



Fylkeshuset,
3706 Skien, Norway
Tel: +47 35 58 42 00
Fax: +47 35 52 90 44
nsc@northsea.org
www.northsea.org

Paper for the
17th NSC Annual Business Meeting,
13th June 2008

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NSC PRESIDENT AND THEMATIC GROUPS ANNUAL REPORTS

Enclosed are the Annual reports for the Thematic Groups.

The Presidents report will be presented at the meeting.

There will be a report from two cooperating organisations;

- The North Sea Regional Advisory Council by the Chair of NSRAC Hugo Andersson
- The Japanese cooperation "Sub Regions Influencing Regions" by Professor Hideo Kojimoto
- Report from the Interreg IVB North Sea Region programme, by Head of Secretariat Christian Byrith

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The NSC Annual Business Meeting of 13th June 2008 adopts the Annual Reports and continues to support the work of the NSC.*



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Culture & Tourism Group

Cllr Annelie Stark from Västra Götaland Region chaired the Culture & Tourism Group, till the 31st meeting, and since then by Cllr. Harry van Waveren from the Province of Zeeland. Prior to that, Cllr. Van Waveren was one of the Vice-Chairs. During the whole period, Cllr. Wendy Mawer from the East of England has been the other Vice-Chair. Since the 32nd Meeting, Cllr. Lars Nordström from Västra Götaland Region has been the other Vice-Chair. Advisor has been Mr Geir Sør-Reime, from Rogaland County Council.

The Culture & Tourism group had two meetings since last AGM:
31st Meeting Norwich 25 October 2007 and
32nd Meeting Bergen 27-28 March 2008.

12 and 14 delegates attended these meetings, respectively. These delegates represented 12 regional authorities from six countries (Denmark, England, Netherlands, Norway, Scotland, Sweden).

At the meetings, the main issues discussed were important initiatives from the European Union in relation to culture, and to tourism, especially sustainable tourism. The Cultural Agenda for the European Union puts culture and creativity right in the centre of the Lisbon agenda, and offers exciting and challenging opportunities for all cultural actors in the years to come.

The Sustainable Tourism initiative is an important response to the Gothenburg agenda, and to the Green Book on Maritime Policy. The CPMR has established an intercom group on sustainable tourism, chaired by Cllr Lars Nordström, one of our vice-chairs. Our group follows this work closely.

The development of project ideas and proposals has been another important priority of our group during the last year, and at the Bergen meeting, a highly successful project workshop was organised. More than 30 project ideas have been identified and discussed, and several have already resulted in project applications.



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Innovation & Education Group

1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to summarise the work of the North Sea Commission's thematic group "Innovation and Education Group" (IEG).

2. IEG Chair, Vice-Chairs and Adviser

- Chair: - Cllr. Ole B. Sørensen, Region North Denmark
- Vice-Chairs: - Cllr. Stella Duneufjardin, Region of Nord-pas de Calais, France
- Cllr. Kate Dean, Aberdeen City, Scotland
- Adviser: - Erik Lindboe, Rogaland County Council, Norway

3. Innovation & Education Group meetings

a) 20 members of the IEG attended the group meeting in Lille, France, 14th – 15th November 2007.

Highlights from the agenda:

- Presentation of The "North Sea Regional Food Initiative project". This is a proposed Interreg IVB program, planned to run for 5 years with a budget of 3 million Euros.
- Presentation of the North Sea Schools project "Sustainability around the North Sea", which had the kick-off meeting in Stavanger, Norway, 2nd – 3rd October 2007. More information about "Sustainability around the North Sea" in the project's website:
<http://www.northseaschools.org/main.htm>
- Presentation of the "Work Shadowing Scheme".
All information regarding the Work Shadowing Scheme is found on the NSC website.
- Life Long Learning
- Introduction to the Passive House+ Project, a proposed Interreg project
- Study tour to colleges in the area

b) 16 councillors and officers attended the IEG meeting in Aalborg 14th – 15th May 2008. The main theme was Innovation. Highlights from the agenda:

- Presentation of the North Denmark Region
- The Regional Development Plan – a method of working
- Interreg Secretariat – Transnationality
- Aalborg University – Innovative research and ways of working together with private companies
Young Entrepreneurship
- Study tour to VR Media Lab in the Aalborg University, introduction to the Smart House.

4. The I & E Strategic Group meets a couple of times a year to plan future group activities and meetings, revise the Work Plan aso. The Strategic Group is: the Chair, vice-chairs and advisor, plus a limited number of supporting officers.

