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USA calling: Giants choose RBS for USD business. Page 10

# Release

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## The cutting edge

New CEO Henrik Sjölund arms Holmen to meet structural changes.

## Uncertainty relieved

For almost 300 years RBS has been based in Scotland. So when Scotland voted on independence, it was very much an issue of interest to us within the bank as well as many others around us, also here in the Nordic region.

The result of the referendum was no; Scotland will remain a part of the United Kingdom. Calm has been restored and the uncertainty is over.

It is in the nature of the financial market to fear change. Many of the market mechanisms are based on the ability to predict a future value or determine a value today based on a potential development.

Uncertainty about what the future holds is often therefore met by scepticism and is seen as a negative. This was also true of the Scotland issue.

## ” RBS has a long-term approach

In purely concrete terms, a yes vote for independence would have seen RBS moving head office from Edinburgh to London. Having said that, it was never on the cards that the bank would leave Scotland completely, or that the bank would be affected on any general scale.

At RBS we have always claimed to have a long-term approach. In the Nordic region we continue to strive to minimise uncertainty for our customers through our product areas of financing, risk management and payments.

RBS celebrates 10 years in the Nordic region in 2014. We know that our Nordic business partners appreciate the stability of our presence here, and we will be around for many years to come.



*Reinhold Geijer*

Reinhold Geijer  
Head of RBS Nordic Region

### Release

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A.P. Møller-Mærsk  
has launched its first  
USD bond.

PHOTO: A.P. MØLLER-MÆRSK

## Mærsk in its first dollar issue

### DANISH CONGLOMERATE A.P.

Møller-Mærsk has issued a US dollar bond. This is the first time the company has operated on the dollar market, and RBS played a key role in the process.

“A.P. Møller-Mærsk, the world-leading Danish energy and shipping conglomerate, is a relatively new player on the bond market. The company has changed its financing strategy in recent years and created a bond program, first for the euro market and more recently for the dollar market,” says Tobias Berdal-Sørensen at RBS Debt Capital Markets

in London.

In September the company issued two bond loans for 5 years and \$ 750m and for 10 years and \$ 500m respectively with RBS as joint bookrunner.

“As the company is diverse and there are no comparables, the process included several stages to check the pricing with the market. Demand was very high and the outcome was positive,” says Berdal-Sørensen.

A.P. Møller-Mærsk requires dollars in its normal lines of business, primarily in its shipping and oil industry operations.

## Sterling premiere for banks

**BOTH NORDEA AND** Danske Bank chose to issue bonds in pounds sterling in early September. Both issues were covered bonds, the banks' own mortgage portfolios serving as the underlying security. It was the first transaction of its kind for both banks.

The issues broaden the banks' investor base and reduce their dependency on

euro and domestic currency markets.

The issue date was chosen for the favourable combination of currency and pricing conditions.

The bonds were three-year floating rate notes, and both issues were for GBP 500m. RBS was the only external bank involved, managing both transactions.

Booted and suited. Holmen is arming for the transition to new conditions.

# A fertile forest future

TEXT ANNELI KAMLIN PHOTO FREDRIK STEHN

Holmen's new CEO Henrik Sjölund is not really new at all – neither to the company nor to the forest industry. But his new role will increase his ability to develop the company's potential on a market that is challenging, but also has many bright spots.



Sawn timber has great potential - although a bigger saw than this might be needed.



A future product by Holmen and Victoria's Secret. Paperboard is a growing product segment.

**A VISION IN** pink, topped with a rose, full of perfume from teenage favourite Victoria's Secret. This is the future for forestry company Holmen.

That's because the packaging is made from Invercote paperboard by Holmen.

"Paperboard is a very interesting market for us. It has tremendous potential. The more complex the paperboard products, the better they suit us, and we have very strong brands," says Henrik Sjölund, CEO of Holmen since April.

The demand for finely packaged cosmetics, champagne, electronics and so on bodes well for the future. Customer companies build their own brands with the packaging, which means Holmen's know-how plays a pivotal role. Product development in co-operation with customers is increasingly in focus.

