



Minutes of the North Sea Commission 14th Annual Business Meeting 17th June 2005, Zeeland, the Netherlands

1. Welcome

The President welcomed everyone to Zeeland and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

2. Annual Reports

a. President's Report

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen gave her first annual report as President of the North Sea Commission (NSC). She reminded members of the contents of her election speech in 2004 and gave an update on all the achievements of the last twelve months. These achievements included the work of the Thematic Groups, increased co-operation, improved communication, close working relationships with the CPMR, and new working structures within the NSC Executive Committee.

Decision:

The President's Report was approved.

b. Annual Reports from the Thematic Groups

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen advised members that full copies of the Thematic Group Annual Reports were included in the meeting papers. These reports described the wide range of work achieved over the last twelve months.

Decision:

The Thematic Group Annual Reports were approved.

c. Report from the conference 'The North Sea – Today and Tomorrow'

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen gave a summary of the success and agreed outcomes from the conference. Information was included in the conference papers and members were advised that details are available on the NSC website.

Decision:

No decision required.



3. NSC Work Plans

a. Executive Committee Action Plan and overview of the Thematic Group work plans

Cllr Audrey Findlay described the process used to develop the Thematic Groups Work Programme 2005 – 2006. This Programme provides an overview of all the work plans. It is hoped that this will give a clear view on the main issues and will help to monitor the work of the Thematic groups.

Cllr Audrey Findlay also outlined the process used to create the new Executive Committee Strategic Group and to produce the NSC Executive Committee Action Plan 2005 – 2006.

Decision:

Members agreed the Work Programme, Action Plan and new Executive Committee working structure.

b. Thematic Group Work Plans

Culture and Tourism

Cllr Annelie Stark (Västra Götaland), Chair of the Culture and Tourism Thematic Group gave an outline of the group's political statement, new working structure, focus for the future and Work Plan.

Decision:

Members agreed the Work Plan

Economic Development

Cllr Kevan Lim (Suffolk), Vice-Chair of the Economic Development Group described the process used to create the group's Work Plan, the agreed priorities, new work structures and aims for the future.

Decision:

Members agreed the Work Plan

Education and Research

Cllr Bernard Cailiau (Nord-Pas de Calais), Chair of the Education and Research Group, introduced the group's Work Plan. Ann Brown (Co-ordinator) gave a detailed summary of the group's achievements, structure and plans for the future.

Decision:

Members agreed the Work Plan

Environment

Cllr Alison McInnes (Aberdeenshire), Chair of the Environment Group gave an overview of the group's aims, vision, activities and key areas of action for the future.



Decision:

Members agreed the Work Plan

Fisheries

Cllr Harry Jensen (Ringkjøbing), Chair of the Fisheries Group gave an outline of the group's involvement with the Regional Advisory Council, Inshore Fisheries Forum and Coastal Zone Management. He also described their plans for the future.

Decision:

Members agreed the Work Plan

Transport

Cllr Tor Ottar Karlsen (Buskerud), Vice-Chair of the Transport Group introduced the group's Work Plan. Jon Halvard Eide, (Co-ordinator) gave a detailed description of the group's priorities for the future.

Decision:

Members agreed the Work Plan

4. Finances

a. Accounts and Audit Report

The Executive Secretary presented the previous year's accounts. He highlighted the auditor's remarks. He also stated that although the accounts show a surplus, there are a number of outstanding invoices to be received. He identified where savings had been made but also explained that, as external contractors are now used, additional expenses have been incurred in the development and maintenance of the new NSC website.

Decision:

The Accounts were agreed and adopted.

b. Budget 2006

The Executive Secretary advised members of the need for additional resources and some changes of priorities in the budget. The Executive Committee has adopted the budget and the Work Plans for NSC, that shows the work of the NSC is growing and are in need of a increase of the membership fees.

Decision:

Members agreed that the 2006 budget should be adopted with a 10% rise (268 Euro) to a membership fees from 2684 Euro to 2952 Euro.

The budget should be adjusted annually according to inflation.

Note: there was one abstention to this vote.



