Flexible working with new wagons
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The fall-off was of short duration and now the tide has turned!

Of course we understood that Railcare would also be affected by the downturn to some extent. But not that it would hit us so hard. Two factors especially contributed to the negative tendency during the first half-year 2009:

- Transport volumes declined quickly, not least within the wood sector where we have our major customers.
- State aid to the railways contributed to a "project overdose". Projects that had already been agreed had to be reprogrammed, which meant that their enactment would be postponed by about a year – a clear disadvantage for us who carry out the task in practice.

We carried this problem of course in several ways. We decided to increase the focus further on our core activities and so outsourced our Business Unit Consulting and the company IM Consulting AB (now Atumo AB) and transferred signalling, electrical and tele-activity to VR Track. We also minimised the number of our own companies by means of mergers. We have focussed strongly on increasing sales within our unique core activities: air/vacuum excavators, culvert repair and special haulage in order to improve profitability.

During mid-autumn there was a considerable upturn in volumes and the number of orders coming in steadily increased, and even began to approach or exceed the levels of the previous year. This in spite of concentrating our activity with considerably fewer employees than then!

We're thus starting to have more agreeable problems such as lack of capacity to contend with again...

At the same time we're striving to make ourselves even better known on the market. Many are familiar with Railcare, but what do they know about our services and development with new innovative solutions?

We have many exciting challenges facing us now with the field being redrawn as a result of the conversion of Banverket [the Swedish Rail Administration] Production Dept into an independent company, Infranord, and the formation of a new body, the Swedish Transport Administration [Trafikverket].

These environmental changes are to our advantage and now it's important to adapt, be available and be the customers' obvious choice!

Dan Magnusson, MD of Railcare Group
The section Ockelbo-Järbo will have new sleepers made of concrete to replace the old wooden ones. At the same time the rails will be upgraded to UIC 60 rails, which means that the section will be better equipped to cope with heavier trains bearing greater loads.

Railcare’s task was to remove the ballast close to the track, expose the cables and relocate them a metre down into the ground. Then the trench was refilled. As the track is old, a fair amount of blast rock or large boulders were encountered which could not be removed, and where cable laying had to be solved in other creative ways.

Everything was carefully documented so that it would be fully known in the future which cables were in the embankment and how they are positioned.

24 men in the field
"It was a very concentrated effort," relates Jonny Granlund, Contractor’s Business Manager in Sweden. A total of 24 people from Railcare were working during the total possession.

"Good planning and organisation contributed to a successful outcome," says Östen List. Everyone puts their back into it, 100%, which means that Railcare can keep its promises.

Several tasks in progress
During spring 2010 Railcare will be carrying out a lot of follow-up work on the section, and Jonny hopes and believes that the successful result will contribute to further, similar tasks for Railcare in the future.

"Within Banverket, Central Region, we continually renew the track," Östen recounts. Today not many sections still have wooden sleepers, but we’ll have a major project in progress during 2011-2012 for example when we renew the 80 km-long Långjåle-Anundsjö section.

On the Ockelbo-Järbo section 22 km of cable was relocated.

It was a concentrated task, where four Railvac machines were working simultaneously.
Atumo currently has 12 consultants with specialist knowledge within infra-consulting (technical consulting) within railway projects and safety (traffic, the working environment and vehicles), the environment and licence tests.

They work along three main tracks

**Infra** – long consulting tasks within the railways, for example construction management, projecting management, construction work environment co-ordination, investigations and project tasks. Customers include Banverket and the Bothnia Line.

**Safety** – consulting tasks and training within safety. Customers are contractors and operators.

**Planning** – all-round undertakings on behalf of infrastructure owners, operators or railway contractors. The customers are contractors.

Several customers on-going for planning

“Railcare and VR Track are our important customers for planning,” recounts Michael. “And we have several new ones on-going. Such customers have a basic agreement with planned commitments and they buy additional projects as needed. Atumo works “inside” the company on safety matters according to a fixed plan. For example several of the staff in the Railcare Group are involved in different tasks. It could be advising, training, revisions, licence testing and documentation. New players are being added all the time and many are too small to have their own staff managing these tasks. And then it’s more economical to buy in the services they need from us. Atumo’s consultants are constantly in a state of development.