- The Strategic Group met in Nord-pas de Calais's offices in Brussels 1st February 2008 to go through the Work Plan and future Innovation & Education Group activities and meetings.
- The Strategic Groups of the Innovation & Education Group and the Culture & Tourism Group had a joint meeting 2nd February 2008 in Brussels. On the Agenda was future co-operation between the groups, including developing the item of *Food*.



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5. Work Plan / Activities

The Work Plan has been updated, and the number of actions is kept on a level which adapts to our way of working and our ability to go through with the actions listed in the WP. The IEG is working with all the items of the plan.

The IEG aims to develop the connections with the Baltic Sea Commission. BSC was invited to the IEG meeting in Aalborg in May 2008, and will be invited to future events as well.

The Work Shadowing Scheme is presented on the North Sea Commission website, and it has also been disseminated by e-mail to NSC members.

The North Sea Schools Sustainability Network

In addition to the running school project “Sustainability around the North Sea”, a new application has been submitted to the Comenius offices, which delivers funding for different school projects in the EU. This planned school project is about food, and it’s aimed at children in primary schools. Comenius will announce its decision before the summer. The IEG will shadow these projects.

In addition, there are plans to develop another school project aimed at young people from 16 +.

If we succeed in this, the EU may be willing to give us the full status of a North Sea Schools Sustainability Network.

Food

The Innovation and Education Group has a major responsibility regarding *Food*, and aims to have a closer look at *Food* in cooperation with other NSC thematic groups. We are now awaiting the answer from Comenius on the school food project, which is mentioned above. We are also awaiting the Angus/Scotland food project, which will be submitted to the Interreg Secretariat later this year. If these projects are approved, the IEG will focus on following them up in the coming years.

Other projects

The applications for the Interreg-projects the Passive House+ (initiated by Sweden) and the North Sea Screen Partnership (initiated by Scotland) were submitted to the Interreg Secretariat in March 2008. The decision from the Interreg Secretariat is expected to be announced before the summer 2008. The NSC will be welcomed to shadow these projects.

More information:

The Passive House+ : <http://northsearegion.eu/ivb/project-ideas/&tid=115>

The North Sea Screen Partnership: <http://northsearegion.eu/ivb/project-ideas/&tid=232>

Information

Information about the IEG and the other thematic groups, invitations to group meetings, updated Work Plan and Newsletters are disseminated to the NSC Secretariat, group members, advisers of the other thematic groups by e-mail. Also, the NSC website is frequently updated.

Events calendar 2007 - 2009



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Date	Event
14 th September 2007	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Brussels
1 st – 4 th October 2007	“Sustainability around the North Sea” – Kick-off meeting in Stavanger, Norway
17 th – 19 th October 2007	CPMR General Assembly in Florence, Italy
14 th – 15 th November 2007	I&E Group meeting in Lille, France
1 st – 2 nd February 2008	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Brussels
15 th – 16 th May 2008	I&E Group meeting in Aalborg, Denmark. Main theme: Innovation.
26 th – 29 th May 2008	“ Sustainability around the North Sea”, project meeting in Busum, Germany, with teachers and pupils
11 th – 13 th June 2008	Joint NSC - Interreg conference in Viborg, Denmark, + NSC GA
5 th September 2008	IEG Strategic Group meeting in Copenhagen
30 th September – 1 st October 2008	North Sea Schools Network meeting in Fife, Scotland
1 st – 3 rd October 2008	CPMR General Assembly in Aquitaine, France
23 rd – 24 th October 2008	I&E Group meeting in Gothenburg
First week of June 2009	North Sea Schools Network: Final conference in Suffolk, England