"While margins can be quite good in certain paperboard segments, generally speaking they're small in our industry. It's extremely important to create a competitive edge with processes that are as efficient as possible," Sjölund explains.

**UNINTERRUPTED FLOWS ARE** also key when it comes to payments to and from the company. Around 90 per cent of Holmen's sales take place in Europe via its own sales companies.

Through a collaboration with RBS, Holmen has created a cash management solution for Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, with the flows collected in a cash pool.

The company's income is largely in euro, while the costs are predominantly in Swedish kronor.

"Consequently we work a lot with currency exchange and hedging, which RBS also helps us

with," says Holmen's CFO Anders Jernhall.

The collaboration is an example of a Nordic company benefiting from the bank's network.

"We value RBS for bringing continuity to the Nordic market," says Jernhall.

Continuity is also a key element of Henrik Sjölund's role at Holmen. He has been with the company since 1993, previously in the Printing Paper business area.

"My time as CEO of Holmen Paper has been characterised by restructuring and a transition towards special paper," he says.

**FALLING DEMAND AND** pressed margins are a reality for newsprint, so Holmen has decided to focus more on special paper, which capitalises on the properties of virgin fibre to bring a competitive advantage.

"We're working hard to re-set production and make more and more printing paper for direct mail, magazines, books and so on. This also calls for a re-focusing of the sales organisation towards new customer segments."

As well as paperboard and printing paper, Holmen also produces sawn timber.

"We have invested in a new sawmill and can see all kinds of interesting opportunities for sawn timber, from mould to fine carpentry"

Holmen plans to expand its geographical markets.

"For instance we're looking at China for paperboard and North Africa for sawn timber," says Sjölund.

Forest and energy assets help secure a stable foundation for the company.

"We are one of Sweden's biggest forest owners with 1.3 million hectares of forest.

We reserve more than we have to for nature conservation and exploit 1 million hectares. We use some ourselves, and the rest we sell to other forest companies and local sawmills."

In terms of electricity, Holmen is roughly 40 per cent self-sufficient, producing green electricity from water and wind power.

**THE SWEDISH FOREST** Industries Federation has simulated different future scenarios for the forest industry. The results are summed up in a report headed "It could be this good", since it shows that the future looks bright for areas such as paperboard, timber products and the development of innovative new forest-based materials. However, the external conditions are also important.

"Social issues are important to us," Sjölund explains.

"Restrictions on forest owners' rights to use their land, a per-kilometre tax on transport, property tax on hydro power stations and limit values for sulphur emissions from cargo ships are some of the political decisions that have had or would have a major impact on us."

He is optimistic about the industry in the longer term, particularly Holmen's role.

"All our production is based on a renewable raw material from sustainably managed forests, which is a great advantage both environmentally but also commercially." X

### Holmen in brief

Forest company Holmen hails back to the 17th century and has five business areas: Holmen Paper, Iggesund Paperboard, Holmen Timber, Holmen Skog and Holmen Energi.

Holmen has production in Sweden, the UK and Spain.

Group sales in 2013 were SEK 16bn. Holmen is listed on Nasdaq Nordic. The main owner is LE Lundbergföretagen.

# Safety in Thailand

TEXT HELENE MURDOCH PHOTO INGEMAR LINDEWALL

Service degree and reliability were some of the most important aspects when global security giant Securitas recently selected RBS as provider of cash management services in Thailand.



Securitas wants to be where the clients are.

**FROM A HUMBLE** start with three people on its payroll 80 years ago, Securitas has grown into a global market leader in security with more than 300,000 employees in 52 countries. One of its relatively new markets is Thailand, where Securitas established operations in 2009, following its strategy to grow in new markets in Asia and elsewhere through acquisitions. In Thailand, Securitas mainly focuses on specialised guarding and Combined Security Solutions for homes, workplaces and community.

"The Thai security market is large. It's important to be close to the clients, who are found all over the country, which means that we have a very widely spread organisation," John Wong, Group Cash Manager of Securitas explains.

John Wong is based in Dublin, Ireland, where Securitas set up its Group Treasury Centre (GTC) operations in the late 1980's.