**Good combination**

Railcare has a 30-percent share in Atumo and according to Michael they have been able to combine their ownership role with a purchasing role in a satisfactory manner.

“We at Atumo feel that we’re a part of the Railcare system, but the difference and the advantage is that our consultants also work with other customers. This means that Atumo’s consultants are constantly in a state of development.

**Improvements during 2010**

“2009 has been a successful start-up year. We need to improve our internal information and communication. We work with integrated, web-based systems, which make things easier. But as we’re spread out all over the country with offices in Skellefteå, Luleå and Borlänge and as several people work independently away from home, a lot is needed to bring about a unitary company culture. Our colleagues are the most important thing and it’s important for 2010 to be a year which is even more fun than our successful 2009! As to customers and the market, we will first and foremost improve even more for our existing customers and tasks. Further, we will increase our customer base and our workforce during 2010. We will also be establishing an office in Stockholm which will be “white-hot” during the next few years as regards investment and our customers’ establishments. The railway market is rich in possibilities and our assessment is that the timing is perfect for Atumo!”
Railcare has carried out one of its very largest culvert renovation jobs so far. It concerns fifty or so railway drain culverts within Banverket’s Operation Area West. The work was carried out as a package job contract.

“I hope we’ll be able to continue with more culverts,” says Roland Axelsson who is project leader for these drain culvert operations on Banverket. In that case Railcare’s task will continue until the summer.

Special money, so-called dewatering funding, has been granted for use on railway culverts which in some cases date from the late 19th century when the tracks were laid. For Banverket’s Operation Area West this is the first renovation work carried out according to the no dig trenching culvert repair method, i.e. fibre-glass lining of the existing stone culverts using the method offered by Railcare.

“Yes, we’ve only tried it on the odd culverts so far,” recounts Roland. “As it’s a relatively new method, we’ve been a bit careful, but now we’ve been able to invest in the idea and the job went to Railcare as they had the best offer at the best price. The need to refurbish the culverts is relatively great, we’d had some minor earth slides and also too many unfavourable comments from inspectors.

Problems with flooding
Of course it’s important to prevent flood damage to the embankment by leading off the water via the culverts. Some years this is extra-critical, including the year 2000 when Operation Area West had major problems with flooding, for example in Arvika. Railcare’s task also included carrying out a range of other “dewatering measures”, drainage work, in connection with the culverts.

“We’ve had full responsibility for the measures,” explains Emil Burén, Business Manager for Drain Culvert Renovation. It all seems new and exciting since we previously had only a package job contract.

Terrific work
Work that ten or so Railcare employees plus a number of staff brought in from outside seem to have accomplished with flying colours.

“It went terrifically well – we kept to the time scheme and I also went and inspected the measures in the field,” recounts Roland Axelsson. “Things are really looking good!

“It looks as though the method has achieved a breakthrough in Western Sweden and I do hope that more orders will come in from both this part of the country and the others,” says Emil Burén.
Extended confidence

Since August last year Holmen Skog has been one of Railcare’s biggest customers for regular shipments of timber. An agreement has also been signed for the whole of 2010. Weda Skog too has signed an agreement for considerably higher amounts to be transported until July.

“The production plan provides for effective shipments and it means that we’re utilising our fleet of rolling stock in a highly rational manner,” says Stefan Karlsson, Businells Manager at Transport. The new locomotives have given a boost to activity and it feels really good that we’re enjoying extended confidence as regards shipments this year too.

Lasse Nilsson, Transport manager boat/train at Holmen Skog, answers Railcare News’s questions about collaboration with Railcare.

What’s the essential reason for choosing to convey timber/paper wood by rail? Financial? The environment?

We always calculate the costs for moving timber in different ways. Movement can be by direct conveyance or an exchange of timber. It’s important that we have different alternatives and don’t become completely dependent on just one other party or mode of transport.

How did it come about that you chose to collaborate with your competitors Weda and Setra in this regard? Do you collaborate with them in any other connection to do with transport?

The need to move volumes from the Ljusdal area by train was large and the space was limited. We see only advantages in collaborating on terminal handling and onward shipment. Another type of collaboration is exchange of location.

How is collaboration organised? I gather you at Holmen have a co-ordinating role.

We had a meeting last summer where we agreed to use the same resources as far as possible so as to be more attractive as customers and achieve a high level of service combined with good prices. Collaboration is exchange of location.