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Marine Resources Group

1. The aim of the report is inform the NSC General Assembly about the work of the NSC Marine Resource Group in 2007/2008.
2. Over the past year the NSCMRG has :
 - Had 2 Group meetings one in Bergen and one in Brussels
 - Had 1 Political meeting in Copenhagen
 - Had a meeting with ICES, North Sea RAC and the Baltic Sea RAC and Danish Fishermen's Association in Copenhagen
 - Presented the NSC resolution on closed areas to the EU Parliament Fisheries Committee, in Brussels
 - Taken part in a political Seminar at the EU Parliament in Brussels
 - Attended the CPMR Fisheries Group
 - Attended the Aqua Marina Group
 - Attended the NSC Advisor meeting Skein
 - Jointly organised a conference on Managing Change in Coastal Communities
 - Attended the EU Maritime Stakeholders Conference on 19/20 May 2008
3. **Meetings:**
 - 1) This meeting took place in Bergen on 21/22 January 2008 at the invitation of Cllr. Tom-Christer Nilsen. During this meeting we discussed many issues including maritime spatial planning and coastal zone management, climate change and aquaculture, air pollution by ships, maritime policy (future projects) and we updated on IUU and the Mercury issue. We also had a study visit to the Marine Institute of Bergen, where we had two very interesting and thought provoking presentations, the first by Svein Sundby on Climate Effects on Marine Resources and the second on Aquaculture in Warmer, Wetter and Wilder Weather, was given by Oivind Bergh both were equally fascinating.
 - 2) Our next meeting was held in Scotland House, Brussels on 19 May 2008. The meeting was well attended and we were very pleased to welcome Cllr Ellen Oseth and Kjetil Helstad from Troms Region for the first time. Our agenda included future co-operation with BSC Fisheries Group, report of the CPMR Fisheries group meeting. Carol Thomas, CPMR gave us an update on the Aquamarina group, the group voiced grave concern about this new group and feared that it could split the CPMR, we agreed that we would discuss this further at the NSC GA.
Cllr. Harry Jensen, NSCMRG EU Spokesperson, was invited to represent the NSC at a Seminar on Natura 2000, in the EU Parliament. Henrik Jensen gave feedback to the group, saying that it had been very useful and clearly highlighted that Member States differed in their interpretation of the Natura 2000, there seemed to be no common theme. The Group agreed that we would re-circulate the NSC Resolution on Closed Areas, so that it could be strengthened.
Cllr. Tom-Christer Nilsen is to represent the NSCMRG at the NSC energy Co-operation meeting, there was some discussion about what the group wanted him to present. Our colleagues from the Troms Region in Norway, were very pleased with the NSCMRG had handled the IUU issue, it had come to the NSCMRG, then on to the



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NSC executive then the NSC General Assembly and on to the CPMR GA, where at all stage it was approved. Since then it was sent to the EU Commission to influence there paper, also to the EU Parliament Fisheries Committee, the NSRAC and to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation FAO in Rome. It was also present to Commissioner Joe Borge, when he attended the NSRAC control and compliance conference.

Cllr. Nilsen was pleased to inform us about the lates on the mercury issue, The Norwegian Coastal Administration (NCA) had put out tender on a salvage operation of U864. The bids were received on April 28, all from international salvage companies with a long-standing reputation in the field. The bids are now being assessed by Norwegian Veritas. They will conclude a recommendation to the NCA by the end of June this year. Cllr. Nilsen will keep us informed as to the progress. Our next meeting will take place in Denmark in October.

4. Copenhagen political meetings:

1) Our first meetings took place at the offices of the Danish Fishermen's Association. Chairman Anders Fasth and Ann Bell attended the meeting with ICES, Baltic Sea and North Sea RAC and a representative of the Danish Fishermen's Association. This meeting looked at co-operation between scientists and fishermen could be better developed along the lines of the NSC Fisheries Partnership and how co-ordination of scientific requirement for RACs could be improved to ensure that RACs had the best possible advice available to them. It also discussed how the co-operation could be strengthened between the NSC and the NSRAC and BSRAC.

2) The NSCMRG Political meeting also took place at the same venue. At this meeting we discussed the agenda for the next meeting, including, IUU, Baltic Sea co-operation, CPMR, Aquaculture and Climate Change and Fuel efficiency in fishing boats. It was agreed that the NSCMRG would create a new political post within the Group, Contact/Spokesperson on Climate Change, Energy and the Costal Zone. This Spokesperson and an officer would be the contact persons on these issues, on behalf of the NSCMRG, both within the NSC and at EU and International level on fisheries related issues. It was also agreed that Cllr. Tom-Christer Nilsen was nominated. This suggestion would put to the next NSC Executive Committee for their approval. As Cllr. Sandy Clunes had resigned as our Vice Chairman, the NSCMRG had to look for another Vice Chair, Cllr. Josie Simpson, Shetland Islands Council, had put his name forward for the position, this was fully supported by the MSCMRG politicians, their recommendation would also go forward to the next Executive Committe. Both the recommendations were approved by the NSC Executive Committee.