Through Securitas acquisition activities around the world, the company often ends up with legacy banks that are not part of its core

group of banks. Securitas' internal policy states that group companies must migrate towards one of the existing core banks, where possible.

"GTC already has standing relationships with international banks, hence we provide a key role in introducing our core banks with a presence in the relevant countries to our local finance management team to facilitate the migration," John Wong says.

"After the initial meetings take place, the selection of bank is carried out by Securitas' local management."

**IN THAILAND, SECURITAS** recently chose to cooperate with RBS after looking for a bank that could handle all recurring cash management requirements, including payroll capabilities.

"The top priorities were to obtain a secure and reliable online banking system and in addition to competitive pricing, better cooperation from the bank with faster response times. These factors as well as the personal service and tailored solutions that RBS can provide were decisive," John Wong says. X

# Pipes galore

TEXT ANNELI KAMLIN PHOTO ILJA C. HENDEL

Growth is in focus for Norwegian plumbing wholesaler Brødrene Dahl, part of the large Saint-Gobain Group. Logistics is a cornerstone for the company, and it has to be extremely efficient. The new high warehouse in Oslo doubles the capacity.

**HOW DO YOU** say 'big' so people really understand?

It's a rhetorical question worth asking yourself when visiting Brødrene Dahl's central warehouse in Langhus, outside Oslo. Because it's big. Very big. There's also a high warehouse which is high. Very high. And cranes that are very tall and very fast.

The facility is the hub of the massive logistical system that is the company's operation in Norway.

“This is an ideal solution for us. Our core business isn't owning properties.”



Brødrene Dahl has 27,000 products in stock.

“Our deliveries used to go out from regional warehouses, but now we have all our inventory here,” says Jan G. Vere, Logistics Director at Brødrene Dahl.

“Operation and purchasing are now more efficient, which gives us a larger product range while reducing costs and distribution times.”

**INCOMING DELIVERIES, STORAGE,** picking and outgoing deliveries take place in a finely honed system that is constantly growing.

“We're focused on expansion, partly because the operation demands such large volumes.”

Many orders are small and require a lot of handling, while the service level is high.

“If we receive an order by 4 pm, we deliver by 7 the next morning virtually anywhere in Norway. The warehouse operates round the clock.”

Brødrene Dahl is part of the giant French Saint-Gobain Group and has sister companies in the other Nordic countries. The company targets the professional market. The typical customer is a plumber needing parts for a job, perhaps just a few pipe connectors.

“But a delivery could also be a whole truck's worth,” says Vere.

**THERE HAS BEEN** serious investment in recent years in expanding the central warehouse and installing an automation system.

“Our latest expansion, including the high warehouse finished in the spring, has doubled our capacity.”

The new part is a building that links together two of the company's existing premises.

“A municipal road used to run between the buildings. We could buy the land, if we promised to build a new road around the facility instead.”

## Dahl's central warehouse

**Property owner:** RBS Nordisk Renting

**Area of premises:** 46,000 square metres

**Maximum height:** 25 metres

**Products in stock:** 27,000

**Orders:** 3 million per year

**Incoming deliveries per day:** 40-50 trailers

**Outgoing deliveries per day:**

100-120 distribution vehicles and trailers

**Customers:** Plumbers, building contractors, local/national authorities, industry (oil, gas, shipping, shipbuilding etc.)



Pipes from floor to ceiling. The new high warehouse includes a fully automated system of cassettes for pipe management. Brødrene Dahl's Logistics Director Jan G. Vere certainly isn't scared of heights.

The height of the building also had to be negotiated with the local authority.

“We wanted to build as high as possible. The automation system is a major investment. The cranes cost the same whatever the height, but the benefit is greater if the cranes are taller.”

The end result is a steel structure that seems to never end when seen from the ground. It's hard to take in just how big it all is. Only by walking up the six adjacent sets of steps do you fully get an idea of how high the storage space is.

**THE HIGH WAREHOUSE** is comprised of two parts. One is for storing products on pallets, Euro pallets and long pallets for shower enclosures. The other is for steel pipes of every conceivable type and dimension. They are sorted into removable compartments called cassettes, each of which

can take a weight of 1.5 tonnes. The computer-controlled giant crane sweeps back and forth picking and replacing cassettes.

