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*Draft resolution for the Annual Business Meeting 22 June 2007, proposed by Region Västra Götaland*

## Activities based on maritime policy

The maritime policy should focus on developing the many activities and different areas of the marine sector, making them sustainable in the broadest sense. This approach is necessary to face challenges of the future including climate change, competition in the global market-place and sustainable use of coastal and maritime resources. Thus, the future of the maritime sector calls for a strategy involving many different levels of activity.

**Therefore, the North Sea Commission strongly recommends its member regions to take concrete actions in the following areas:**

- Connect activities of the maritime sector with other policy areas, Coastal policy must be connected with policy-areas concerning the hinterland and inland regions. For example, in Västra Götaland Lake Vänern is the major freshwater depot in Europe and a crucial resource that could benefit users far beyond Sweden.
- By definition, the maritime sector is characterised by clusters in coastal regions. The regional level has a key role in managing the needs of the maritime sector on a day-to-day basis. It is well-equipped to transform the EU maritime policy into operational plans with the participation of the sector businesses and organisations.
- The establishment of regional forums for maritime policy should be encouraged in regions with a significant maritime sector.
- The EU marine strategy should constitute the environmental pillar of the maritime policy. Environmental aspects should have a distinct presence in development policy, and vice versa - development concerns should be part of environmental policy for the maritime sector.
- An important aspect of the maritime policy is the creation of a coherent strategic research program for the maritime sector. The maritime research networks of excellence of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Program should be developed in order to be closely connected to the maritime policy. A strong link between research and policy is an active response to the strategic challenges identified in the policy.

The importances of strong maritime activities are crucial for the continued development of the maritime policy in the long run. We therefore urge the member regions of the North Sea Commission to take into account these important measures.