenlaakso has been located next to the flow of Russian tourists. We have got our share, but not like in Saimaa region. Our strength has been in locating Russian business, for example, in the surroundings of HaminaKotka harbor.

In Southern Kymenlaakso region have been opened 252 Russian companies during the last five years. It is 13 % of all registered companies.

- This tells us that we have the know-how and means for international services and we should develop them further. We can build a strong case through the success stories like the shopping centers in Vaalimaa. New cases are speaking for themselves, Lybeck says.

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