“It's incredibly efficient compared to moving everything by forklift,” says Vere.

**SINCE 1999, BRØDRENE DAHL'S** partner on the property side has been RBS Nordisk Renting, which has been involved in the company's expansion several times, including most recently.

“This is an ideal solution for us. Our core business isn't owning properties. But it is important to us to have a property owner who's receptive to our needs and facilitates our expansion, and we have just that in Nordisk Renting,” says Vere.

“This is an ideal solution for us. Our core business isn't owning properties. X



“We now have incredibly efficient warehouse management,” says Jan G. Vere.

# Banks optimise capital

TEXT ANNELI KAMLIN ILLUSTRATION MATTIAS KÄLL

Banks are in the process of adapting to tougher requirements on capital adequacy. Recent clarifications of the rules have generated increased funding activity. One such example is SEB's billion-euro transaction to replenish its subordinated capital, known as Tier 2 capital.



Hampus Brodén, Head of Group Financial Management at SEB.

**BANKS' FINANCIAL DECISIONS** are largely governed by regulatory conditions.

"Extensive material on new rules for banks comes out every month. A lot of this focuses on what the balance sheet should look like. Different goals can conflict and also change over time, which means it's important to understand which way the general trend is going in order to be able to make decisions about optimising various factors," says Hampus Brodén, Head of Group Financial Management at SEB.

**A MAJOR CHANGE** to the rules on banks' capital adequacy has been under way for a few years. The controls are stricter, and the starting-point is the new generation of rules known collectively as Basel III.

"Furthermore, Sweden is far stricter in applying the rules than other countries, which stems from the Swedish banking crisis in the

1990s and its aftermath," says Phil Pearce, who is responsible for Nordic customers within the Hybrid Capital & Balance Sheet Solutions at RBS in London, part of the RBS balance sheet advisory team for major banks in the Nordic region and Europe.

**THE SWEDISH FINANCIAL** Supervisory Authority, the SFSA, recently issued updated requirements for banks' capital adequacy.

"The requirements have provided some clarification of the situation compared to before," says Brodén.

This clarification is one of the reasons why SEB approached the wholesale funding market with a bond that falls under the category of Tier 2 capital.

"The bond was for € 1bn, has a 2.5% interest rate and is due in 2026. We needed to replace a previous instrument of the same type and decided to issue the bond in late May. It turned



Tougher rules are affecting the way banks borrow

out to be very good timing bearing in mind how the spreads have developed since then,"

says Brodén.

The last time SEB carried out a Tier 2 transaction was in 2011, so the euro transaction marked a comeback to the market, with RBS as a lead manager.

"We appreciate RBS for its role as a sounding-board in balance sheet advisory," says Brodén.

**“ We appreciate RBS for its role as a sounding-board in balance sheet advisory**

Tier 2 capital takes its name from the ranking in a bank's balance sheet. In regulatory contexts there are two layers, Tier 1 and Tier 2. The SFSA

has specified how much a bank must have of each type.

The debt is grouped according to seniority, i.e. in the order their lender is paid in the event of a crisis. First in line is the public while shareholders come last. In between there are a number of investors with different types of bonds.

**TIER 1 CAPITAL** is the most junior and largely comprises core capital, in other words equity and profit, as well as hybrid capital which is also called Additional Tier 1 capital.

"Hybrid capital is becoming more and more interesting. It comprises bonds with a perpetual maturity, making it similar to equity. We will see greater demand from banks for these types of financial instruments which help them meet the new requirements for more and better capital," says Phil Pearce.

Tier 2 capital, or subordinated capital, covers losses before more senior capital. It is more risky for investors to own and, therefore, more expensive for the bank.

**"IN GENERAL, THE** costs of all our financial input goods – equity, lending and liquidity – are increasing with the stricter regulatory requirements," says Brodén.

"This means that banks need to charge their customers more and pay them less, although this doesn't impede our ability to support them in general."