How do you see the volumes (wood raw materials) to be conveyed by rail in the future in general terms?

As long as it’s rational and financially viable, wood will be taken by rail. But if the State imposes restrictions in the form of e.g. increased rail charges, rail’s comparative advantages will be reduced and volumes will be carried by road to a greater extent.

How long will the wood last to keep Ljusdal going as a terminal?

As we don’t fell more than new replacement growth, we can answer ‘for ever’.

Changing needs affect sections and terminals. Timber brought by rail is normally dearer than local wood conveyed on lorries. Where needs for timber change, timber to be transported over long distances is affected first.

Did Railcare’s investment in the new locomotive have any influence on your decision to choose to use Railcare?

No, but it’s obviously a positive factor if capacity increases. We’ve noted that operational safety has improved.

What’s your general opinion of Railcare as a supplier? Views, wishes?

We regard Railcare as a stable and reliable supplier.

Anything else you consider important?

Development is always important. For Railcare as an operator it’s important to battle on and find new solutions for us customers.
Facts about Railcare’s shipments of timber

- A Railcare train runs every day (Christmas Eve and Christmas Day excepted) taking timber from the terminal in Ljusdal.
- The timber is taken either to Hallstavik (customer: Holmen Skog), Krylbo (Veda Skog) or Hasselfors (Setra). Holmen Skog has a co-ordinating role and plans the journeys.
- This can be pulping wood or saw timber, a total of 1100-1200 cubic metres of rolling stock.
- Railcare’s new Vossloh Euro 4000 diesel-electric locomotives are used for the shipments and can pull up to 1800 tonnes.
- Each loading occasion takes around four hours.
- Normally each journey is covered by two drivers: one for the northern section and one for the southern. The change-over takes place in Southern Norrland.
Faster renovation of platforms using Railcare’s new methods

Railcare has developed a completely new method for renovating railway platforms. The background is that a large number of platforms will have to be adapted annually over the coming 3-4 years for the disabled. White markings nearest the tracks will make it easier for the partially sighted to know where the edge of the platform is.

"Our idea is to shorten working time by using the vacuum loader for conveying materials to and fro," recounts Jonny Granlund, Contractor’s Business Manager. We reckon about a week's working time if we can close off the platform completely. Using traditional methods it takes up to two months – with all the disruption this entails for traffic and passengers."

Interest in the new method is considerable and if the plans come off all right, the first platforms can be renewed during 2010 using the Railcare method.

1 The existing surface layer on the platform is sawn up, planed away and removed by the air/vacuum excavator.

2 Part of the sub-layer is removed and the surface is levelled off.
New major shareholder in the Railcare Group

During 2009, Norra Västerbotten Fastighets AB acquired a total of ten percent of the ownership of Railcare Group AB corresponding to 400,000 shares. The shares were acquired from the principal shareholders Ulf Marklund and Leif Dahlqvist who sold half each. NV Fastigheter then became the Railcare Group’s first institutional owner.

"Railcare is one of the most exciting companies in our region," says Anders Westermark, MD of NV Fastigheter AB. "We see considerable future potential for Railcare through the link to infrastructure, the environment and long-term demand."

"Highly satisfactory to gain an institutional owner with a long-term approach like NV Fastigheter. We take it as proof that we’re on the right path," says Dan Magnusson, Railcare’s MD.

Unique position
NV Fastigheter is owned by the local paper Norra Västerbotten, which has a unique market position with very wide coverage within its area of distribution. It is therefore difficult to expand on the media site and they recently invested in a super-modern printing shop, which means that the need for investment is currently low. Instead earnings have been invested in e.g. property and shares.

But can a local paper scrutinise companies critically in which they have a financial interest?
"Our experience shows that these companies are scrutinised extra closely, so there are no problems," says Anders Westermark.

Facts
Norra Västerbotten Fastigheter AB is a regional investment company owned by the newspaper Norra Västerbotten. The aim of the business is long-term investment in regional, viable companies. NV Fastigheter also owns a third of the regional investment company Trecab AB.
Two big jobs in Denmark

2009 was a very successful year for Railcare in Denmark including two big tasks which brought very positive results on the whole.

"Things still look very good and if we get the orders we’re hoping for, 2010 will also be a terrific year for us,” says Uffe Mørch-Pedersen, Contractor’s Business Manager in Denmark.