5. Closed Areas and Natura 2000

The ongoing debate on Closed and Marine Protected Areas was discussed at an Inter-RAC Conference held at the Scottish Parliament, the EU Commission has agreed along the lines of the NSC resolution that Consultation and stakeholder involvement is vital.

Cllr. Harry Jensen, Ann Bell, Tommy Mostrup and Pim Visser presented the NSC resolution plus a Danish and Dutch case to the EU parliament Fisheries Committee.



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The EU Parliament Fisheries Committee congratulated the NSC on the work they were undertaking and supported our resolution.

Cllr. Jensen also represented the NSC as a speaker at a seminar on debate on “Natura 2000- an opportunity for or an obstacle to development”, organized by the EU Alde Group, in the European Parliament other speakers included Commissioner Hubner.

6. CPMR Fisheries Group

Anders Fasth, Ann Bell and Anders Carlberg attended a meeting of the CPMR Fisheries Group in Brussels, one area highlighted was the need for the CPMR to be more involved in RACs, following the line of the NSC. It was agreed that Josie Simpson, Chair of the CPMRFIG would attend the next meeting of the Inter-RAC Committee to discuss ways of better involvement in all RACs. Josie has since attended an Inter-RAC meeting. Cllr. Josie Simpson has also been elected as the Vice Chair of the NSCMRG, this will ensure even closer co-operation between both groups.

7. CPMR Aqua Marina Group

Ann Bell and Martin Brebner attend the first meeting of the CPMR aqua Marina Group in Brussels. The meeting established a working method for the group, which involves 3 plenary sessions per year, each focusing on a particular thematic area of the maritime policy (e.g. research, transport etc.). There is also the potential for thematic groups/meetings to be set up to examine issues in more detail. Martin Brebner and Ann Bell were both concerned that this sectoral/thematic approach to examining the Blue Book could overlap significantly with the work of other groups in the CPMR. As the Maritime Policy covers similar policy areas to the CPMR as a whole, there is a real risk that the Aquamarina group becomes a 'mini-CPMR.

We both felt that was merit in continuing the Aquamarina group, as it is important to follow the implementation of the policy. However, in order to avoid duplication with the work of other CPMR working groups and the Geographical Commissions, it may be better for the Aquamarina group to focus on the co-ordination and governance of the Maritime Policy (i.e. conflicts between policy areas, cross-sectoral working across Commission DGs, co-ordination across national boundaries, regional/national/european co-operation etc.) and perhaps the planning framework (ICZM etc.). The group could also look at any gaps in the policy itself. **In short, the main issue we both had with the group is the thematic nature of its meetings, which tends to conflict with the idea of a cross sectoral maritime policy.**

8. Managing Change in Coastal Communities conference

In June 2004 the NSC organised a conference in Peterhead, which looked at the “Changing role of Women in Fishing and Rural Communities”, as a result of the conference the North Sea Women’s Network was formed, the NSWN now has a seat on the Executive Committee of the NSRAC and also Chair the NSRAC Socio Economic Focus group. The main aim of the NSWN is to be the voice of the Coastal Communities on the NSRAC. It was agreed that the time was right to take a look at how Coastal Communities were managing the many changes that have taken place. The conference was jointly organised by the NSC and the NSWN and funded by the Scottish Government. Women from fishing communities in France, Canada, Ireland,

the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, England and Scotland, attended the one day event in Edinburgh on 14th May. Delegates were welcomed by Scottish Fisheries Minister Richard Lochhead, MSP, who said: "There is huge potential in our fishing communities - from the men out at sea to the women and families back on shore. I want our coastal and rural communities to be a place where people want to live and work. From now on we will should be helping communities shape their own future by assisting them to set and achieve their own priorities at a grassroots level."

An international panel of presenters tackled key issues related to fisheries and aquaculture, including Dr Katia Frangoudes, University of Brest, who gave the keynote presentation on the role of women in coastal communities in Europe; Dr Alyne Delaney, an anthropologist working in Denmark who has been investigating the effects of cod recovery plans on fishing communities in Scotland and the Netherlands; and Lena Söderholm (NSC) a fisheries advisor with the Sogn og Fjordane county council in Norway, who spoke about a strategy and project to manage change in one of the country's most fishery dependent communities.

A workshop session explored the challenges facing women due to the changing dynamics of the fishing industry, discussed initiatives to manage change and identify development priorities and funding sources, and looked at ways to regenerate communities, keep young people in them, and put back a sense of pride.