Brodén thinks that the extra strict requirements in Sweden could potentially reduce the competitiveness of Swedish banks compared to banks in other countries.

"There is, however, a compensating factor in that the strict rules make Nordic players more attractive on the financial markets.

Investors and customers value the security provided by the rules. We also benefited from this in our Tier 2 transaction." X

## SSAB adds France

TEXT ANNELI KAMLIN

**SWEDISH STEEL GROUP** SSAB is very much an international company, with operations in 45 countries and large payment flows as a result. Much of its business is done in Europe. Two years ago the company decided to introduce a new solution for cash management, in collaboration with RBS. The aim was to streamline the financial flows and use the liquidity as well as possible.

**"THIS TIME WE** chose to prioritise Western Europe, where we saw the greatest development potential. Six countries ended up in the new solution," says Anna Norfjell, SSAB's Cash Manager, based in Brussels.

Recently, France was added to the list.

"The main change is that our French operation is now also encompassed by our cash pool solution, whereby flows in euro from different countries are co-ordinated in a single account. It's a major advantage from a group-wide perspective," says Norfjell.

**HOWEVER, AS BEFORE,** SSAB was keen to ensure that implementation entailed the least possible disruption to the local offices.

"Adjusting our procedures has gone very smoothly, even though so much is new. The new solution works well," says France Thenard at SSAB's Paris office.

**SSAB HAS BEEN** on the French market for 40 years, with customers in automotive and construction, among other sectors.

"Adding France is a good example of how an existing cash pool can be expanded as necessary. The basic concept doesn't change just because a new country is added," says Håkan Bergqvist of RBS Global Transaction Services in Stockholm. X

# RBS knows USD

TEXT HELENE MURDOCH PHOTO MATTIAS NILSSON

Svenska Handelsbanken, Statoil and A.P. Møller-Mærsk. An increasing number of Nordic corporates and financial institutions choose RBS when they want to head west to issue in USD. “We’re considered to be an expert debt shop”, explains Victor Forte, Head of Syndicate and a Managing Director of RBS in the US.

**SOMETIMES BEING SMALLER** is an advantage. This is at least one of the reasons, according to Victor Forte, why RBS is able to successfully compete with bulge-bracket US firms for dollar denominated bonds – with mega-corporates like AT&T, McDonalds, Daimler, Toyota and Rio Tinto on the client list.

“We can’t compete on the scale of the largest US banks. Rather, we offer a different approach. Our strength is that we focus solely on fixed income, an area in which we rank among the top three in the US for those clients we choose to cover.

**AS WE COVER** a smaller list of clients, we can dedicate the whole breadth of our whole expertise and attention to each deal. Our Syndicate and DCM teams have the means to see the deal through and offer support through each step of the process. What we offer is bespoke solutions tailored to each individual issuer,” explains Victor Forte.



Victor Forte is an expert on the USA.

Today, corporations and financial institutions can choose among a variety of options to raise capital. In addition to issuing bonds in domestic markets and local currencies, they can also choose to issue bonds in other markets and different currencies. Since interest rates may



American investors are interested in the Nordic region.

differ from country to country, issuers may choose to take advantage of these opportunities. At the moment there is a growing interest among Nordic corporations and financial institutions to issue and register their USD bonds, so-called Yankee bonds, in the United States to get access to the largest capital market in the world.

**“SOMETIMES YOU HAVE** a choice between currencies. Our global presence and international expertise in the fixed income area means that we can provide advice on the best currency option for each issue,” says Victor Forte.

There is a growing mutual attraction between American investors and Nordic corporations and financial institutions, according to Victor Forte.