Task Nº 1 Checking spacers

We carried out a very special Railcare job during the period March-May 2009 on a 146 km section. Up to five Railvac air/vacuum excavators were on site in Denmark to remove ballast in order to check the spaces in the duo-block sleepers. The steel bars were next checked in order to decide if they were corroded. If several duo-blocks in a row are cracked the track becomes unstable and the speed has to be reduced. The duo-blocks proved to be in a better state than expected – only one section was sub-standard.

“A successful job,” says Uffe. We worked uninterrupted and finished two weeks earlier than expected. The customer was very pleased. It is to be hoped that we will get similar jobs in the future; around two thirds of the sections requiring checking are still left.

Task Nº 2 – Ballast reinforcement

According to new Danish railway regulations, the ballast on the sides of the track must be of a certain height and width. This means that around 80% of Denmark’s tracks will require more ballast. Work commenced on topping up the ballast last year and Railcare was the subcontractor on this occasion for Danish Contec with Banedanmark [Danish Rail] as the end customer. Railcare’s task was to supply the traction for the ballast wagons to be transported to the various regions in Denmark. A total of 350,000 tonnes of ballast was conveyed from central depots in Copenhagen and Vejle. Incidentally, the ballast is imported from e.g. Scotland and South Africa!

“The work is continuing and we will be removing around 100,000 tonnes more this year,” says Uffe Mørch-Pedersen.

Grenland Rail tripled its turnover!

Railcare’s part-owned Norwegian company Grenland Rail AS expanded strongly during 2009. Turnover increased from NOK 4.3 m to NOK 14 m, and the number of employees from two to ten!

It is above all State investment in the Norwegian railway network which lies behind the expansion. Investment increased last year by around 35 percent and the increase will also continue during 2010.

"And then we had a bit of luck too,” says Heimon Winkelman, Grenland Rail’s MD.

One new large task has been an operation on points in Drammen, which, next to Oslo is the largest railway junction in Norway. Grenland Rail has had almost continuous traffic with shunting engines to and from the port on behalf of Cargolink. Green Cargo has been added as a customer where wagons have been taken from Drammen to a storage depot. Grenland Rail has furthermore had a number of different orders for shipments in connection with various contracts. In addition to all tasks, Grenland Rail has also worked on the revision of operating permits for Railcare Tåg in Norway.

He is generally highly optimistic about the future.

The Norwegian railway network is in great need of renovation and all funds now being invested will also be of benefit to us.

Grenland Rail has enjoyed a year of considerable expansion thanks to several new transport commissions.
The sector association FSJ

The Association of Swedish Railway Contractors [Föreningen Sveriges Järnvägestrentrådsmännen] (FSJ) is being developed and is investing in the run-up to the deregulated future on the railways. Last year the Association had a new Board, a new website and a new logo. And several new members were added during the year. Odal Lundmark, Skanska, now has the task as part-time “driver” to develop the Association further into a powerful organisation which will look after the interests of member companies concerning various issues in the sector. FSJ is moreover a referral body.

More information about FSJ can be found on www.fsj.se

Skanska chose Railcare

Skanska Sverige AB chose Railcare as their supplier of drain culvert renovation services regarding 12 railway culverts in Norrbotten. The work was carried out during September-October on the Haparanda Line.

New wagons allow flexible working

Mach 1 and Mach 2. These are the names of Railcare’s two new special wagons for refilling of ballast using air/vacuum excavators.

“With these wagons we can remove ballast and refill with new at almost the same speed,” recounts Jonny Granlund, Contractor’s Business Manager in Sweden. This renders lowering and raising the track unnecessary during the work.”

The purpose of the names on the wagons is naturally so that this type of job can be carried out faster than with traditional methods. Because the filling material has been loaded on to the same wagon as the vacuum loader, all the work (vacuum suction of ballast which is to be changed and refilling with new) can be accomplished in sequence from both ends of the wagon. In addition to working on points, the complete unit can be used e.g. for changing the ballast on shorter sections, cleaning the bed and when working on cable groovers.

