



Draft Resolution Towards a European Maritime Policy – a major European perspective for the North Sea Region

Resolution is forwarded by Lower Saxony
on behalf of the German Members of the North Sea Commission

The North Sea Commission welcomes the ambitious aim to design and elaborate an integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union. As outlined by a communication jointly presented by President José Manuel Barroso and Commissioner Joe Borg in early March 2005, a Commission's Task Force chaired by Commissioner Borg shall elaborate a Green Paper scheduled to be presented in the 1st half of 2006. This Green Paper shall serve as a consultation paper for an extensive consultation exercise to follow this presentation.

The North Sea Commission strongly supports the perception of the European Commission that;

- the seas are seriously contributing to livelihood and well-being of mankind.
- the seas are generating considerable potentials for economic growth in terms of transport, resources, maritime research and development, innovative technologies as well as of marine protection.
- these potentials need to be addressed by an integrated political approach as regards the aim to make the most out of these cross-cutting potentials and needs in a sustainable manner.
- it is high time to develop a Maritime Policy of the European Union as regards competitiveness of the entire Union in general and of maritime regions in particular.
- this cross-cutting issue considerably can serve to the implementation of the targets set out in the Lisbon, Gothenburg and The Hague process.

In this respect the North Sea Commission points to the potentials, capacities and needs of the North Sea Region and of the North of Europe as a whole;

- sea transport, ship building facilities and sea harbours of the area are of paramount importance for the entire Union
- maritime businesses, technologies and research of the area are offering unique potentials
- protection of marine environment and resources as well as the pressing issue of maritime safety need to be enhanced by coordinated efforts

Some major issues primarily to be addressed by a Green Paper and a future European Maritime Policy;

- **maritime industries and technologies:**
against the background of speedy innovation cycles development of innovative technologies need to be supported (marine environment technologies, offshore wind energy, marine aqua-culture, marine resources, safety of maritime transport, surveillance of global climate change etc.)



- **maritime research and development:**

enhanced and coordinated co-operation of research institutions need to be supported by the 7th Research Framework Programme; the number of research fields need to be enlarged up to production of healthy marine nutrition, marine pharmaceuticals or marine energy and should include also bio-geo-systems at land-sea borders (including Coastal Zone Management and the Wadden Seas)

- **maritime transport, logistics and safety:**

maritime transport systems will gain ever increasing importance for the entire Union. Thus, hinterland connections of European harbours as well as the improvement of multi-modal transport networks and logistical chains need to be supported by EU funds (Transeuropean Networks, EU programme Marco Polo, „Motorways of the seas“, EU Structural funds objective 3 “territorial co-operation”). In the field of maritime safety the promotion of environmentally friendly and secure new ship generation could considerably contribute to competitiveness of European shipbuilding sector. Increasing shipping rates as well as growing world-wide competition require sufficient education and training facilities. Enhanced network co-operation among respective institutions in the field of transport could generate added value and should be supported

The North Sea Commission calls upon the European Commission to involve regional co-operation organisations active in transnational co-operation in European regions of relevance: By contributing to a Green Paper as well by active participation in a consultation process to follow, their experience and the potentials of the areas which they represent could lend considerable added value to the political process.

Parallel to this, the North Sea Commission calls upon the governments of the North Sea Region as well as to the regions in countries bordering the North Sea to consider establishing discussion fora on European Maritime Policy and to develop joint contributions to the whole process involving the regional level within the North Sea states from the very beginning.

Furthermore the North Sea Commission strongly asks for the launch of an active maritime community generating joint transnational projects, which could be funded by transnational programmes. This leads to strengthen the core issues on the regional development in maritime influenced areas. The multifunctional approach needs therefore an Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).