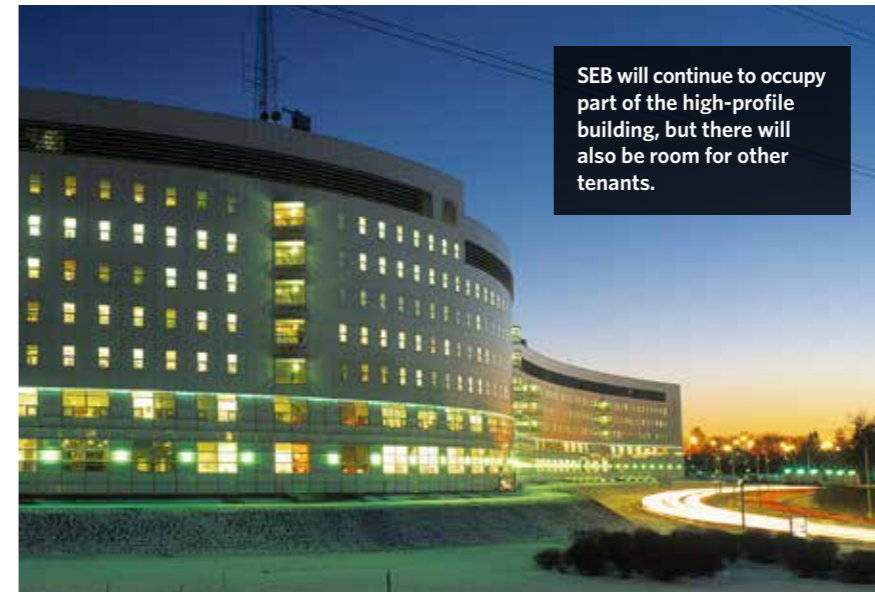
“Throughout the turbulent global

financial markets of the last five years, the Nordic region has been regarded as something of a safe haven among US investors – in particular as they seek new ways to diversify their holdings,” he says.

“Right now, US investors have a significant appetite for investing in Nordic companies. The US market would actually love to see more issuers from the Nordic region,” Victor Forte adds.

**ACCORDING TO MANY** Nordic clients, a strong reason for choosing RBS to underwrite a USD transaction is its seasoned and experienced Syndicate team, headed by Victor Forte, whose career includes 17 years in Syndicate with six years as Head of US Debt Syndication at Lehman Brothers. During his tenure, the firm was a consistently top ranked commercial paper dealer and investment bank by market share for domestic bonds.

The RBS North American business covers a broad range of capabilities across Debt Capital Markets, Fixed Income Sales & Trading and Origination, as well as Global Transaction Services. Recent deals for Nordic clients include a 5-year USD 1.4 billion senior unsecured dual-tranche offering for Svenska Handelsbanken, a 5-year USD 750 million and 10-year USD 500 million senior unsecured dual-tranche offering for A.P. Møller-Mærsk, as well as a 3 billion USD 5-year FRN and 5-year, 10-year and 30-year unsecured notes offering for Statoil. X



SEB will continue to occupy part of the high-profile building, but there will also be room for other tenants.

## SEB still in Rissne

TEXT ANNELI KAMLIN

SEB has signed a new rental agreement with RBS Nordisk Renting for Bankhus 90 in Rissne. Certain operations will remain in the building until 2031.

**THE CURVED WHITE** building just north of Stockholm has been a landmark since it was finished in 1992.

“We had it built to house ourselves and created a high-quality building. It still feels modern today,” says Mikael Helsing, Head of Group Real Estate at SEB.

**THE BUILDING WAS** born from an endeavour for modern workplaces, the original plan being to move the head office here. At most SEB has had 2,900 employees based at Rissne.

In the 1990s SEB decided not to own properties any more and sold Bankhus 90. Since 2006 it has been owned by Nordisk Renting.

“The bank’s activities are changing, as is the world generally, and it’s now time for another overhaul. We’re leaving our entire office on Sergels Torg and Magnus Ladulåsgatan in central Stockholm and large parts of Rissne to create a new shared workplace. Certain types of operation will be in the Rissne building. Downsizing from more locations to fewer reduces

complexity and spreads our risks,” says Helsing.

The new agreement runs until 2031.

“We are delighted to still have SEB as a tenant, but we can now adapt the building to more tenants and offer them efficient, modern office premises,” says Lennart Ingefäldt, at Nordisk Renting.

Sundbyberg, of which Rissne is a part, is a municipality in strong growth. In just a few decades the labour market has developed from heavy engineering to modern service production.