Produced in Norway

For some time now there have been only two wagons of this type. They are used in Norway by Railcare’s collaboration partner Miljo og Veiservice who are also responsible for production of Railcare’s Mach wagons. Delivery is expected April 2010. There are also plans to invest in two further wagons some time in the future.
Cleaning drain culverts is a tough job

During the autumn and spring – with a break during the coldest winter period - Railcare cleaned 51 railway drain culverts on the Gårdsjö-Håkanstorp section. The work was conducted during week-nights. The Railcare gang cleaned two culverts a night with the help of the vacuum loader, equipped with a hand held hose.

“The operators quite simply had to crawl into the culverts and suck them clean of mud, water, sand and various other rubbish,” recounts Stefan Larsson, sales and project leader at Railcare. A tough job, but it went off really well.

When the drain culverts are blocked, drainage ceases to function and there are problems with water on the embankment. When the trains pass by, the sleepers are forced down and mud splashes up and sticks to the rails, locomotive and carriages. Work to cure this is included in the de-watering funds proposed to remedy these problems. On the Gårdsjö-Håkanstorp section, Infranord AB has been the main contractor and they used Railcare for culvert cleaning. Infranord then goes on to clean the ditches on the relevant side of the embankment.

Air/vacuum excavation in a big city environment

In Malmö a gigantic railway project is underway to build the new City tunnel and rebuild Malmö central station. More and more travellers and trains are the reason for the investment. Railcare too has a finger in the pie and during the late autumn of 2009 cables had to be exposed before rebuilding of Malmö station. The work took three days and the task was commissioned by Peab.

“There’s a guarantee of several jobs suitable for us within this project which will be continuing for another year or two,” says Stefan Larsson, sales and project leader at Railcare.
Major export order

The American company Loram Maintenance of Way has placed an order for two new Partnerpac Railvac machines with a total value of SEK 6.8 m. Delivery will be in collaboration with Disab Vacuum Technology AB, Eslöv.

"It's absolutely clear that our technology is a winning concept for Loram, which is now expanding its stock of Railvac machines to a total of twelve," says Håkan Johansson, Managing Director of Railcare Export AB.

Håkan Johansson concentrates on markets outside Scandinavia. He works mainly with two players: the Sersa Group for commissions in England and Disab Vacuum Technology for machine sales.

"Generally speaking, things look very promising for 2010 on several fronts," says Håkan.

Some highs from last year:
- Intensified negotiations with Russians interested in investing in machines for the Russian railways. A long-term investment plan in Russia is proceeding apace, despite the downturn.
- On-going contract work in England, in e.g. Penzance, Reading and Southall. This mostly concerns replacement of deteriorated ballast with new. Work is taking place in collaboration with the Sersa Group, which is considering investing in its own Railvac machine during 2010.
- Marketing activities, mainly central Europe. Railcare’s aim is to carry out subcontracted work for various players with the RA6-machine. By way of introduction, we are cultivating contacts acquired through contracts carried out in Sweden on behalf of players with their principal markets in other countries.

“We’ve only been scratching the surface so far in England and things look very exciting on other export markets too,” says Håkan Johansson.

The American company Loram is buying even more Railvac machines. This is one of their older machines.
Railcare carried stone slabs

Last autumn Railcare transported concrete slabs for the rebuilding of Umeå station. The job was carried out at the request of VTG, Västernorrlands Transport and Gräv, a new customer for Railcare. The slabs were carried from Märsta to Umeå during a four-week period to pave the station being rebuilt in Umeå. There may be new deliveries this year.

The Transport Administration – a new authority

On 1 April 2010 Trafikverket will be starting up, tasked with developing an efficient and sustainable transport system. The Department will be responsible for co-ordinated, long-term infrastructure planning for all types of traffic.

"It's too early yet to say what this will mean for Railcare," comments Railcare's MD, Dan Magnusson. We'll only know when it says "Trafikverket" or "Infranord" and not "Banverket" on invitations to tender for work on the railways. In the longer term I think it'll be very good for us with a more defined playing field with simpler and clearer rules.

4000 visited Nordic Rail

The Elmia Nordic Rail and Elmia Future Transport Exhibition in Jönköping in early October 2009 gathered a total of 4262 visitors and 256 exhibitors. As usual one of these exhibitors was Railcare.

"A successful exhibition for our part with pleasant reunions and a number of new contacts," reports Sanna Lundgren, IR contact at Railcare.

The next Nordic Rail exhibition will be autumn 2011.