5. Election of NSC Office bearers

a. Election of Vice President

Decision:

Vice-President Audrey Findlay was re-elected as NSC Vice-President for a new 2-year period from the NSC Annual Business Meeting 2005 until the Annual Business Meeting 2007.

b. Confirmation of the election of Vice President Peter Byman

Decision:

Cllr Peter Byman was confirmed as Vice-President of the NSC from October 2004 until the NSC Annual Business Meeting in 2006.

c. Confirmation of the Members and Substitute Members of the NSC Executive Committee, elected by the National delegations

The Executive Secretary gave an update on the new proposed list of members and substitute members to the NSC Executive Committee. The Executive Committee for 2005-2006 has these members from the member Countries:

Country	Member	Substitute Member
Denmark	Cllr. Harry Jensen, Ringkjøbing Amt	Cllr. Niels Thomsen, Viborg Amt
England	Cllr. Kevan Lim, East of England Regional Assembly	Cllr. Richard Rockcliffe Norfolk County Council
France	Cllr. Martine Filleul, Region Nord-Pas de Calais	Cllr. Jeannine Marquaille Region Nord-Pas de Calais
Germany	Cllr. Björn Thümler, Niedersachsen	Vacant.
Nederland	Cllr. Rinske Kruisinga, Provincie Noord-Holland	Cllr. Jacques Suurmond, Provincie Zeeland
Norway	Cllr. Gisle Handeland, Hordaland Fylkeskommune	Cllr. Thore Westermoen, Vest-Agder Fylkeskommune
Scotland	Cllr. Kathleen Matheson, Highland Council	Cllr. Alec Thomson, Fife Council
Sweden	Cllr. Roland Andersson, Västra Götaland Region	Cllr. Jan Hallberg, Västra Götaland Region

Decision:

Members agreed the elections to the NSC Executive Committee.



6. Update of the NSC Charter

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen outlined the new proposed NSC Charter.

Decision:

The new NSC Charter (dated 15th May 2005) was adopted.

7. Report from CPMR

Mr Claudio Martini, the CPMR President, praised the work of the NSC and thanked the Provincie of Zeeland for their assistance with this year's event. He described the contents of the recent CPMR activity report and the organisation's successes over the last twelve months. He highlighted some future issues for regional policy and funding, and the need to recognise the importance of interregional work.

Mr Xavier Gizard, the General Secretary of the CPMR spoke about the importance of transnational work and the need to lobby to ensure it remains a priority. He also described some of the future meetings and activities of the CPMR.

Decision:

No comments. No decision required.

8. Report from the Interreg IIIB programme for the North Sea

Programme Manager Lorraine George, Interreg Secretariat, described how the spending targets for last year have been met. All the programme funds have been allocated. By the end of this year 53% of the entire programme funds will have been spent. She advised that 58 projects have been approved and 15 projects will be completed this year. A project book has been produced containing information from the 58 projects.

An open call will be held in November with an emphasis on projects that look to the future. The remaining funds comprise about 3.7 million euros (ERDF) and 0.4 million euros (ERDF interest money).

She outlined their publicity activities and the work of two new initiatives (Interact Point and Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation).

Lorraine George also described the current climate of uncertainty for funding in the future, and how Interreg could demonstrate valuable outcomes from partnership working and funding.

Decision:

No comments to the report. No decision required.



9. Resolutions and Political Statements

Cllr Peter Byman described the content of the tabled resolutions and political statements.

- **Political Statement on Inshore Ship to Ship transfers of crude oil products and other hydrocarbons**

Decision:

Approved.

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

The Executive Committee had decided to merge the two draft resolutions from Lower Saxony on behalf of the German Members of the North Sea Commission and the Regional Council of Western Norway (presented by: Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn og Fjordane, Møre og Romsdal). The new resolution is based on the German draft resolution with amendment from the Norwegian draft resolution.

Decision:

Approved.

- **Draft Resolution on the interdependence of EU's Lisbon Strategy and the Gothenburg Agenda.**

The Highland Council had proposed some amendments at the Executive Committee. A new draft resolution, with the new amendments, was presented for the Annual Business Meeting.

Decision:

Approved.

- **Draft Resolution with reference to a new European legislation on chemicals**

Decision:

Approved.

- **Draft Resolution on EU Territorial Co-operation 2007 - 2013**

The Executive Committee had some comments and amendments to the original draft resolution. A small working group made a new draft resolution according to the decision made by the Executive Committee, and this new draft resolution was presented for the Annual Business Meeting

Decision:

Approved.



10. 15th General Assembly 2006

On behalf of all the Scottish members, Cllr Kathleen Matheson, Highland Council, Scotland thanked the Provincie of Zeeland for its hospitality and invited the NSC to hold its 15th General Assembly in Scotland during June 2006.

Decision:

Approved.

11. A.O.C.B.

Cllr Gunn Marit Helgesen welcomed Aberdeen City Council as individual members of the NSC.

The President closed the meeting by thanking the Provincie of Zeeland for all its assistance with the organisation of this year's NSC GA.

Note:

The background papers for this meeting, the President's Report and the approved resolutions are available on the NSC website www.northsea.org

NSC Secretariat; VC/VJ/LH
June 2005