**“WE CAN SEE** that Sundbyberg has a strong attraction to employers of all sizes. We conduct an ongoing dialogue with businesses about how, together, we can create the conditions for growth,” says Mayor Jonas Nygren (Social Democrats).

Future plans for the municipality include a Rissne station for Greater Stockholm’s light railway. The municipality already has metro and commuter train stations. X



## Reflections

Pär Magnusson  
Chief Economist,  
RBS Nordic Region

## A tug of war

**WHEN THE SCOTS** voted against leaving the UK a lot of people breathed a sigh of relief, but I think we’ll soon be holding our breath again. That’s because Scotland is not alone in wanting to break free of its nation and create its own, smaller state.

Catalonia has announced a referendum to leave Spain, and who knows what other regions in Europe might follow in Scotland’s and Catalonia’s footsteps?

Apart from all the complications and geopolitical unease this can cause in the countries where this kind of separatism has a foothold, one has to ask oneself why it ever gains a foothold in the first place.

**IF WE MAINLY** view regional separatism as a symptom of a general dissatisfaction with social development, and that regional nationalism has a primitive but effective attraction for many people who can see a darker future due to poor economic development, it’s relatively easy to understand

**IN OTHER WORDS,** the grass roots are deeply dissatisfied with the status quo and want to break free. Meanwhile there is a trend within the EMU where the elite, who manage the central institutions, are pulling in exactly the opposite direction. There the effort focuses on supplementing the inadequate currency union by any means with a finance-political union, which in effect is like trying to create a gigantic state within the EMU.

How far can that particular tug of war continue until the rope breaks?

And what happens then? X



Co-worker portrait: Johan Hultner

**Grew up in:** Stockholm, Copenhagen, Brussels, Moscow and Quito.

**Remembers:** A bit of Russian from the Armed Forces Interpreter Academy.

**Declined:** Moving to Kazakhstan after university.

**Rio de Janeiro:** Met his Spanish wife there.

**Interesting year:** A year with the Swedish Trade Council in Spain in connection with the Olympics and Expo 92.

**Totally Swedish achievement:** Completed the Vasaloppet ski race 2014 - "Tough, but I'm doing it again."

# ” We look forward to exciting new business

TEXT ANNELI KAMLIN PHOTO HÅKAN LINDGREN

**D**ifferent continents, countries and languages are mentioned in quick succession during a meeting with Johan Hultner, Senior Relationship Manager with focus on Acquisition Finance at RBS Nordic Region.

Born into a diplomat family, as a child Johan Hultner moved extensively around the world and attended American schools. At 14 he went to boarding school in Sweden, followed by university in Uppsala.

“I studied applied physics and supplemented it with economics.”

**THE TRADITIONAL CAREER** path after such a technical start would have been research, but Johan found the world of business more attractive and went into finance.

“That was when the corporate acquisitions market was just really taking off. Even then I found it an

exciting area, with great opportunities to look into different companies and sectors.”

**HIS FIRST JOB** was at the investment bank S.G. Warburg & Co in London, where his analytical abilities came in very handy.

“At that age you tend to put a lot into the analysis before the deal. Then you gradually build your expertise over the years.”

**SOME OF THE** first deals Johan was involved in were business milestones, such as taking state-owned Pharmacia public. He also had experience of private equity firms early on. He primarily worked in advisory in connection with corporate sales and acquisitions, as well as leveraged buy-outs.

“Then, as now, I found the private equity firms’ structure appealing. They often work to a longer time

frame than listed companies so they can generally make bolder decisions. They can also take greater risks in the form of higher indebtedness in the companies, which can lead to higher returns,” Johan explains.

**SINCE 2005 JOHAN** has worked for RBS, and the international family live in Stockholm: Johan, his Spanish wife and their two teenagers, born in the UK. They speak a mixture of Swedish, Spanish and English at home.

**ACCORDING TO JOHAN**, the market for leveraged finance is ‘very active’ at the moment.

“Interest in new transactions is huge, and we look forward to exciting new business. An acquisition can be a lengthy process where you have to keep the goal in mind. It’s a great feeling finally seeing all the papers get signed.” ×