New life for locomotive sheds threatened with closure

The sheds where locomotives are housed are part of our early industrial history.

The shed at Långsele was built around the turn of the century and was threatened with closure, but it has now been refurbished. Railcare's locomotives are kept and serviced there when they are not in use.

"It's been a boost for our entire community," says Lars Filipsson of Three T.

The shed has room for 14 locomotives and ten bays are rented out. Come summer, two more will be rented out. Tenants include Hector Rail and Swedish Rail as well as Railcare. In addition, short-stay places can be rented e.g. for locomotives that need to thaw out.

The attractive brick building was rather run-down, so first of all the roof and gates and some of the interior had to be renovated. The whole area has also been cleaned up and two sidings have also been refurbished. Outside the building itself there is a turntable, 25 metres in diameter, which is used to guide the locomotive into the right bay. The turntable is also rented out to anyone wanting to turn their locomotives.

The renaissance of the railway is most apparent in Långsele, which is strategically placed in the middle of northern Sweden. Increased amounts of freight and the Bothnia Line have increased the amount of traffic.

"Railcare is also working to, for example, find suitable return freight for Railcare's trains which run timber southwards. We're currently taking insulation material for Byggmax and road salt northwards for the Road Administration," Lars explains. Good for both Railcare and for the environment.
Preventive maintenance of wagons and locomotives increases accessibility

Midwagon has its own track plant at its workshops at Ånge.

Railcare’s wagons and older locomotives are now being serviced regularly according to a schedule with planned dates.

"The idea is to have short stoppages for the whole rolling stock fleet by having planned, preventive maintenance," recounts Ulf Norlén, Technical Manager at Transport. Obviously we expect to gain on reduced maintenance costs and increased accessibility.

There will be an inspection every four weeks, an overhaul three times a year for lubrication and minor repairs, and a thorough overhaul every three years involving more comprehensive measures. Railcare has chosen Midwagon as its collaboration partner, and they will carry out the servicing of locomotives and wagons mainly at their plant at Ånge. A maintenance agreement was signed with Midwagon last year which came into full force at the turn of the year.

"70 percent of all our traffic passes through Ljusdal which is near Ånge, and Midwagon also has its own large track, which is an advantage. In addition, we've used Midwagon before and find that their way of working suits us with good service and lead times.

Comprehensive undertaking

"This is a comprehensive undertaking for us and we share Railcare’s aim to see that the wagons keep rolling and that stoppages are kept to a minimum," recounts Lars Björn, Midwagon’s MD. We rely on frankness and flexibility on both sides. Railcare is one of our biggest customers after the giants and has moreover grown quickly over recent years. We’ve grown too since start-up eleven years ago. We currently have 60 employees and have plant in Ånge, Borlänge and Helsingborg.

Many years on the clock

Locomotives and wagons normally have a long working life – 50 years is not unusual. That they last so long can of course be explained as being largely due to continuous maintenance.

"But preventive maintenance doesn’t prevent everything," says Ulf Norlén. So we also do servicing out in the field with our own repairers for both locomotives and wagons. Our newest locomotives are not covered by the agreement. They’re still under guarantee service.

Railcare’s rolling stock being seen to by Midwagon’s servicing staff.
Loads to do for Railcare’s snow clearers

- now in Norway too

Winter 2009-2010 has seen unusual amounts of snow, so Railcare’s snow clearers have had plenty to do. New for the season was a team in Oslo where Railcare signed a contract for a four-month project in collaboration with its Norwegian partner Miljø & Vieservice AS. The contract was for Norwegian Rail’s tracks in Oslo.

“A clear breakthrough for our method in Norway,” says Jonny Granlund, Business manager Entreprenad. Interest in Railcare’s methods is considerable and this was a good occasion to demonstrate how efficient our machines are.

As in previous years snow clearing with vacuum technology has also taken place in Stockholm where there have been large amounts of snow. The snow is removed with a snow sweeper and melted with hot water inside the machine. The water can then be emptied into the surface water drains. The method has considerable advantages as it removes the snow quickly and doesn't require large areas to store the snow. This is especially important on large areas of rail in a city environment where the snow can cause major problems for navigability and where there is no room for mounds of snow.

Heavy snow during winter 2009-2010 has meant a lot of work for Railcare’s snow clearers in Stockholm and Oslo.