

NSC FISHERIES GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2006

2005/2006 has once again been a very interesting time for the fishing sector and the dependent communities. The NSCFG has worked to try and ensure that some of the issues facing both sectors and communities are addressed by the following actions.

1. The NSCFG continues to work closely with the CPMR Fisheries Group (CPMRFIG) to support the Chair and Secretariat and to develop joint working. To this end we held the first joint **NSCFG – CPMRFIG** meeting on 16 February 2006, in Brest. The following actions were agreed at the meeting:
 - **Safety at Sea through Partnership**, a seminar is to be held in Stavanger later this year. It will be jointly organized by CPMR and NSCFG with support from the Oil & Gas sector and SFF Services. Rogaland County has agreed to host this important seminar. It will address the need to develop close links with fisheries and the energy sectors, further develop existing safety equipment (FishSafe). Ensure that all North Sea fleets have access to the safety equipment. A meeting with the energy sector is to be arranged.
 - **Fishing Vessel Fuel Costs** – our French colleagues highlighted the high fuel costs and fuel consumption incurred by fishing vessels. It was thought necessary to look into the possible development of fuel-efficient engines, which could also use bio-fuels. A joint ad hoc working group, which will include representatives of the Renewable Energy Group, is to set in place to investigate further.
 - **EU Fisheries Training Standard** – it was agreed by all that fisheries training is vital to future sustainability of the fisheries sector. Recruitment to the sector, across Europe, is very low. This is believed to be due to a number of factors e.g. lack of perceived future in the sector, poor image, lack of understanding, this is particularly important as more people from the new accession countries are working within the EU Fishing fleets. If the sector is to attract young people, who can be trained as professionals and can be mobilised across Europe, it was agreed by both Groups, that a EU Standard in Fisheries Training has to be developed. An ad hoc joint working group is to look at the development on such a standard, which would include:
 - Safety**
 - Quality
 - Conservation
 - Navigation
 - Communications
 - Biology
 - Stock assessment

Representatives from the geographic Commissions, Colleges, Scientists, Fishermen, EU Commission and environmental organizations will be invited to form the working group.

It was also agreed that the Chairs of the NSCFG and CPMRFIG will write to the EU Commission to seek a seat on new European Control Agency Advisory Board to ensure that local and regional authorities views are taken account of in the setting up of this new agency.



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A letter to Commissioner Borg regarding the decisions that are taken by EU Fisheries Ministers at the December Council is to be sent. This letter will highlight the importance of fisheries to the coastal communities of Europe and the need for a more holistic approach to be taken. The Council needs to take account of not only biological assessments, but also the social and economic consequences of the decisions they take. Local and Regional Authorities are often left to deal with such consequences.

(Annex 1 - Reply from Commissioner Borg)

1.1 **Safety at Sea**

As a result of the joint meeting, I was invited to give a presentation to the North Sea Oil & Gas Sector "Fisheries Liaison Seminar". My colleague Malcolm Morrison and I gave a joint presentation on "Working in Partnership". The presentation highlighted how Local Authorities from around the North Sea could work together to create opportunities through networks such as the NSC and CPMR to ensure a stable, safe, sustainable future.

It was agreed that we would work together to ensure that "FishSafe" a safety device, available only to UK fishermen, could be developed and made available to all fishermen using the North Sea. "FishSafe" has saved many lives.

A Seminar, as agreed at the joint NSCFG/CPMFIG meeting, was discussed and agreement was reached that the United Kingdom Offshore Oil Association (UKOOA) would work with the NSCFG and CPMRFIG to arrange the Seminar in Stavanger early autumn 2006. A further meeting between UKOOA & NSC will take place in Aviemore on 15th June.

1.2 **North Sea Inshore Fisheries Network**

The development of the NSC Inshore Fisheries is still progressing, it is planned to have the First Seminar in October 2006. As you will see from the attached Letter from Commissioner Borg, he mentions that Inshore Network could contribute to Cod Recovery Review, it is therefore that we move this forward.

Annex 2 Draft Seminar Proposal

1.3 **European Standard in Fisheries Training**

This was discussed at the meeting of the CPMRFIG on 26 May in Ancona, it was agreed that I would lead a Focus Group, to bring this forward, everyone agreed that it was important that Fisheries training was important to ensure professionalism within the Sector. A meeting of this Focus group will take at the CPMR General Assembly later this year.

2. North Sea Ministerial Meeting (NSMM)



The NSCFG and NSRAC representatives at the NSMM.