Scottish Cabinet Secretary Richard Lockhead MSP receiving a NSC Tartan Tie at the conference

9. Maritime Policy

Martine Brebner prepared a very good discussion paper for the NSC Marine Resource Group on possible North Sea Maritime Policy projects. After much debate we identified 4 possible project areas:

- Maritime Spatial Planning and integrated coastal zone management.
- Air pollution by ships.
- Safety at sea – The development of the Fish-Safe initiative, which is a good example of industries working in partnership to bring long term improvements in safety and the management of environmental risks. It also provides the opportunity to expand the capture and dissemination of data relating to hazards in the North Sea other than those in UK waters.
- Work the Marine Institute in Bergen and Sogn og Fjordane to develop a project on the marine ecosystem and climate change.



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To date I have had two meetings with the EU Commission regarding the funding of the Safety at Sea project. This project would be split into two phases, one the development of the Fish-Safe equipment and two the management of spatial data on the hazards that lie beneath the North Sea. Another meeting with the EU Commission Maritime Policy team is scheduled for 17 June. Cllr. Tom-Christer Nilsen has been assisting with this project idea, which is being carried out in collaboration with the Oil & Gas and Fishing sectors.



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Sustainable Development Group

This report aims to summarise the work of the Sustainable Development Group (SDG) for the period of 2007/08

1. Officer Bearers

- Chair - Cllr Andreas Lervik
- Vice Chair - Cllr Henrik Ringbaek Madsen
- Vice Chair - Cllr John Lamb
- Adviser - Yasa Ratnayeke

2. SDG Meetings

- 26th September 2007
The Chair, Vice Chairs and the Adviser met in Aberdeen to discuss the organisation of the Joint Annual Conference of the Baltic Sea Energy Group and the SDG in April 08. The work plan was also discussed in detail and it was decided that we should try and limit our work plan to work that we could actually carry out with the year. It was also decided that the group should look at developing a Political Paper on Sustainable Procurement. The next meeting of the entire group was set for the 13th of December 2007 at Scotland House in Brussels.
- 12th & 13th December 2007
On the 12th of December the Chair, Vice Chair and Adviser met with the Baltic Sea Energy Group to discuss and finalise preparations for the Joint Annual Conference of the two groups. It was decided that the meeting will be held in Umeå on the 24th and 25th of April at the Umeå Folkets Hus and that the NSC – SDG will contribute 5000 Euro towards the cost of hosting the joint conference. We also discussed topics of the conference and also speakers. It was decided that the travel costs and accommodation costs of the speakers will be covered by the organisers.

The 13th of December so the SDG members (Eleven of them) meet and discussed in detail the input our members should have in organising speakers for the Joint Annual Conference. There was a very good response from our members. The group agreed on the work plan being developed should concentrate solely on things we could achieve within a realistic time frame. There was also agreement that we should look at developing a Background paper on European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy and the Adviser was tasked in getting this done. This has been done and also a Political Paper was developed on “Energy As A Priority in European Sustainable Procurement” which was submitted to the CPMR Energy Group who supported the paper.



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- 23rd and 24th April 2008 – Umeå
We had 13 members attending this meeting. The Political Paper on “Energy as a Priority in European Sustainable Procurement” was discussed and amended as per Cllr Kevan Lim – Chair of the NSC Energy Group comments. There was also lively debate on the CPMR Policy Position on the Energy / Climate Package, which the group requested that the Adviser to pass on their comments to the CPMR Energy Group, which has been done. The members also approved the attached work plan.
The Chair informed the group that he will be stepping down as from the NSC AGM and he requested that one of the Vice Chairs should take on the role of Chair. It was agreed by the members that Cllr John Lamb should take over as Chair and his post as Vice Chair will be advertised by the NSC Secretariat. The members thanked Cllr Andreas Lervik for all the hard work that was done by him for this group and wished him all the best in his new job.

The 24th of April saw the start of the first Joint Annual Conference of the Baltic Sea Energy group and the SDG. The conference was a great success and well received by all attendees. The NSC – SDG should take this a big step forward in the possibilities of joint working with the Baltic Sea and try and influence funding Programmes (Interreg) to support transnational between the two regions in a substantial way.



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Transport Group

Introduction

This report summarises the work of the NSC Transport group since the last NSC General Assembly in Brunstad in June 2007.

The Transport group in brief

The main aim of the group is to improve cohesion, accessibility and competitiveness in the North Sea Region (NSR) through the development of sustainable and efficient transport solutions.