The NSCFG & NSCEG played an active role in the drafting of the NSM declaration and during the meeting. Cllr. Alison McInnes, Chair NSCEG made the NSC position, very clear and with some success, at the meeting.

During the meeting we had the opportunity to speak to John Richardson, Head of the Maritime Policy Task Force, it was agreed that representatives of the NSC would meet with Mr. Richardson, in Scotland House, on 4 July 2006 to discuss the Green Paper, relating particularly to the North Sea.

3. North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC)

The NSRAC is now into it's second year, which has proved just as busy as the it's first year. Up until the present time it has:

- Given advice on – Multi Annual Management- Retention of the Shetland and Plaice Boxes – Development of an effort management scheme for the Kattegat – future management of Nephrops and Flatfish fisheries.
- Development positions on Protected Areas – Criteria for any closed or protected areas – Cod Recovery Review Plan
- Initiated research projects on Long-term fisheries objectives for key fisheries – mapping of fishing areas – collection of social and economic data on fisheries and fishery dependent areas

Lessons Learned from the NSRAC have been:

- Stakeholder Participation is important for resolving the complex issues of ocean governance
- The fisheries sector has already achieved success in providing a voice for stakeholders through the Regional Advisory Councils
- The RACs provide a model which can be improved and built upon



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4. Inter-RAC Committee (IRC)

The IRC's membership includes the Chairs and Executive Secretaries of all the RACs, was formed in December 2005 and aims to:

To ensure the effective administrative management of RACs by working together to:

- Share experience and best practice
- Avoid duplication of effort
- Provide administrative support
- Co-operate where appropriate when dealing with horizontal administrative issues
- Co-ordination of meetings etc.
- Provide a collective view on administrative issues affecting all RACs

I Chair the meeting, Patricia Comiskey of the North Western Waters RAC is the Rapporteur.

5. CPMRFIG Resolution

At the NSC Executive Committee meeting in Ipswich, Tommy Mostrup, Ringkøbing County, gave a presentation on Bird Protected Areas and their effects on local Communities. After much discussion it was agreed that the NSCFG would take this matter to the CPMRFIG to seek its support.

At the meeting of CPMRFIG on 26 May 2006, Tommy Mostrup gave a similar presentation, after which, there was much debate and support. It was agreed that a Resolution would be drafted for the presentation at the CPMR General Assembly.

The Resolution will recognise the need for the protection of Birds, fish stocks and habitats, however protected or closed areas should only be put in place:

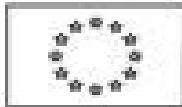
- After consultation with the local community
- Have clear objectives
- Be time bound
- Have a mid term evaluation to ensure that the purpose was being met
- And the local community should be involved in the management of any areas

6. The next meeting of the NSCFG will most likely take place before the Safety at Sea seminar.

The NSCFG is committed to continuing to working with partners towards the sustainable development of the North Sea.



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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR FISHERIES AND MARITIME AFFAIRS

Conservation Policy

Brussels, 21.04.2006 D 05184
(2006)

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Dear Mr Simpson,

Mr Borg has asked me to reply to your letter of 24 March 2006, in which you express your concerns about the impact of decisions taken by the Council of Ministers on small scale coastal fisheries.

The Commission bases its proposals to regulate fisheries on the best scientific advice that is available in order to restore stocks to their full potential. Inevitably, this has meant that efforts have been focussed on cod recovery for the last few years. I understand the frustration felt by the industry that quotas seem to be continually reduced without any apparent recovery of fish stocks, especially when it is perceived to be with the aim of recovering stocks that are not targeted by all segments of the fleet. Unfortunately most fisheries are mixed, so it is impossible to implement recovery measures without implicating several fleets.

There is of course always room for debate on the measures that are proposed. The cod recovery plan has not yet led to the results that it aimed for, and the Commission is currently preparing a review of the plan to assess the reasons for this. The first stage in this process will be a non-paper for discussion with stakeholders, so I would encourage you to make your views known to the North Sea RAC. However, it is clear that issues concerning small scale fisheries extend beyond the North Sea, and indeed in your letter you give two examples from the Baltic. Because there are horizontal issues to be discussed as well as regional issues, the Commission does not restrict its consultations to the RACs, and I would therefore invite the Inshore Fisheries Network to contribute to the debate on the review of the cod recovery plan. I note that in your letter you request a meeting with Mr Borg, but I would invite you in the first instance to discuss the issues you raise with my services. To this end I suggest you contact Mr Ernesto Penas, Head of the unit in charge of management of stocks, on 0032.2.2963744 to fix a mutually convenient date.

Yours sincerely,

John FARNELL
Director