Current key issues of the group: Sea based intermodal transport corridors & Motorways of the Sea, developing projects for the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme, cooperation with Baltic Sea Commission, statistical mapping and promoting use of more sustainable energy in the transport sector.

Leadership and administration

Chair: Councillor Leif Blomqvist, Västra Götaland region Sweden (appointed 1 March 2006)

Adviser: Jon Halvard Eide, Vest-Agder Norway (appointed October 2000)

Vice-Chair: Councillor Anne E. Robertson, Aberdeenshire Council, Scotland (appointed in June 2007)

Vice Chair: Poul Weber, South Denmark Region (appointed June 2007)

Membership

The group has got about 30 registered members. In addition, a number of regions are on a correspondence list receiving information about the activities of the group.

Group meetings

The group has held three ordinary meetings in the 2007 – 2008 season:

- Kolding, South Denmark Region, 2 – 3 October 2007
- Gothenburg, Västra Götaland Region, Sweden, 14 – 15 February 2008
- Southend, East of England, 21 – 22 May 2008

Attendance

On average, about 8 -12 persons coming from member regions in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, England and Scotland have attended the meetings of the group, a level of attendance fairly equal to the 2006 - 2007 season. No representatives from German and French member regions have attended any group meetings this season.

We are happy to observe that the political chairmanship is participating somewhat more actively in group meetings than before.



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Participation in other NSC meetings, contribution to general NSC activities

- The Chair, Vice-Chair Robertson and the Adviser attended a meeting of the Executive Committee in Cambridge, UK, on 2 November 2007
- Preparatory meeting for General Assembly 2008, Viborg, Central Denmark Region, 16 November 2007

The Adviser attended a meeting in Viborg, Central Denmark Region on 16 November 2007, together with the NSC Secretariat, other NSC Advisers and officers from the host region in order to prepare the study tours at the General Assembly. The transport tour will take place in the port of Aarhus, and will in addition to port-related issues also address the public transport system in Central Denmark Region.

- NSC Advisers meeting, Skien, Telemark, 3 – 4 March 2008

The Adviser attended a meeting with the NSC Secretariat and fellow NSC Advisers in Skien, Telemark, on 3 – 4 March. The first day of this meeting was devoted to presentations of the thematic groups to regional councillors. The second day was concerned with the preparation of the next Executive and the 2008 General Assembly, as well as with issues related to intergroup cooperation

- The Transport group drafted a NSC response to the consultation on the EU Green Paper on Urban Transport on 15 March (see also section on “Current issues and priorities” below)
- The Chair, Vice-Chair Robertson and the Adviser attended a meeting of the Executive Committee in Gothenburg on 4 April
- The Chair and the Adviser attended a meeting of the NSC Energy Coordination group in Brussels on 27 May

Involvement in external events of relevance to the group

- The adviser and some group members attended a project development seminar under the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme in Stavanger on 20 -21 August 2007
- The Adviser attended and made a presentation at the Baltic Development Forum Summit in Tallinn on 6 November 2007
- The Adviser attended a meeting of the High-level group on Transports for Sustainable Growth in the Baltic Sea Region in Tallinn on 6 November 2007
- The Adviser attended a meeting of the North Sea Motorways of the Sea Task Force in Copenhagen on 26 February 2008 (see also section on “Current issues and priorities” below)
- The Adviser attended a meeting of the Baltic Sea Commission Working group on transport, Schwerin, Germany, 29 April 2008



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Current issues & priorities of the group (according to Work Plan)

Developing intermodal transport corridors, incl. Motorways of the Sea (MoS)

As the MoS issue is primarily driven by national governments and industry actors, the primary roles of the Transport group are to monitor developments, exchange information on relevant initiatives involving NSC regions, and mobilise political support for MoS initiatives in the NSC regions.

The Adviser has followed the North Sea Motorways of the Sea Task Force as an observer on behalf of the Northern Maritime Corridor II project. The Task Force consists of Government Ministry & Maritime Administration officials from all EU member states in the North Sea Region, as well as from Norway. The European Commission DG TREN, and European stakeholder organisations related to ports and shipping are observers. The main responsibility of the Task Force is to organise joint calls for tender for MoS projects under the TransEuropean Network – TEN-T. Two such calls have been organised so far. Four proposals were submitted to the first MoS call, including the “NSC” ports of Gothenburg, Aarhus and Esbjerg.

Observership in this Task Force is regarded as an excellent opportunity to stay updated on the development of MoS in the North Sea Region, as well as for promoting NSC policy positions on the MoS directly towards representatives of the European Commission and the member states.

North Sea - Baltic Sea cooperation on transport issues

The Transport group has decided to investigate the feasibility of organising at least one joint meeting with the Transport group of the Baltic Sea Commission (BSC) per year. The first joint meeting could take place in conjunction with the General Assembly in Herring on 11 June.

NSC member regions in Denmark and Sweden which are also members of the BSC have furthermore been encouraged to involve themselves in the work of the BSC Transport group as a way of facilitating and promoting cooperation between the two Commissions

The Adviser attended a meeting of the BSC Transport group in Schwerin, Germany, on 29 April. The meeting discussed transport connections to Russia, project ideas for the Baltic Sea Region Programme, and responses to EU consultations on the Marco Polo II Programme and revision of the TEN-T.

The meeting agreed that there is a potential for BSC – NSC cooperation on the development of intermodal freight transport & MoS, air transport and various forms of sustainable transport. Relevant forms of cooperation could include:

- Recurrent exchange of information on plans, activities and positions
- Mutual attendance at group meetings
- Organisation of meetings, seminars, study visits
- Drafting of joint resolutions to CPMR and EU,
- Developing joint projects



Fylkeshuset,
3706 Skien, Norway
Tel: +47 35 58 42 00
Fax: +47 35 52 90 44
nsc@northsea.org
www.northsea.org

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Attendance at the annual Baltic Development Forum Summit and involvement in the High Level Group on transport in the Baltic Sea Region are furthermore regarded as useful platforms for further developing North Sea- Baltic Sea cooperation in the field of transport. Related projects under the Interreg Programmes for the respective regions are regarded as another relevant platform for cooperation.

Developing project ideas for the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme

The adviser and some group members attended a seminar under the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme in Stavanger on 20 -21 August. The main purpose of the seminar was to develop maritime projects for the first call of the Programme which opened in September 2007. The Adviser and some group members have since then been involved in the development of a project proposal on sea motorways (StratMoS) which was approved in the first call last autumn. This project has partners from several NSC member regions. Other NSC member regions are partners to a project bid on Dry Ports which is likely to be approved in the 2nd call this Spring. These projects have many interfaces and are regarded to be a useful platforms for the activities of the Transport group on the development of intermodal transport corridors and MoS.

NSC member regions in Sweden and Norway are furthermore partners to a project bid on transport to the 1st call of the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007 – 2013 with many interfaces to the aforementioned projects.

Energy issues in the transport sector

In 2007, the Transport group started to explore energy issues in the transport sector and organised a thematic seminar on this issue in Aberdeenshire in May 2007. As a practical way of progressing this issue, the Transport group has started to collect and compile good practice solutions from the NSC member regions on the use of more sustainable fuel in the transport sector, including use of renewable energy and fuel saving schemes. Such good practice will be published at the NSC home page, and could also serve as input to future energy events organised by the NSC, as well as to the NSC Energy Coordination group.

The Chair and Adviser of the Transport group form part of the NSC Coordination group on energy, and attended the first meeting of this group in Brussels on 27 May.

Response to EU Green Paper on Urban Transport

In March 2008, the Transport group submitted a NSC response to the consultation on the EU Green Paper on Urban Transport. The Executive Committee endorsed the response on 4 April. The response was drafted on the basis of an EERA (East of England Regional Assembly) response, together with contributions from several member regions. The main



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message of the response is that more sustainable urban transport would require a sophisticated approach, combining both soft and hard policy measures tailored to each locality. The response is emphasising the importance of technology, facilitating intermodality, cheap, innovative approaches (e.g car shiaring), early education & awareness-raising, infrastructure improvements, workplace travel plans and pricing mechanisms. The role of the EU should primarily be to disseminate good practice, support research and facilitate awareness raising. The response is also pointing to the need of making EU funding schemes more known and user-friendly.

Statistical mapping of key developments in the transport sector

The Transport group has continued to explore relevant items and sources for further developing the statistical mapping task. After the study on container traffic which was presented at a group meeting in May 2007, it was agreed that it would be logical to map RoRo services. It could also be interesting to map air transport services & traffic in the North Sea Region.

At the meeting in May 2008, the group heard a presentation on major trends in modal split / shift in the North Sea Region.